NIL DURPAN

or

THE

INDIGO PLANTING MIRROR

Written by

Dinabandhu Mitra

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in collaboration with
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

We have the pleasure of publishing the third Indian edition of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's English translation of the immemorable Bengali drama, NIL DARPAN, by Dinabandhu Mitra. This valuable translation has been lying hidden from the public gaze for the last 60 years, and we have reason to feel gratified that we have done our bit to re-discover it.

Nil Darpan, a drama depicting the pitiable condition of Bengal under the tyranny of Indigo planters, is too famous a work to need any words of introduction. Yet the readers will find exhaustive information about the drama, its social and political background etc., in the Editorial Note that follows. Let it suffice to say that Nil Darpan, apart from its dramatic quality, is a rare historical document worthy to be read by all.

As the father of the Bengali novel Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya pointed out, Nil Darpan was the first Bengali literary work to be translated into a number of European languages and to win laurels wherever it had been published.

We take this opportunity of extending our sincerest thankfulness and gratitude to Dr. Subodh C. Sen Gupta M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D., Principal of Presidency College, who is too well-known a figure in Bengal's literary world to need an introduction. He took the trouble of going through the English rendering of Bankimchandra's biographical sketch of Dinabandhu Mitra, and found it faithful and happy.

Calcutta. In this edition the text of the proceedings of the trial of the Rev. Mr. Long was added with all relevant documents, relating particularly to the trial and Indian and foreign newspaper comments thereon. It was compiled by Mr. Kumud Behari Bose and entitled "Trial of The Rev. James Long. And The of Drama Nil Durpan" with 'Indigo planters and all about them' as a sub-title. The compiler mentioned the name of the author in his preface but hastened to add that he was neither adding to, nor omitting anything from, what had emerged from the court-proceedings. The reason assigned was that he did not like to give occassion for another protracted and vexatious trial.

In preparing the present edition I have followed the text of the second Indian edition of the translation. Every care, however, has been taken in the preparation of this edition to compare the text of the English version with that of the original Bengali, as published by the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, which claims to have followed the text of the first edition. Therefore, the book presented in these pages is the first ever-faithful English edition of the original Bengali drama with the names of the author and the translator printed on the title page.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

NIL DARPAN was published a few years after India's first great struggle for national independence, miscalled *Sepoy Mutiny* by some historians. This mighty upheaval was followed by a series of skrimishes between the foreign Indigo planters and Indian ryots in different parts of Bengal, Behar and U. P. To the planters of those days indigo was worth more than its weight in gold, as until the introduction of tea-planting it was the most important Indian staple grown by foreign capital. In the opinion of the

Directors of the East India Company, Indigo industry provided their servants in India with "a mode of remitting their fortunes to Europe which would be legal, advantageous and adequate."

The Nil Darpan thus reflects a great social upheaval in Bengal. But it is not merely an expression of the conflict between the British Indigo planters and ryots, rich and poor. The drama also brings out, 'subtly and yet effectively, the rift, and the division that occurred between the different classes in the society and between the different sections in Government as a result of this conflict.

In fact, the rule of unmitigated tyranny unleashed by the Indigo planters on the soil of Bengal not only caused an active discontent amongst the people of Bengal ; it moved the more sympathetic sections of the British in India, and met with serious opposition from the more thinking sections of the administrators here. As a matter of fact, the issue of Indigo caused a serious unrest among the rulers and the ruled—a section of the ruling class having already begun thinking if the Indigo issue was not going to bring about the end of British rule in India.

From the very beginning, the planters were opposed by the missionaries, and later on, by a section of the civilians. The struggle that ensued and continued over a long period becomes manifest in the allegations brought by the planters against the missionaries and the British Indian civilians :

1. "How long would the missionaries remain in India, if they were not backed and protected by British bayonets ? The planters, being now deserted by those who hold bayonets at their command, are, as a matter of course, thrown into the power of a hostile race who hate civilian, missionary and planter in equal degree, or perhaps the missionary the most and the planter the least. The mutiny gives conclusive evidence of the hatred borne by natives to all Europeans or indeed Christians—surely it

is a very suicidal policy for one set of Englishmen to ruin another in a foreign country, and even the thinking portion of the natives must laugh at the house divided against itself and be full of hope that their time is coming to gain ascendancy, when they see Mr. Grant at his work."

[*Brahmin and Pariahs : Pp 69-70*]

2. "In the early days of Indian Empire our civilian went out of England—a mere boy—and he found himself at once a member of a dominant and privileged class. The millions of Hindusthan all bowed themselves to the dust before him. He was taught—and how soon is such a lesson learnt—to consider himself a supreme being to those around him. As the common phrase in India runs he was one of the heaven-born. After a few years of subordinate office, with a salary greater than that of the grey-headed barrister in judicial position at home, he became in some far-away province, the pro-consul of great sovereign company. He had no knowledge of law, either in its principle or its practice, yet he sat in judgement on the millions of mankind, and the Indian princes were his suitors. He knew little, if anything, of the principle of finance, yet he administered the finances as well as the judicial functions of his province. He was ignorant of the habits and customs of the people, and he had a bare smattering of their language, yet his fiat was practically without appeal in all cases, from a contest between two farmers to the confiscation of the possession of an ancient line of princes. He was irresponsible. No crime, however great, could ever be proved against him. In the history of the company there is scarcely an instance of a 'senior merchant' or a 'collector' having been publicly or privately dismissed from service."

[*Brahmin and Pariahs : P. 13*]

But among the British residents of India there were

men who were far-sighted enough to realize the dangers of letting the peasant discontent grow. Indeed some had been even moved by the ryots' plight. Amongst them were Sir J. P. Grant, once Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, W. Seton-Karr, a high official, Mr. Eden, once Magistrate of Barasat, and many others.

Sir J. P. Grant was the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal from 1859-62 and had earned great fame by helping the passing of the Widow Remarriage Bill, and by lending his support to the cause of the Bengali ryots victimized by the Indigo planters. In the words of Macaulay, J. P. Grant was one of the "flowers" of the Calcutta society. According to the Hindu Patriot, "he has awakened in the raiyat a community of feeling for a community of suffering.....a spirit of independence ....."

When two of our own great Indians, Raja Rammohun Roy and Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, expressed their appreciation of the 'constructive activities' of the Indigo planters, Mr. Eden, Magistrate of Barasat, submitted before the Indigo Commission a statement which set out *inter alia :* the following

"As a general rule I do not think the residence of Indigo planters has improved to any great extent the physical and moral condition of the people."

Rev. James Long was the most important of those who supported the cause of the ryot. He was a missionary with a clear head, a compassionate heart and a sociologist's outlook. He came to India in 1840 after spending his childhood in Russia. His writings reveal his concern for the poor and his love for humanity. While in Russia he took interest in her folklore. Before publishing this English version of the Nil Darpan, he collected folk songs set to tune and sung throughout Bengal, depicting the plight of the peasants engaged in Indigo plantation. He had so many pioneering works to his credit that he could claim the honour of being India's first sociologist.

Rev. Long's statement as a defendant, and the evidence of a contemporary British Magistrate of Faridpur (now a district of East Pakistan) before the Indigo Commission are historically important. Along with the actions of J. P. Grant, Seton-Karr and others these two documents serve to show the attitude of a section of honest and intelligent Britishers to the vexed and burning Indigo question. Mr. E. Delatour, the then Magistrate of Faridpur, said before the Indigo Commission : "there is one thing more I wish to say ; that considerable odium has been thrown on the missionaries for saying that 'not a chest of Indigo reached England without being stained with human blood.' That has been stated to be an anecdote. That expression is mine and I adopt it in the fullest and broadest sense of its meaning, as the result of my experience as a magistrate in Faridpur District. I have seen several ryots sent to me as a magistrate, who have been speared through the body. I have had ryots before me who have been shot down by Mr. Forde (a planter). I have put on record how others have been first speared and then kidnapped and such a system of carrying of indigo, I consider to be a system of Bloodshed".

Rev. J. Long, in his statement to the court, put forward his reasons for publishing the Nil Darpan. As has already been said, Rev. Long's views were shared by a number of British officials who helped him to circulate the edition of the Nil Darpan among the influential circles of the day. Speaking about W. Seton-Karr, President of the Indigo Commission and later Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, planters were so angry with him that there was an attempt to put him up as the main culprit in place of Rev. Long. This attempt was foiled by Rev. Long who took upon himself the full responsibility for the publication of the English version. He stated his reasons before the Court thus : "I will now state the

grounds why as a clergyman opposed to war I published the Nil Darpan. My Lord, four years only have elapsed since Calcutta was waiting in trembling anxiety for the result of the mutiny. Few could look with calmness on the future, while watch and ward were kept all night by the citizens. (Many felt then, as I had felt long before, how unsafe it was for the English to reside in India in ignorance of and indifference to the current of the native feeling.) The mutiny in common with the Afghan War has shown that the English in India were generally unacquainted with it ; so a short time previous to the mutiny, the Santhal war burst out unexpectedly to the public. For a long period, thugge and torture prevailed in India without the English knowing anything of them. Had I, as a missionary, previous to the mutiny, been able to submit to men of influence a native drama which would have thrown light on the views of the Sepoys and native chiefs how valuable.. My Lord, the mutiny has passed away ; who knows what is in the future. As a clergyman and friend of the peaceable residence of my countrymen in India, I beg to state the following as a motive for my editing such a work as the Nil Darpan. I, for years, have not been able to shut my eyes to what many able men see looming in the distance. It may be distant or it may be near ; but Russia and Russian influence are rapidly approaching the frontiers of India. Her influence so manifest in Cabul 20 years ago, as shown in a recent parliamentary blue book, was beginning to be felt in India during the last mutiny".

This apart, the peasants of Bengal did not allow the tyranny of the Indigo planters go unresisted. A missionary who lived in Nadia where the real drama of the Indigo tyranny was enacted wrote thus :

"They [the peasants : *Ed*] had divided themselves into about six different companies. One company consists merely

of bowmen, another, of slingsmen like David of old. Another company consists of brickwallas, for which purpose they have even, as I hear, collected the scattered bricks about my own compound. Another company consists of balewallas. Their business is merely to send unripe bale fruits at the heads of the lattials. Again another division consists of thalwallas who fling their brass rice-plates in a horizontal way at the enemy which does great execution. Again, another division consists of rola-wallas who receive the enemy with whole and broken well-burned earthen pots. The Bengali women do at times great execution with this weapon."

[From a letter of Rev. C. Bomwetsch, dated 25. 1. 1860 to the Editor, *Indian Field*]

The brief survey in the foregoing paragraphs helps to give the reader an idea about the social and political milieu in which the Nil Darpan was written. In fact it was written when Lord Canning, writing to the Home Government, said : "I assure you that for about a week it caused me more anxiety than I have had since the days of Delhi···and from that day I felt that a shot fired in anger or fear by one foolish planter might put every factory in lower Bengal in flames."

Its impact on the different strata of the society was great. As the publisher of the English version of the Nil Darpan Rev. J. Long was imprisoned and fined. His fine was paid by that great son of Bengal, Kaliprasanna Sinha. Rev. Long's cell became a place of pilgrimage to both Indians and Europeans.

THE DRAMA

To come to the drama, NIL DARPAN is firmly based on facts. To use a modern phraseology, it is documentary in nature. Its characters and situations are largely drawn from real life. The hero, Nabin Madhab, and his brother, Bindhu Madhab, bear a marked resemblance to Bishnu Charan Biswas and Digambar Biswas of the Chowgacha

village in Nadia, a district in Bengal. The kidnapping and torture of the peasant woman Khetramony in the play is a dramatic version of the kidnapping of Haramani, an event that caused deep and wide resentment in the country. Even the magistrates, referred to in the drama, represent real British officials with their identities suitably marked. The dialogue in the drama makes use of actual statements made by Government officials before the Indigo Commission [Ref. the dialogue of the Mukhtears in the Trial Scene of the play.] It refers to the actions taken by Sir J. P. Grant and W. Seton-Karr in favour of the ryots.

The Nil Darpan has linked the names of Dinabandhu, Michael and Rev. J. Long for ever. It helped to launch the professional Bengali stage in its career. The actors and actresses taking part in this drama were in constant danger of being manhandled by the British officials.

Two very well-known incidents, proving the force and power of this great drama, may be mentioned in this connection.

A performance in a town of Sanjukta Pradesh (United Provinces), while in progress, had to be given up as the British army men rushed to the stage with drawn swords.

On another occasion Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, the most courageous social reformer and the pioneer educationist of that age, while witnessing the play, was carried away by it to the extent that he took off one of his slippers and threw it at the head of Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi who was playing the role of Mr. Rogue, an Indigo planter. The slipper was symbolic of the nation's reply to the atrocities of the Indigo planters. Never in his life did Ardhendu Sekhar receive better appreciation of his histrionic skill.

These two incidents help to show the two aspects of this powerful drama. Obviously it could both bite and rouse. It is no mean drama that can, on the one hand, draw British swords out of their scabbards, and on the

other, slippers off the feet of righteously indignant countrymen.

Nil Darpan is indeed a magic mirror which reflects two faces : the face of the tyrant, and the face of the aggrieved victim of tyranny.

From the point of view of mass appeal the first half of the drama is still capable of retaining complete grip over the audience. The second half probably required slight excisions and abridgements, here and there, from the productional point of view. As one of those who had helped to revive the play after an interval of more than 60 years, I can say that it has lost none of its old fire, its old magic.

THE TRANSLATOR

Before I conclude I feel it necessary to say a few words about the translation. Michael Dutt was probably the ideal man to undertake the job. He was a master of English language and he was probably at home in the patois in which the play was written—the dialect of the district of his birth. A few words here about this celebrated translator may not be out of place.

On January 25, 1824, Madhushudan Dutt was born in Sagardari, a village in the district of Jessore. He got admitted in Hindu College in 1837 and was one of the brightest scholars of his college. He embraced Christianity in 1843 and came to be known as Michael Madhushudan Dutt.

Michael Dutt acquired rare erudition in Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Persian, besides English which he treated as his mother tongue for a long time—a language in which he thought, talked, wrote and dreamt.

When he first started writing, it was in English, and his English translation of *Ratnavali* won him a great fame. In 1858 he joined the Police Court as its Head Clerk and Interpreter. During his work there he, at the request of his friends, wrote the drama *Sharmistha*, and it was staged

Since then Michael Dutt went on writing in Bengali and gave to the country dramas and poems of a rare quality which brought him an undying glory. Michael Dutt was the father of the Bengali sonnet and poem in Blank Verse. Tragedies, satires and lyrics are amongst his creations.

In the meantime he had been to Europe and had returned as a barrister. It was Michael Madhushudan Dutt who formed the bridge between the culture of the East and the culture of the West. Speaking about him the great Bankimchandra has said :

"There is a wind now blowing in our favour and we must hold our banner aloft—a banner on which is inscribed SRI MADHUSHUDAN."

Speaking about the translation, we should refer to Rev. Long's public statement on 20. 6. 1861 : "Coarse passages (and words, too : *Ed)* of the play had been expunged or softened in the translation." [*Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors*]

For example, the name of the Indigo planter Mr. Rogue was translated as Mr. Rose (obviously for political reasons), and we have in this edition introduced Mr. Rogue (as in the original) as Mr. Rose (as in the first edition of the English translation) when he first appears on the stage, and later on, we have mentioned him as Mr. Rogue, following the original.

Certain words and expressions have been wrongly translated. For example, Michael has translated *Sarkiwalla* [Spearman] as *Soorkiwalla* [brick-dust maker], and *Bau* [Bangle] as *Bahu* [daughter-in-law]. These are only two of many such inaccuracies. Michael Madhushudan has also left portions of the drama untranslated.

It is rather difficult to explain these shortcomings. According to his biographers, the translation was the result of a solitary night's effort. Whatever it was, it cannot be denied that the translation bears in many places the mark of hurry.

I am painfully aware of my limitation in the knowledge of English. Yet I have tried to fill up the lacuna with my translations and to amend Michael's translation when lapses were patently evident. The defects have been mended in the present edition, and it may be said that an honest attempt has been made to publish here a full-bodied translation of the Nil Darpan with all errors corrected and all omissions made good.

Originally we thought of placing the mistakes and the corrections side by side in the body of the drama, but on further thought we have, for the sake of uninterrupted reading of the drama by our readers, refrained from doing so. The drama with all mistakes corrected may be now read without difficulty but at the end of the book an appendix is being given, containing a comparative study of such mistakes occurring in the first and second editions of the translation, and the corrections made in the present edition, the third Indian edition.

Footnotes explaining difficult words or expressions belonging to the dialect of the original have been given here for the convenience of the readers.

At the end of the book is given an English translation of the biographical sketch of Dinabandhu Mitra by Bankimchandra Chattopadhaya.

This task of bringing out a new edition of the translation of the Nil Darpan has been quite a venturesome and arduous task, and if it were not for the help of my friends I should have failed in performing it.

I express my grateful thanks to Sri Hemendra Prosad Ghosh, doyen of Bengali Journalism, for having allowed me to use his valuable library for this work.

Last of all, I must express my heartfelt gratitude to Sri Sailesh Sengupta who has helped me throughout the work as a co-editor.

INTRODUCTION

by Rev. J. Long

The original Bengali of this Drama—the Nil Durpan, or Indigo Planting Mirror—having excited considerable interest, a wish was expressed by various Europeans to see a translation of it. This has been made by a Native ; both the original and translation are *bona fide* Native productions and depict the Indigo Planting System as viewed by Natives at large.

The Drama is the favourite mode with the Hindus for describing certain states of society, manners, customs. Since the days of Sir W. Jones, by scholars at Paris, St. Petersburgh, and London, the Sanskrit Drama has, in this point of view, been highly appreciated. The Bengali Drama imitates in this respect its Sanskrit parent. The evils of Kulin Brahminism, widow marriage prohibition, quackery, fanaticism, have been depicted by it with great effect.

Nor has the system of Indigo planting escaped notice ; hence the origin of this work, the Nil Durpan, which, though exhibiting no marvellous or very tragic scenes, yet, in simple homely language, gives the "annals of the poor" ; pleads the cause of those who are the feeble ; it describes a respectable ryot, a peasant proprietor, happy with his family in the enjoyment of his land till the Indigo System compelled him to take advances, to neglect his own land, to cultivate crops which beggared him, reducing him to the condition of a serf and a vagabond ; the effect of this on his

home, children and relatives are pointed out in language, plain but true.; it shows how arbitrary power debases the lord as well as the peasant ; reference is also made to the partiality of various Magistrates in favour of Planters and to the Act of last year penally enforcing Indigo contracts.

Attention has of late years been directed by Christian Philanthropists to the condition of the ryots of Bengal, their teachers, and the oppression which they suffer, and the conclusion arrived at is, that there is little prospect or possibility of ameliorating the mental, moral, or spiritual condition of the ryot without giving him security of landed-tenure. If the Bengal ryot is to be treated as a serf, or a mere squatter or day-labourer, the missionary, the school-master, even the Developer of the resources of India, will find their work like that of Sisyphus—vain and useless.

Statistics have proved that in France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Saxony, the education of the peasant, along with the security of tenure he enjoys on his small farms, has encouraged industrious, temperate, virtuous, and cleanly habits, fostered a respect for property, increased social comforts, cherished a spirit of healthy and active independence, improved the cultivation of the land, lessened pauperism, and has rendered the people averse to revolution, and friends of order. Even Russia is carrying out a grand scheme of serf-emancipation in this spirit.

It is the earnest wish of the writer of these lines that harmony may be speedily established between the Planter and the Ryot, that mutual interests may bind the two classes together, and that the European may be in the Mofussil the protecting Aegis of the peasants, who may be able "to sit each man under his mango and tamarind tree, none daring to make him afraid."

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I present "The Indigo Planting Mirror" to the Indigo Planters' hands ; now, let every one of them, having observed his face, erase the freckle of the stain of selfishness from his forehead, and in its stead, place on it the sandal powder of beneficence, then shall I think my labour successful, good fortune for the helpless class of ryots, and preservation of England's honour. Oh, ye Indigo Planters ! Your malevolent conduct has brought a stain upon the English Nation, which was so graced by the ever-memorable names of Sydney, Howard, Hall, and other great men. Is your desire for money so very powerful, that through the instigation of that vain wealth, you are engaged in making holes like rust in the long acquired and pure fame of the British people ? Abstain now from that unjust conduct through which you are raising immense sums as your profits ; and then the poor people, with their families, will be able to spend their days in ease. You are now-a-days purchasing things worth a hundred rupees by expending only ten ;—and you well know what great trouble the ryots are suffering from that. Still you are not willing to make that known, being entirely given up to the acquisition of money. You say, that some amongst you give donations to schools, and also medicine in time of need—but the Planters' donations to schools are more odious than the application of the shoe for the destruction of a milch cow, and their grants of medicine are like unto mixing the inspissated milk in the cup of poison.

If the application of a little turpentine after being beat by Shamchand,* be forming a dispensary, then it may be said that in every factory there is a dispensary. The Editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What surprising power of attraction silver has ! The detestable Judas gave the great Preacher of the Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder then, if the proprietors of two newspapers, becoming enslaved by the hope of gaining one thousand rupees, throw the poor helpless of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths. But *misery and happiness revolve like a wheel*, and that the sun of happiness is about to shed his light on the people of this country, is becoming very probable. The most kind-hearted Queen Victoria, the mother of the people, thinking it unadvisable to suckle her children through maid-servants, has now taken them on her own lap to nourish them. The most learned, intelligent, brave, and open-hearted Lord Canning is now the Governor-General of India ; Mr. Grant, who always suffers in the sufferings of his people, and is happy when they are happy, who punishes the wicked and supports the good, has taken charge of the Lieutenant-Governorship, and other persons, as Messers. Eden, Herschel, etc., who are all well-known for their love of truth, for their great experience and strict impartiality, are continually expanding themselves lotus-like on the surface of the lake of the Civil Service. Therefore, it is becoming fully evident that these great men will very soon take hold of the rod of justice in order to stop the sufferings which the ryots are enduring from the great giant *Rahu*, the Indigo Planter.

* *Shamchand* is an instrument made of leather, used by the Planters for beating the ryots.

NIL DURPAN,

OR

THE INDIGO PLANTING MIRROR,

A Drama

TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI

BY

A Native.

CALCUTTA.

C. H. MANUEL, CALCUTTA PRINTING & PUBLISHING PRESS,
No. 10, Weston's Lane, Cossitollah.

1861.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

GOLUK CHUNDER BASU.

NOBIN MADHAB, BINDU MADHAB } *Sons of Goluk Chunder*

SADHU CHURN—*A neighbouring Ryot.*

RAY CHURN—*Sadhu's brother.*

GOPI CHURN DAS—*The Dewan.*

J. J. WOOD, P. P. ROSE* } *Indigo Planters.*

THE AMIN OR LAND MEASURER

A KHALASI—*a Tent-pitcher.*

TAIDGIR—*Native Superintendent of Indigo Cultivation.*

Magistrate, Amla, Attorney, Deputy Inspector, Keeper of the Gaol, Doctor, a Cow-keeper, a Native Doctor, Four Boys, a Latyal or Club-man, and a Herdsman.

WOMEN

SABITRI—*Wife of Goluk Chunder.*

SOIRINDRI—*Wife of Nobin.*

SARALOTA—*Wife of Bindu Madhab.*

REBOTI—*Wife of Sadhu Churn.*

KHETROMANI—*Daughter of Sadhu.*

ADURI—*Maid-servant in Goluk Chunder's house.*

PODI MOYRANI†—*A Sweetmeat Maker.*

* In the original P. P. Rose has been mentioned as P. P. Rogue.—*Ed.*

† Podi Moyrani was actually a procuress gathering women for the gratification of the planters' lust.—*Ed.*

FIRST ACT

FIRST SCENE

SVAROPUR—*(A verandah attached to) Goluk Chunder's Gola or Store-House*

GOLUK CHUNDER BASU *and* SADHU CHURN *sitting*

Sadhu. Master, I told you then we cannot live any more in this country. You did not hear me however. A poor man's word bears fruit after the lapse of years.

Goluk. O my child ! Is it easy to leave one's country ? My family has been here for seven generations. The lands which our forefathers rented have enabled us never to acknowledge ourselves servants of others. The rice, which grows, provides food for the whole year, means of hospitality to guests, and also the expense of religious services ; the mustard seed we get supplies oil for the whole year, and, besides, we can sell it for about sixty or seventy rupees. Svaropur is not a place where people are in want. It has rice, peas, oil, molasses from its fields, vegetables in the garden, and fish from the tank ; whose heart is not torn when obliged to leave such a place ? And who can do that easily ?

Sadhu. Now it is no more a place of happiness ; your garden is already gone, and your holdings are well nigh gone. Ah ! it is not yet three years since the Saheb took a lease of this place, and he has already ruined the whole village. We cannot bear to turn our eyes in the southern direction towards the house of the heads of the villages (Mandal). Oh ! what was it once, and what is it now ! Three years ago, about sixty men used to make a daily feast in the house ; there were ten ploughs, and about forty or fifty oxen ; as to the court-yard, it was crowded like as at the horse races ; when they used to arrange the ricks of corn it appeared, as it were, that the lotus had expanded itself on the surface of a lake bordered by sandal groves; the granary was as large as a hill ;

but last year the granary, not being repaired, was on the point of falling into the yard. Because he was not allowed to plant Indigo in the rice-field, the wicked Saheb beat the *Majo*[1] and *Sajo*[1] Babus most severely; and how very difficult it was to get them out of his clutches ; the ploughs and kine were sold, and at that crisis the two Mandals left the village.

Goluk. Did not the eldest Mandal go to bring his brethren back ?

Sadhu. They said, "We would rather beg from door to door than go to live there again." The eldest Mandal is now left alone, and he has kept two ploughs, which are nearly always engaged in the Indigo-fields. And even this person is making preparations for flying off. Oh, Sir ! I tell you also to throw aside this infatuated attachment (maya) for your native place. Last time your rice went, and this time, your honour will go.

Goluk. What honour remains to us now ? The Planter has prepared his place of cultivation round about the tank, and will plant Indigo there this year. In that case, our women will be entirely excluded from the tank. And also the Saheb has said that if we do not cultivate our rice-fields with Indigo, he will make Nobin Madhab to drink the water of seven Factories. (i.e. to be confined in them)

Sadhu. Has not the eldest Babu gone to the Factory ?

Goluk. Has he gone of his own will ? The Pyeadah (a servant) has carried him off there.

Sadhu. But our eldest Babu has very great courage. On the day the Saheb said, "If you don't hear the Amin, and don't plant the Indigo within the ground marked off, then shall we throw your houses into the river Betroboti, and shall make you eat your rice in the factory godown," the eldest Babu replied, "As long as we shall not get the price for the fifty bigahs[2] of

1. **Majo and Sajo Babus :** The second and third brothers of a Bengali family—Ed.

2. **Bigah :** One-third of an acre of land—Ed.

land sown with Indigo last year, we will not give one bigah this year for Indigo. What do we care for our house ? We shall even risk (pawn) our lives."

Goluk. What could he have done, without he said that ? Just see, no anxiety would have remained in our family if the fifty bigahs of rice produce had been left with us. And if they give us the money for the Indigo, the greater part of our troubles will go away.

NOBIN MADHAB *enters*

O my son, what has been done ?

Nobin. Sir, does the cobra shrink from biting the little child on the lap of its mother on account of the sorrow of the mother ? I flattered him much, but he understood nothing by that. He kept to his word and said, "Give us sixty bigahs of land, secured by written documents, and take 50 rupees, then we shall close the two years' account at once".

Goluk. Then, if we are to give sixty bigahs for the cultivation of the Indigo, we cannot engage in any other cultivation whatever. Then we shall die without rice crops.

Nobin. I said, "Saheb, as you engage all our men, our ploughs, and our kine, every thing in the Indigo field, only give us every year through, our food. We don't want hire." On which, he with a laugh said, "You surely don't eat Yaban's[1] rice."

Sadhu. Those whose only pay is a bellyful of food are, I think, happier than we are.

Goluk. We have nearly abandoned all the ploughs ; still we have to cultivate Indigo. We have no chance in a dispute with the Sahebs. They bind and beat us, it is for us to suffer. We are consequently obliged to work.

Nobin. I shall do as you order, Sir ; but my design is for once to bring an action into Court.

1. **Yaban :** The Mohammedans and all other nations who are not Hindus are called by that name.

ADURI *enters*

Aduri. Our Mistress is making noise within. The day is far advanced ; will you not go to bathe, and take your food ? The boiled rice is very near become dry.

Sadhu. *(Standing up)* Sir, decide something about this, or I shall die. If we give the labour of one-and-a-half of our ploughs for the cultivation of nine bigahs of Indigo fields, our boiling pots of rice will go empty. Now, I am going away, Sir, farewell, our eldest Babu. *(Sadhu goes away*

Goluk. We don't think that God will any more allow us to bathe and to take food in this land. Now, my son, go and bathe.

(All go away

SECOND SCENE

The house of Sadhu Churn

RAY CHURN *enters with his plough*

Ray. *(Laying down his plough)* The stupid Amin is a tiger. The violence with which he came upon me ! Oh my God ! I thought that he was coming to devour me. That villain did not hear a single word and with force he marked off the ground. If they take five bigahs of land of Sanpoltola what will my family eat ? First, we will shed tears before them ; if they don't let us alone, as a matter of course, we shall leave the country.

KHETROMANY *enters*

Is my brother come home ?

Khetro. Father is gone to the house of the Babus and is coming very soon. Will you not go to call my aunt ? What were you talking about ?

Ray. I am talking of nothing. Now, bring me a little water, my stomach is on the point of bursting from

thirst. I told my brother-in-law[1] so much, but he did not hear me.

SADHU *enters and* KHETROMANY *goes away*

Sadhu. Ray, why did you come so early ?

Ray. O my brother, the vile Amin has marked off the piece of ground in Sanpoltola. What shall we eat ; and how shall I pass the year ? Ah, our land was bright as the golden champah[2]. By the produce of only one corner of the field, we satisfied the mahajans[3]. What shall we eat now, and what shall our children take ? This large family may die without food. Every morning two recas (nearly 5 Lbs) of rice are necessary. What shall we eat then ? Oh, my ill-fortune ! (burnt forehead); what has the Indigo of this whiteman done ?

Sadhu. We were living in the hope of cultivating these bigahs of land and now, if these are gone, then what use is there of remaining here any more ? And the one or two bigahs which are become saltish yield no produce. Again, the ploughs are to remain in the Indigo-field; and what can we do? Don't weep now ; tomorrow we shall sell off the ploughs and cows, leave this village, and go and live in the zemindary of Babu Basanta.

KHETROMANY *and* REBOTI *enter with water*

Now, drink the water, drink the water; what do you fear ? He, who has given life, will provide also food. Now, what did you say to the Amin ?

Ray. What could I say ? He began to mark off the ground, on which it seemed as if he began to thrust burnt sticks into my breast. I entreated, holding him by his feet, and wanted to give him money; but he heard nothing. He said, "Go to your eldest Babu ; go to your father." When I returned, I only

1. **Brother-in-law :** Here the word is used sarcastically; and is taken to mean the brother of the wife—Ed.
2. **Champah :** The name of a beautiful yellow flower—Ed.
3. **Mahajan :** The village money-lender—Ed.

punished him with saying, "I shall bring this before the Court."

(Seeing the Amin at a distance)

Just see, that villain (Shala)[1] is coming ; he has brought servants with him, and will take us to the Factory.

The AMIN *and the two servants enter*

Amin. Bind the hands of this villain.

(Ray Churn is bound by the two servants)

Reboti. Oh ! what is this ? Why do they bind him ? What ruin ! What ruin ! *(To Sadhu)* Why do you stand looking on? Go to the house of the Babus, and call the eldest Babu here.

Amin. *(To Sadhu)* Where shalt thou go now ? You are also to go with me. To take advances is not the business of Ray. We shall have much to bear with if we are to make signature by cross marks. And because you know how to read and to write, therefore you must go and make the signatures in the Factory Account-Book.

Sadhu. Sir, do you call this giving advances for Indigo ; would it not be better to call it the cramming down[2] Indigo ? Oh my ill-fortune, you are still with me ! That very blow, through fear of which I fled, I have to bear again. This land was as the kingdom of Rama before Indigo was established ; but the ignorant fool is become a beggar, and famine has come upon the land.

Amin. *(To himself, observing Khetromany)* This young woman is not bad-looking; if our younger Saheb can get her, he will, with his whole heart, take her. But while I was unable to succeed in getting a *peshkar's* (overseer's) post by giving him my own sister, what can I expect from getting him this woman; but still she is very beautiful; I will try.

Reboti. Khetro, go into the room.

(Khetromani goes away

1. **Shala :** The word, meaning the brother of the wife, is used contemptuosly of any one—Ed.

2. **Cramming down Indigo :** There is a play here on the Bengali words Dadan [advances—Ed.] and Gadan. [cramming down—Ed.]

Amin. Now, Sadhu, if you want to come in a proper manner, come with me to the Factory.

(Going forward

Reboti. Oh Amin ! have you no wife nor children ? Have you kept only the plough and this beating (*marpit*) ? He (i.e. Ray) had just laid down the plough, and all this beating ! Did he not want to drink a little water ? Oh God ! he is a growing lad. By this time he ought to take a second meal. How can he then, without taking any food, go to the Saheb's house which is at such a distance ? I ask for the Saheb's grace; just let him have some food; and then take him away. Oh ! he is so very much troubled for his wife and the children. Oh ! he is shedding tears, his face is become dry. What are you doing ? To what a burnt-up land am I come ? Destruction has come upon me both in life and money. Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! I am gone both in life and money. *(Weeps)*

Amin. Oh, stupid woman ! Now stop your grunting. If you want to give water, bring it soon; else I shall take him away.

(Ray Churn drinks water; exit all

THIRD SCENE

The Factory of BEGUNBARI. *The Verandah of the large Bungalow*

Enter J. J. WOOD *and* GOPI CHURN DAS, *the Dewan*

Gopi. What fault have I done, my Lord ? You are observing me day by day. I begin to move about early in the morning and return home at three o'clock in the afternoon. Again, immediately after taking dinner, I sit down to look over papers about Indigo advances; and that takes my time to twelve and sometimes to one o'clock in the night.

Wood. You, rascal, are very inexperienced. There are no advances made in Svaropur, Shamanagar, and Santighata

villages. You will never learn without Shamchand *(the leather strap)*.

Gopi. My Lord, I am your servant. It is through favour only that you have raised me from the *peshkari* business to the Dewani. You are my only Lord, you can either kill me or can cut me in pieces. Certain powerful enemies have arisen against this Factory; and without their punishment, there is no cultivation of Indigo.

Wood. How can I punish without knowing them ? As for money, horses, latyals (club-men), I have a sufficiency; can they not be punished by these ? The former Dewan made known to me about those enemies. You do not. I have scourged those wicked people, taken away their kine, and kept their wives in confinement which is a very severe punishment for them. You are a very great fool; you know nothing at all. The business of the Dewan is not that of the Kayt[1] caste; I shall drive you off, and give the business to a Keaot.[2]

Gopi. My Lord, although I am by caste a Kaystha, I do my work like a Keaot (a shoe-maker)[3]. The service I have rendered in stopping the rice cultivation and making the Indigo to grow in the field of the Mollahs, and also to take *(Lakhroj)* his rent-free lands of seven generations from Goluk Chunder Bose, and to take away his holdings which were royal gifts ; the work I have done for these, I can dare say, can never be done by a Keaot or even by a shoe-maker. It is my ill-fortune only (evil-forehead) that I don't get the least praise for doing so much.

Wood. That fool, Nobin Madhab, wants the whole account settled. I shall not give him a single cowrie. That fellow is

1. **Kayt :** Kayastha, a certain caste of Bengal, inferior only to the Brahmins.

2. **Keaot :** Another and lowest caste of the Bengal.

3. **Shoe-maker :** A shoe-maker does not belong to the Keaot caste. This has been a mistake.—Ed.

very well versed in the affairs of the Court; but I shall see, how that braggart takes the advances from me.

Gopi. Sir, he is one of the principal enemies of this Factory. The burning down of Polasapore would never have been proved, had Nobin no concern in the matter. That fool himself prepared the draft of the petition; and it was through his advice and intrigues that the Attorney so turned the mind of the Judge. Again, it was through his intrigues that our former Dewan was confined for two years. I forbade him, saying, "Babu Nobin, don't act against our Saheb; and especially as he has not burnt your house." To which he replied, "I have enlisted myself in order to save the poor ryots. I shall think myself highly rewarded, if I can preserve one poor ryot from the tortures of the cruel Indigo Planters; and throwing this Dewan into prison, I shall have compensation for my garden." That braggart is become like a Christian Missionary; and I cannot say what preparations he is making this time.

Wood. You are afraid. Did I not tell you at first, you are very ignorant ? No work is to be done through you.

Gopi. Saheb, what signs of fear hast thou seen in me ? When I have entered on this Indigo profession, I have thrown off all fear, shame, and honor; and the destroying of cows, of Brahmans, of women, and the burning down of houses are become my ornaments, and I now lie down in bed keeping the jail as my pillow *(thinking of it)*.

Wood. I do not want words, but work.

SADHU, RAY, *the* AMIN, *and the two Servants enter making salams.*

Why are this wicked fool's hands bound with cords ?

Gopi. My Lord, this Sadhu Churn is a head ryot ; but through the enticement of Nobin Bose he has been led to engage in the destruction of Indigo.

Sadhu. My Lord, I do nothing unjust against your Indigo, nor am I doing now, neither have I power to do anything

wrong; willingly or unwillingly I have prepared the Indigo, and also I am ready to make it this time. But then, every thing has its probability and improbability ; if you want to make powder of eight inches thickness to enter a pipe half-an-inch thick, will it not burst? I am a poor ryot, I keep only one and half ploughs, have only twenty bigahs of land for cultivation ; and now, if I am to give nine bigahs out of that for Indigo, that must occasion my death, but my Lord, what is that to you, it is only my death.

Gopi. The Saheb fears lest you keep him confined in the godown of your eldest Babu.

Sadhu. Now, Sir Dewanji, what you say is striking a corpse (useless labour). What mite am I that I shall imprison the Saheb, the mighty and glorious ?

Gopi. Sadhu, now away with your high-flown language ; it does not sound well on the tongue of a peasant ; it is like a sweeper's broom touching the body.

Wood. Now the rascal is become very wise.

Amin. That fool explains the laws and magistrate's orders to the common people, and thus raises confusion. His brother draws the ploughshare, and he uses the high word "pratap-shali" ("glorious").

Gopi. The child of the preparer of cow-dung balls is become a Court Naeb *(deputy)*. My Lord, the establishment of schools in villages has increased the violence of the ryots.

Wood. I shall write to our Indigo Planters' Association to make a petition to the Government for stopping the schools in villages ; we shall fight to secure stopping the schools.

Amin. That fool wants to bring the case into Court.

Wood. *(To Sadhu)* You are very wicked. You have twenty bigahs, of which, if you employ nine bigahs for Indigo, why can't you cultivate the other nine bigahs for rice.

Gopi. My Lord, what to speak of nine bigahs ! The debt which is credited to him can be made use of by bringing the whole twenty bigahs within our own power.

Sadhu. *(To himself)* O, Oh ! The witness for the spirit-seller is the drunkard ! *(Openly)* If the nine bigahs which are marked off for the cultivation of the Indigo were worked by the plough and kine of the Factory, then can I use the other nine bigahs for rice. The work which is to be done in the ricefield is only a fourth of that which is necessary in the Indigo-field, consequently if I am to remain engaged in these nine bigahs, the remaining eleven bigahs will be without cultivation.

Wood. You, dolt, are very wicked, you scoundrel *(haramjada) ;* you must take the money in advance ; you must cultivate the land ; you are a real scoundrel *(kicks him).* You shall leave off every thing when you meet with Shamchand *(takes Shamchand from the wall).*

Sadhu. My Lord, the hand is only blackened by killing a fly, i. e. your beating me only injures you. I am too mean. We...

Ray. *(Angrily)* O my brother, you had better stop ; let them take what they can ; our very stomach is on the point of falling down from hunger. The whole day is passed, we have not yet been able either to bathe or to take our food.

Amin. O rascal, where is your Court now: *(Twists his ears).*

Ray. *(With violent panting)* I now die ! My mother ! My mother !

Wood. Beat that "bloody nigger" *(beats with Shamchand, the leather strap).*

Enter NOBIN MADHAB

Ray. O thou Babu, I am dying ! Give me some water. I am just dead !

Nobin. Saheb, they have not bathed, neither have they taken the least food. The members of their family have not yet washed their faces. If you thus destroy your ryots by flogging them, who will prepare your Indigo ? This Sadhu Churn prepared the produce of about four bigahs last year with the greatest trouble possible ; and if with such severe beatings

you make such cruel advances to them, that is only your loss. For this day give them leave, and tomorrow I myself shall bring them with me, and do as thou do'st bid me.

Wood. Attend to your own business. What concern have you with another's affairs ? Sadhu, give your opinion quickly, and it is my dinner time.

Sadhu. What is the use of waiting for my opinion ? You have already marked off the four bigahs of the most productive land ; and the Amin has, to-day, marked off the remaining part. The land is marked without my consent, the Indigo shall be prepared in the same way ; and I also agree to prepare it without taking any advances.

Wood. Do you say my advances are all fictitious, you cursed wretch, bastard and heretic *(beats him)*.

Nobin. (Covers with his hand the back of Sadhu). My Lord, this poor man has many to support in his family. Owing to the beating he has got, I think, he will be confined in bed for a month. Oh ! What pains his family is suffering ! Sir, you have also your family. Now, what sorrow would affect the mind of your wife if you were taken prisoner at your dinner-time ?

Wood. Be silent thou fool, braggart, low fellow, cow-eater. Don't think that this Magistrate is like that one of Amaranagara, that you can, for every word, lay complaints before him, and imprison the men of the Factory. The Magistrate of Indrabad is as death to you. You rascal, you must first give me a hand-note to state you have received the advance for sixty bigahs of land, or else I shall not let you go this day. I shall break your head with this Shamchand, you stupid. It is owing to your not taking advances, that I have not been able to force advances on ten other villages.

Nobin. (With heavy sighs) O my mother Earth ! Separate yourself that I may enter into you. In my life I never suffered such an insult. O, Oh !

Gopi. Babu Nobin, better go home, no use of making fuss.

Nobin. Sadhu, call on God. He is the only support of the helpless.

(Nobin Madhab goes away

Wood. Thou slave of the slave ! Take him to the factory, Dewan, and give him the advance according to rules.

(Wood goes awuy

Gopi. Sadhu, come along to the factory. Does the Saheb forget his words ? Now ashes have fallen on your ready-made rice ; the Yama[1] of Indigo has attacked you, and you have no safety.

FOURTH SCENE

Goluk Chunder Basu's Hall

Enter SOIRINDRI *preparing a hair-string*

Soirindri. I never did prepare such a piece of hair-string. The youngest Bou[2] is the most fortunate, since whatever I do in her name proves successful. The hair-string I have made, is the thinnest possible. According to the hair, the hair-string is made. Oh ! how beautiful the hair is ; it is like unto that of the Goddess Kali[3]. The face is as the lotus, always smiling. People say two sister-in-laws never agree. I don't attend to that. For my part, I feel pleasure when I see the face of the youngest Bou. I consider the youngest Bou in the same light, as I do Bipin. The youngest Bou loves me as her own mother.

SARALOTA *enters with a braid in hand*

Saralota. My sister, just see whether I have been able to make the under part of this braid ? Is it not made ?

1. **Yama :** Death, the king of Terror.
2. **Bou :** This is a term which is applied to one's son's wife; but sometimes, though rarely, it means wife.
3. **Kali** : One of the Hindu goddesses. She is of very dark complexion and has a luxuriant growth of hair.

Soirindri. *(Seeing the braid)* Yes, now it is well made. O ! My sister, this part is made somewhat bad ; the yellow does not look well after the red colour.

Saralota. I wove it by observing your braid.

Soirindri. Is the yellow after the red in that ?

Saralota. No ; in that the green is after the red. But because my green thread is finished, therefore I placed the yellow after that.

Soirindri. You were not able, I see, to wait for the market-day. I see, my sister, every thing is in haste with you. As it is said, "Hurry *(Hari)*[1] is in Brindabun ; but as soon as the desire rises, there is no more waiting.[2]"

Saralota. Oh ! What fault have I committed for that ? Can that be got in the market ? At the last market-day, my mother-in-law sent for it ; but that was not got.

Soirindri. When they write a letter this time to my husband's brothers, we shall send to ask for threads of various colours.

Saralota. Sister, how many days are there still remaining of this month ?

Soirindri. *(Laughingly)* On the place where the pain is, the hand touches. As soon as his[3] college closes, he shall come home, therefore you are counting the days. Ah ! my sister, your mind's words are come out.

Saralota. I say truly, my sister ; I never meant that.

Soirindri. How very good-natured our Bindu Madhab is ! His words are honey. When we hear his letters read,

1. **Hari** : Another name of Lord Krishna, king of Brindaban. He is a mythological god of the Hindus—Ed.

2. This is only a quotation explaining, by an example, the eagerness of the mind when the desire is once excited. (This occurs as a verse in the original, and is an utterance of Sri Radha, the beloved of Lord Krishna. A great and worthy portion of Bengali literature is devoted to the treatment of the love between Lord Krishna and Sri Radha—Ed.)

3. **His** : This pronoun "his" refers to the husband of Saralota.

they rain like drops of nectar. I never saw such love towards one's brother as his, and also his brother shows the greatest affection for him. When he hears the name of Bindu Madhab, his heart overflows with joy, and it becomes, as it were, expanded. Also, as he is, so our Saralota is, *(pressing Saralota's cheek)* Saralota is as simplicity[1] itself. Have I not brought with me my huka[2] ? It is the first thing which I have forgotten to bring with me.

Enter ADURI

Aduri, will you just go and bring me some ashes of tobacco ?

Aduri. Where shall I now seek for it !

Soirindri. It is stuck on the thatched roof of the cook-room, on the right side of the steps leading into the room.

Aduri. Then, let me bring the ladder from the threshing floor ; else how can I reach to the roof ?

Saralota. Nicely understood indeed !

Soirindri. Why, can she not understand our mother-in-law's word ? Don't you understand what steps are, and what Dain[3] signifies ?

Aduri. Why shall I become a Dain ; it is my fate. As soon as a poor woman becomes old and her teeth fall out she is immediately called a Dain. I shall speak of this to our mistress : am I become so old as to be called a Dain ?

Soirindri. Silly ! *(Rising up)* Youngest Bou, sit down, I am coming ; to-day we shall hear the *Betal*[4] *of Vidyasagar.*[5]

(Soirindri goes away

1. **Saralota** : English equivalent is 'Simplicity.'

2. **Huka** : i. e. hookah. The translation here is mistaken. The words in the original mean a box containing ashes of tobacco—Ed.

3. **Dain** : A Bengali word meaning either the right side, or a witch according to context.

4. **Betal** : A mythological Book :—Ed.

5. **Vidyasagar** : A great social reformer of Bengal, who retold the stories of "Betal"—Ed.

Aduri. That Sagar (who) allows marriage to the widows ; fie ! fie ! Are there not two parties to that ? I am of the Ajah's party[1].

Saralota. Aduri, did your husband love you well ?

Aduri. O young Haldarni[2], do not raise that word of sorrow now. Even up to this day, when his face comes to my mind's eye, my heart, as it were, bursts with sorrow. He loved me very much, and he even wanted to give me a *daughter-in-law*[3].

Let alone a Paiche[4];
What worth indeed may it be !
I can find a gold bangle for one,
If after my heart she be !

Does it fit in ? He even did not give me time to sleep. Whenever I felt drowsy, he said, "O my love, are you sleeping?"

Saralota. Did you call him by his name ?

Aduri. Fie ! Fie ! The husband is one's Lord. Is it proper to call him by his name ?

Saralota. Then, how did you call him ?

Aduri. I used to say, "O ! do you hear me ".

Enter SOIRINDRI *again.*

Soirindri. Who has irritated this fool again ?

Aduri. She was inquiring after my husband, therefore, I was speaking with her.

Soirindri. (Laughing) I never saw a greater fool than this our youngest Bou. While having so many subjects of talk, still you are exciting Aduri in order to near from her about her husband.

1. **Ajah's Party** : i. e. the party of Rajahs (native princes) who opposed widow-remarriage :—Ed.

2. **Haldarni** : wife of a man bearing the surname 'Haldar' :—Ed.

3. **Daughter-in-law** : a wrong translation. The word in the original means a bangle :—Ed.

4. **Paiche** : a large piece of ornament usually of silver, worn round the waist :—Ed.

Enter REBOTI *and* KHETROMANY

Welcome, my dear sister, I have been sending for you for these many days ; still I see, you don't get time to come. O our youngest Bou, here take your Khetro ; here she is come *(To Reboti)*. She was troubling me for these days, saying, "My sister Khetromany of the Ghose family, is come from her father-in-law's house ; then, why is she not yet coming to our house ?"

Reboti. Yes such is your love towards us. Khetro, bow down before your aunts. *(Khetromany bows down*

Soirindri. Remain with your husband for life ; wear vermilion even in your white hair ; let your iron circlet[1] continue for ever and the next time you go to your father-in-law's house, take your new-born son with you.

Aduri. The young Haldarni speaks most fluently before me ; but this young girl bowed down before her ; and she spoke not a single word.

Soirindri. Oh ! what of that ! Aduri, just go and call our mother-in-law here. *(Aduri goes away*

The fool knows not what she says. For how many months is she[2] with child !

Reboti. Did I yet express that ; the bad turn of my fortune (broken forehead) is such, that I yet cannot say whether that is actually the case or not. It is because that you are very familiar with us, that I tell it you—at the end of this month she will be in her fourth month.

Saralota. But her belly has not yet bulged !

Soirindri. What madness ! She has not yet completed her third month and you expect a bulged belly !

Saralota. Khetro, why did you cut off the curls of your hair ?

1. The iron circlet worn by a woman on her left hand is the mark or sign of the husband being alive.

2. **She** : refers to Khetromany.

Khetro. The elder brother of my husband was much displeased at seeing the curls in my hair. He told our mistress (mother-in-law), that curls agree best with prostitutes and women of rich families. I was so much ashamed at hearing his words, that from that very day I cut off my curls.

Soirindri. Youngest Bou, the shades of evening are spreading about ; just go, my sister, and bring the clothes.

Enter ADURI *again*

Saralota. (Standing up). Aduri, come with me ; let us go up, and bring down the clothes.

Aduri. Let young Haldar first come home, ha ! ha ! ha !

(Ashamed Saralota goes away

Soirindri. (With anger, yet laughing) Go thou unfortunate fool ; at every word, you joke. Where is my mother-in-law ?

Enter SABITRI

Yes, she is come.

Sabitri. Ghose Bou, art thou come, and hast thou brought your daughter with you ? Yes, you have done well. Bipin was making a noise, therefore, I sent him out and am come here.

Reboti. My mother, I bow down before you, Khetro, bow down before your grandmother.

(Khetromany bows down

Sabitri. Be happy, be the mother of seven sons. *(Coughing Aside)* My eldest Bou, just go into the room. I think my son is up. Oh ! my son has no regular time for bathing, neither for taking food. My Nobin is become very weak by mere vain thoughts—*(Aside "Aduri")* Oh ! my daughter, go in soon. I think, he in asking for water.

Soirindri. (Aside, to Aduri) Aduri, calling for you.

Aduri. Calling for me, but asking for you.

Soirindri. Thou burnt-faced ! Sister Ghose meet me another day.

(Exit Soirindri

Reboti. O my mother, here is none else. Some great danger has fallen upon me, that Podi Moyrani came to our house yesterday.

Sabitri. Rama ! Rama ! Rama ![1] who allows that nasty fool to enter his house ? What is left of her virtue ? She has only to write her name in the public notices.

Reboti. My mother, but what shall I do ? My house is not an enclosed one. When our males go out to the fields the house in no more a house ; but you may call it a mart. That strumpet says (I do shrink at the thought), she says, that the young Saheb is become, as it were, mad at seeing Khetromany ; and wants to see her in the Factory.

Aduri. Fy ! fy ! fy ! bad smell of the onion ! Can we go to the Saheb. Fy ! fy ! fy ! bad smell of the onion ! I shall never be out any more alone. I can bear every other thing, but the smell of the onion I can never bear. Fy ! fy ! fy ! bad smell of the onion.

Reboti. But, my mother, is not the virtue of the poor actual virtue ? That fool[2] says, he will give money, give grants of lands for the cultivation of rice and also give some employment to our son-in-law. Fie ! fie ! to money. Is virtue something to be sold ? Has it any price ? What can I say ? That fool was an agent of the Saheb, or else I would have broken her mouth with one kick. My daughter is become thunderstruck from yesterday ; and now and then, she is starting with fear.

Aduri. Oh, the beard ! When he speaks, it is like a he-goat twisting about its mouth. For my part, I would never be able to go there as long as he does not leave off his onions and beard. Fie ! fie ! fie ! the bad smell of the onion.

Reboti. Mother, again that unfortunate fool says, if you do not send her with me, I shall take her away by certain latyals.

1. **Rama ! Rama ! Rama !** : Rama is a great mythological hero of India enjoying the status of a god. The word is commonly uttered as an oath when one comes across anything undesirable ;—Ed.

2. **That Fool** : refers to Podi Moyrani the sweet-maker.

Sabitri. What more is the Burmese (Mug) power? Can any one take away a woman from a house in the British Dominion?

Reboti. O my Mother ! Every violence can be committed in the ryot's house. Taking away the women, they bring the men under their power. In giving advances for Indigo they can do this ; they will do it more when they are infatuated. Don't you know, my mother, the other day, because certain parties did not agree to sign a fictitious receipt of advances, they broke down their house and took away by force the wife of one of the Babus.

Sabitri. What anarchy is this! Did you inform Sadhu of this.

Reboti. No, my mother. He is already become mad on account of the Indigo; again, if he hear this, will he keep quiet ? Through excessive anger he will rather smite his head with axe.

Sabitri. Very well, I shall make this known to Sadhu, through my husband ; you need not say anything. What misfortune is this ! The Indigo Planters can do anything. Then why do I hear it generally said, that the Sahebs are strict in dispensing justice. Again, my son Bindu Madhab speaks much in praise of them. Therefore I think that these are not Sahebs ; no, they are the dregs (Chandal) of Sahebs.

Reboti. Respecting another word which Moyrani has said, I think the eldest Babu has not heard of it that a new order has been proclaimed, by which the wicked Sahebs, by opening a communication with the Magistrate, can throw any one into prison for six months ; again, that they are making preparations for doing the same with the Babus. (Your husband).

Sabitri. *(Sighing deeply)* If this be in the mind of God it will be.

Reboti. Many other things she said, my mother : but I was not able to understand her. Is it the fact, that there is no appeal[1] when once a person is imprisoned ?

1. **Appeal** : In villages of Bengal this word is pronounced as 'Pil', which as a Bengali word also means a child :—Ed.

Aduri. I think, Lady imprisonment[1] has been made sterile.

Sabitri. Aduri, be silent a little my child.

Reboti. Moreover, the wife of the Indigo Planter, in order to make her husband's case strong (pakka), has sent a letter to the Magistrate, since it is said that the Magistrate hears her words most attentively.

Aduri. I saw the lady ; she has no shame at all. When the Magistrate of the Zillah[2] (whose name occasions great terror) goes riding about through the village, the lady also rides on horseback, with him—The Bou riding about on a horse ! Because the aunt of Kasi once laughed before the elder brother of her husband, all people ridiculed her ; while this was the Magistrate of the Zillah.

Sabitri. I see, wretched woman, thou wilt occasion some great misfortune one day. Now it is evening, Ghose Bou, better go home. There is Goddess Durga with you.

Reboti. Now, I go my mother. I shall buy some oil from the shop ; then there will be light in the house.

(Exit Reboti and Khetromany

Sabitri. Can't you remain without speaking something at every word.

Enter SARALOTA *with clothes on her head*

Aduri. Here, our washerwoman is come with her clothes.

Sabitri. Thou, fool, why is she a washerwoman? She is my Bou of gold, my Goddess of good Fortune *(patting her back)*. Is there no one in my family excepting you to bring down the clothes ? Can't you, for one dunda[3] sit quiet in one place ? Art thou born of such a mad woman ? How did you

1. **Lady imprisonment** : The Bengali synonym for 'imprisonment' is "Meyad" in the rural areas of Bengal. Aduri, being half-witted, takes the word 'Meyad' (imprisonment) as a woman and the word 'Pil' (in this case appeal) as a child.
2. **Zillah** : a district.
3. **Dunda** : Dunda is equal to 24 English minutes.

tear off your cloth ? I think you bruised yourself. Ah, her body is, as it were, a red lotus ; and this one bruise has made the blood to come out with violence. Now, my daughter, I tell you, never move up and down the steps in the dark, in such a manner.

Enter SOIRINDRI

Soirindri. Now, our young Bou, let us go to the ghat.[1]

Sabitri. Now, my daughters, while the evening light continues, you two together go and wash yourselves.

(Exit all

1. **Ghat** : a pond which the villagers use for washing, bathing etc.

SECOND ACT

FIRST SCENE

The Godown of Begunbari Factory

TORAPA *and four other Ryots sitting*

Torapa. Why do they not kill me at once ? I can never show myself ungrateful. That eldest Babu, who has preserved my caste; he, through whose influence I am living here; he, who by reserving my plough and the cows, is preserving my life, shall I by giving false evidence, throw the father of that Babu into prison ? I can never do that; I would rather give my life.

First Ryot. Before sticks there can be no words; the stroke of Shamchand is a very terrible thrust. Have we a film on our eyes; did we not serve our eldest Babu ? Are we devoid of all sense of shame ? And has not our eldest Babu given us salt to eat ?[1] But, then, what can we do ? If we do not give evidence they will never keep us as we are. Wood Saheb stood upon my breast and blood began to fall drop by drop. And the feet of the filth-eater were, as it were, the hoofs of the ox.

Second Royt. Thrusting in the nails; don't you know the nails which are stuck under the shoes worn by the Sahebs ?

Torapa. (Grinding his teeth with anger) Why do you speak of the nails ? My heart is bursting with having seen this blood. What do I say ? If I can once get him in the Vataramari field, with one slap I can raise him in the air; and at once put a stop to all his "gad dams" and other words of chastisement.

Third Ryot. I am only a hireling, and work on commission. It won't cut ice if I say that I refused to take indigo advance under the influence of the Babus. Why was I then confined in the godown ? I thought that serving under him at this time, I shall be able to make a good collection and shall be able to invite my friends, on the occasion of my wife's com-

1. **And has.....salt to eat ?** : i. e. And has not.....given us food? In India the giver of bread is described as the giver of salt :—Ed.

pleting her seventh month of pregnancy, but I am rotting here in this place for five days and again I am to go to that *Andarabad.*

Second Ryot. I went to that Andarabad once ; as also to that Factory of Bhabnapore, every one speaks good of the Saheb of that place; that Saheb once sent me to the Court, then I saw much fun in that place. Ha ! just as the Magistrate, sitting at the tails of the two Mukhtears (lawyers) shouted "Hyal" (Hallo), the two brother-in-laws in the persons of the Mukhtears kicked up a row. The wordy battle they fought made me think there was literally a bull-fight as between the white ox of Sadhukhan and the bull-calf of Jamadar on the field of Moyna.[1]

Torapa. Did he find any fault with you ? The Saheb of Bhabnapore never raises a false disturbance. "By speaking the truth, we shall ride on horseback." Had all Sahebs been of the same character with him then none would have spoken ill of the Sahebs.

Second Ryot. Don't be overjoyous. There is a saying: "I thought Kelo's mother was chaste. But she sleeps with her son-in-law". Now this torturing[2] is all put a stop to. In his godown there are now seven persons, one of them a child. The vile man has filled his house also with kine and calves. Oh, what robbery is he carrying on !

Toarpa. As soon as they get a Saheb, who is a good man, they want to destroy him. They are holding a meeting to drive off the Magistrate.

Second Ryot. I cannot understand how the Magistrate of this Zillah has found fault with the Magistrate of the other Zillah.

1. The two Mukhtears have been compared here with two fighting bulls.

2. **Torturing** : the word in the original is 'Ikshul' the meaning of which has not yet been found out. According to some the word may also mean 'unjustified detention'.

Torapa. He did not go to dine in the factory. They prepared a dinner for the Magistrate, in order to get him within their power, but the Magistrate concealed himself like a stolen cow; he did not go to dinner. He is a person of a good family. Why should he go to the Indigo Planters ? We have now understood, these Planters are the low people of Belata.[1]

First Ryot. Then how did the late Governor Saheb go about all the Indigo Factories, being feasted like a bridegroom just before the celebration of the marriage ? Did you not see that the Planter Sahebs brought him to this Factory well-adorned like a bridegroom ?[2]

Second Ryot. I think he has some share in this Indigo Company.

Torapa. No ! can the Governor take a share in Indigo affairs ? He came to increase his fame. If God preserve our present Governor, then we shall be able to procure something for our sustenance ; and the spectre of Indigo shall no more hang on our shoulders.

Third Ryot. (With fear) I die. If the ghost of this burden once attack a person, is it true that it does not quit him soon ? My wife said so.

Torapa. Why have they brought this brother-in-law here ? He does not understand a thing. For fear of the Sahebs, people are leaving the village ; and my uncle Bochoroddi has formed the following verse :

"The man with eyes like those of the cat, is an ignorant fool ;
"So the Indigo Saheb of the Indigo Factory is a blue devil."

Bochoroddi is very expert in forming such verses.

1. **Belata** : i. e. England.

2. This refers to a certain practice in India of the bridegroom going to the house of relatives amid great feasting before the celebration of the marriage.

Second Ryot. Did not you hear another verse which was composed by Nita Atai ?

"The Missionaries have destroyed the caste ;

"The Factory monkeys have destroyed the rice."

Torapa. What a composition ! But what is really meant by "Destroyed the caste ?"

TORAPA *repeating the words of the second Ryot*

"The Missionaries have destroyed the caste :

"The Factory monkeys have destroyed the rice."

Fourth Ryot. Alas ! I do not know what is taking place in my house : I am a ryot of a different village. How could I then claim to have come to Svaropur, and at the instigation of Bose, thrown away the advance offered me ? When my youngest child had a fever I came to Bose to get from him a little sugar-candy. Ah how very kind he was ; how agreeable and good-looking in countenance I found him ; and sitting as solemn as an elephant.

Torapa. How many bigahs have they thrust on you this year ?

Fourth Ryot. Last year I prepared ten bigahs but as to the price of that, they raised great confusion. This year again, they have given advances for fifteen bigahs and I am doing exactly as they are ordering me, still, they leave not off insulting me.

First Ryot. I am labouring with my plough for these two years, and I have cultivated a little piece of ground. That piece of ground which I prepared this year, I kept for sesamum ; but one day, young Saheb, riding on his horse, came to the place, and waiting there himself, took possession of the whole piece. How can the ryots live if this is to continue ?

Torapa. This is only the intrigue of the wicked Amin. Does the Saheb know everything about land ? This fool goes about like a revengeful dog ; when he sees any good piece of land, he immediately gives notice of it to the Saheb. The

Saheb has no want of money, and he has no need for borrowing money on credit. Then, why is it that the fool does so ; if he has to cultivate Indigo, let him do so ; let him buy oxen ; let him prepare ploughs ; if he cannot guide the plough himself, let him keep men under him. What want have you of lands ? Why not cultivate the village from end to end ? We stand ready to help in the cultivation. In that case the land can overflow with Indigo in two years. But he will not do it.....

(*Aside*, ho ; ho ; ho ; ma ; ma ;) Gazi Saheb[1] Gazi Saheb ; Darga Darga[2] Call your Rama. Within this there are ghosts. Be silent, be silent.

(*Aside*, Oh Indigo ; You came to this land for our utter ruin. Ah ! I cannot any more suffer this torture. I cannot say how many other Factories there are of this Concern. Within this one month and-a-half, I have already drunk the water of fourteen Factories ; and I do not know in what Factory I am now ; and how can I know that, while I am taken in the night from one Factory to another, with my eyes entirely shut. Oh ! my mother ! where art thou now ?)

Third Ryot. Rama ; Rama ; Rama Kali, Kali, Durga ! Ganesh,[3] Ashra[4].

Torapa. Silence, silence.

(*Aside*, Ah, I can make myself free from this hell, if I take the advance for five bigahs of land. Oh ! my uncle, it is now proper to take the advance. Now, I see no means of giving the notice ; my life is on the point of leaving the body. I have no more any power to speak. Oh my mother, where art thou now ? I have not seen thy holy feet for a month-and-a-half.)

1. & 2. **Gazi Saheb & Darga** : These are words used by the Mohemmadans in times of great alarm and here used to express the fear of ghosts.

3. **Rama, Kali, Durga, Ganesh** : Names of Hindu gods & goddesses.

4. **Ashra** : i. e. Ashura, the Demon.

Third Ryot. I shall speak of this to my wife ; did you hear now ? Although these are become ghosts after death, still have they not been able to extricate themselves from the Indigo advances.

First Ryot. Art thou so very ignorant ?

Torapa. A person of a good family ; I have understood that by the words. My uncle Prana, can you once take me up on your shoulders, than I can ask him where his residence is ?

First Ryot. Thou art a Mussalman.

Torapa. Then, you had better rise on my shoulders and see—*(sits down)* rise up—*(sits on the shoulders)* take hold of the wall; bring your face before the window—*(seeing* GOPI CHURN *at a distance)* come down, come down, my uncle, Gopi is coming *(first Ryot falls down).*

Enter GOPI CHURN *and* MR. ROSE *with his Ramkanta*[1] *in his hand*

Third Ryot. Dewan, there is a ghost in this room. Now, it was crying aloud.

Gopi. If you don't say as I teach you, you must become a ghost of the very same kind. *(Aside, to Mr. Rose)* These persons have known about Mojumder's confinement, we must no more keep him in this Factory. It was not proper to keep him in that room.

Rose. I shall hear of that afterwards. What ryot has refused ; what rascal is so very wicked ? *(Stamps his feet).*

Gopi. These are all well-prepared. This Mussalman is very wicked ; he says, I can never show myself ungrateful, *(nimakharami).*

Torapa. *(Aside)* O my father ; How very terrible the stick is. Now I must agree with them ; as to future considerations I shall see what I can do afterwards. *(Openly)* Pardon me, Saheb ! I, also, am become the same with you.

1. **Ramkanta** : it is very like Shamchand.

Planter. Be silent, thou child of the sow ! This Ramkant is very sweet. *(Strikes with Ramkanta and also kicks him.)*

Torapa. Oh ! Oh ! my mother, I am now dead. My uncle Prana, give me a little water ; I die for water. My father, father !

Rose. Shall not filth be discharged into your mouth ?

(Strikes with his shoes

Torapa. Whatever thou shalt say, I shall do. Before God, I ask pardon of thee, my Lord.

Rose. Now the villain has left his wickedness. To-night all must be sent to the court. Just write to the Attorney, that as long as the evidence is not given, not one of these shall be let out. The Agent shall go with them. *(To the Third Ryot)* Why art thou crying ? *(Gives a kick).*

Third Ryot. Bou,[1] where art thou ? These are murdering me. O my mother ! Bou ! my mother ! I am killed, I am killed. *(Falls upside down on the ground).*

Rose. Thou, stupid, art become (bawra) mad.

(Exit Mr. Rose

Gopi. Now, Torapa, have you got your full of the onion and the shoe ?

Torapa. Oh Dewanji, preserve me by giving a little water. I am on the point of death.

Gopi. The Indigo warehouse and the steam engine room, these are places where the sweat shoots forth and water is drunk. Now, all of you come with me, that you may at once drink water.

(Exit all

1. **Bou** : Bengali word for 'wife'.

SECOND SCENE

The bed-room of Bindu Madhab

SARALOTA *sitting with a letter in her hand*

Saralota. Now, my dear love with an honest tongue is not come, and an elephant, as it were, is treading on the lotuslike heart. I have become hopeless amid very great hope. In expectation of the coming of the Lord of my life, I was waiting with greater disquietude of mind than the swallow *(chatak)* does when waiting for the drops of rain at the approaching rainy season. The way in which I was counting the days exactly corresponded with what my sister said, that each day appeared, as it were, a year *(deep sigh)*. The expectation as to the coming of my husband is now of no effect. The course of his life itself will prove successful, if the great action in which he is now engaged, can prove so. Oh ! Lord of my life ! We are born women, and cannot even go out to walk in the garden; we are unable to walk out in the city; can by no means form clubs for general good; we have no Colleges nor Courts, nor Brahma Samaja of our own ; we have nothing of our own, to compose the mind when it is once disturbed ; and moreover, we can never blame a woman when she feels any disquietude. O my Lord, we have only one to depend upon—the husband is the object of the wife's thoughts, of her understanding, her study, her acquisition, her meeting, her society; in short, this jewel—the husband is all to a virtuous woman. O thou letter ! thou art come from the hand of the dear object of my heart, I shall kiss thee, *(kisses it)*; in thee is the name of my lord; I shall hold thee on my burnt heart, *(keeps it on her breast)*. Ah ! how sweet are the words of my Lord; as often as I read it, my mind is more and more charmed *(reads)*.

MY DEAR SARALA, In my letter I cannot express what anxiety my mind feels to see your sweet face. O what inexpressible pleasure do I feel when I place your beautiful (moonlike) face on my breast! I thought that that moment of happiness is come ; but pain immediately overtook pleasure. The College is closed, but a great misfortune has come upon me; through the grace of God, if I be not able to extricate myself from it, I shall never be able any more to show my face to thee. The Indigo Planters have secretly brought an accusation against my father in the court; their main design being, in some way or other, to throw him into jail. I have sent letters, one after another, to my brother giving him this information; and I myself am remaining here with the greatest care possible. Never dirturb yourself with vain thoughts. The merciful Father must certainly make us successful. My dear, I have not forgotten the Bengali translation of "Shakespeare"; it cannot be got now in the shops, but one of my friends, Bonkima by name, has given me one copy. When I come home, I shall bring it with me. My dear, what a great source of pleasure is the acquisition of learning! I am conversing with you, although at such a great distance. Ah! what great happiness would my mind have enjoyed if my mother did not forbid you to send letters to me.

"I am yours,
Bindu Madhab".

As to myself I have a full confidence as to that. If there by any fault in your character, then who should be an example of good conduct ? Because I am fickle; cannot sit for some time quietly in one place, my mother-in-law calls me the daughter of a mad woman. But, where is my fickleness now ? In the place, where I have opened the letter of my dear Lord, I have spent nearly a fourth part of the day. The fickleness of the exterior part has now gone into the heart. As, on the boiling of the rice, the froth rising up makes the surface quiet, but the rice within is agitated; so am I now. I have not that smiling face now. A sweet smile is the wife of happiness ; and so soon as happiness dies, the sweet smile goes along with it. My Lord, when thou shalt prove successful, every thing shall be preserved; if I am to see your face disquieted, all sides will be dark unto me. O my restless mind, wilt thou be not quieted ? If you remain unquiet, that can be suffered. As to your weeping, none can see it, nor can hear it ; but my eyes ! you shall

throw me into shame, (*rubbing her eyes*); if ye are not pacified I shall not be able to go out of doors.

Enter ADURI

Aduri. What are you doing here ? The elder Haldarni[1] is not able to go to the tank-side. All whom I see are of a disturbed countenance.

Saralota. (*A deep sigh*) Let us then go.

Aduri. I see you have not yet touched the oil. Your hairs are yet dusty, and you have not yet left the letter. Does our young Haldar write my name in the letter ?

Saralota. Has the Bara Thakur[2] finished his bathing ?

Aduri. The eldest Haldar is gone to the village. A law-suit is being carried on. Was that not written in your letter ! Our master was weeping.

Saralota. (*Aside*) Truly, my Lord ! Thou shalt not be able to show thy face, if thou can'st not prove successful.

(*Openly*) Let us now rub ourselves with oil in the cook-room.

(Exit both

1. Refers to Soirindri.
2. **Bara Thakur** : the eldest brother of the husband.

THIRD SCENE

A Road pointing three ways

Enter PODI MOYRANI

Podi. It is the degenerate Amin who is ruining the country. Is it through my own choice that I am levelling the axe at my feet, by giving the young women to the Saheb ? Oh to think of the club which Rai (Ray Churn), lifted against me that day ! If it were not for Sadhuda, the day would have proved my last. Ah, it bursts my heart when I see the face of Khetromany. Have I no feeling of compassion, because I have made a paramour my companion ? Whenever she sees me still, she comes to me, calling me Aunt, Aunt ! Can the mother, with a firm heart, give such a golden deer into the grasp of the tiger ? The younger Saheb is never satiated even with two of us—Kali, the daughter of a rude tribe and me. How detestable is this, that for the sake of money I have given up my caste and my religion ; and also am obliged to touch the bed of a Buno (rude tribe). That libertine, the elder Saheb, has made it a practice to beat me whenever he finds me, and has also said, he will cut off my nose and ears ; that vile man is come to an old age, can keep women in confinement, and can kick them on their buttocks, but never runs after women. Let me go to the blackmouthed Amin and tell him that shall not be effected by me. Have I any power to go out in the town ? Whenever the nasty fellows of the neighbourhood see me, they follow me as the Phinge (a kind of bird) does the crow.

(Aside, a song*)*

Whenever I sit down to reap the rice in the field. Her eyes immediately come before my sight.

Enter a COWHERD

Cowherd. Saheb, have not insects attacked thine Indigo twigs ?

Podi. Let them attack thy mother and sister, thou degenerate fool. Leave off thy mother's breast, go to the house of Death ; go to Colmighata, to the grave.[1]

Cowherd. I have also sent orders to prepare a pair of weeding knives.

Enter a LATYAL *or* CLUB-MAN

Oh ! the Latyal of the Indigo Factory !

(The Cowherd flies off swiftly

Latyal. Thou, Oh lotus-faced, hast made the tooth-powder[2] very dear.

Podi. *(Seeing the silver chain round the waist of the Latyal)* Your chain is very grand.

Club-man. Don't you know, my dear, wherefrom comes the clothing of the bailiff and the dress of the nautch girl ?

Podi. I wanted a black calf from you a long while ago, but yet you did not give it me. My brother, I shall not ask from thee any more.

Club-man. Dear lotus-faced, don't be angry with me. To-morrow, we shall go to plunder the place called Shamanagara ; and if I can get a black calf, I shall immediately keep that in your cow-house. When I shall return with my fish, I shall pass by your shop.

(Exit the Club-man

Podi. The Planter Sahebs do nothing but rob. If the ryots be loaded in a less degree with exactions they can preserve their lives ; and you can get your Indigo. The Munshies of Shamanagara entreated most earnestly to get ten portions of land free. "The Thief never hears the instructions of Religion." The wretched elder Saheb remained quiet having burnt his wretched tongue.

1. All these signify that "let Death come upon thee."
2. **Tooth-powder** : made of tobacco ashes.

Enter four BOYS *of a Native Pathshala*[1]

Four Boys. (keeping down their mats and expressing great mirth with the clapping of their hands.)

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?
My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?
My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

Podi. My child Kesoba, I am your aunt. Never use such words to me.

Four Boys. (Dance together) My dear Moyrani ; where is your Indigo ?

Podi. My dear Ambika, I am your sister ; don't use me in this manner.

Four Boys. (Dance round Podi)

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?
My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?
My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

Enter NOBIN MADHAB

Podi. What a shame is this, that I exposed my face to the elder Babu.

(Exit Podi, covering herself with a veil

Nobin. Wicked and profligate woman. *(To the children)* You are playing on the road still ; it is now too late, go home now.

(Exit Four Boys

Ah ! I can within five days establish a school for these boys, if only the tyranny of the Indigo be once stopped. The Inspector of this part of the country is a very good man. How very good a man becomes, if only learning be acquired. He is young ; but in his conversation he has the experience of years. He has a great desire that a school be established in this country. I am also not unwilling to give money for this purpose ; the large Bungalow which I have, can be a good place for a school ; moreover, what is more happy than to

1. **Pathshala** : village primary school of Bengal.

have the boys of one's own country to read and write and study in his own house, this is the true success of wealth and of labour. Bindu Madhab brought the Inspector with him, and it is his desire, that all with one mind try to establish the school. But observing the unfortunate state of the country, he was obliged to keep his design to himself. How very mild, quiet, goodnatured, and wise is he become now ! Wisdom in younger years is as beautiful as the fruits in a small plant. In reading of the sorrow, which my brother has expressed in his letter, even the hard stone is melted and the heart of the Indigo Planter would become soft. I cannot now rise up to go home, I do not see any means ; I was not able to bring one of the five to my side, and cannot find where they are taken away. I think Torapa will never speak a lie. It shall be a great loss to us, if the other four give evidence ; especially as I was not able to make the least preparation ; and again the Magistrate is a great friend of Mr. Wood.

Enter a RYOT *two* PEADAS *or Bailiffs of the Police, and a* TAIDGIR *of the Indigo Factory*

Ryot. My elder Babu, preserve my two children ; there is no one else to feed them. Last year, I gave eight carts' load of Indigo, and did not get a single pice for that, and also I am bound, as with cords, for the remainder. Again they will take me to Andrabad.

Guard. The advance-money of the Indigo and the marking nut of the washerman behave alike ; as soon as they come in contact, they become mostly joined. You villain come, you must first go to the Dewanji ; your elder Babu also shall come to this end.

Ryot. Come, I don't fear this. I would rather have my body rot in the jail than any more prepare the Indigo of that white man. My God ! my God ! none looks on the poor *(weeps)*. My elder Babu, give my children food ; they

brought me from the field ; and I was not able to see them once.

(Exit all, except Nobin Madhab

Nobin. What injustice ! These two children will die without food in the same way as the new-born young of the hare suffers when the hare is in the hand of the savage hunters.

Enter RAY CHURN

Ray. Had not my brother caught hold of me, I would have put a stop to her *(Refers to Podi)* breathing, I would have killed her ; then, at the utmost, I had been hanged for six months.[1] That villain !

Nobin. Ray Churn, where art thou going ?

Ray. Our mistress ordered me to call Putakur[2]. The stupid Podi told me that the bailiff will bring the summons tomorrow.

(Exit Ray Churn

Nobin. Oh ! Oh ! oh ! That which never took place in this family has now come to pass. My father is very peaceful, honest, and of a sincere mind, knows not what disputes and enmities are, never goes out of the village, trembles with fear at the name of Court affairs, and even shed tears when he read the letter. If he is to go to Indrabad, he will turn mad ; and if, to the jail, he will throw himself into the stream. Ah, such are the misfortunes that are to fall on him while I, his son, am living : My mother is not so much afraid as my father is, she does not lose hope at once ; with a firm ´mind she is now invoking God. My dear-eyed is become, as it were, the deer in my volcano ; she is become mad with fear and anxiety.[3] Her father died in an Indigo Factory and her fear now, is

1. This expression "had been hanged **for** six months" is only used sarcastically.

2. **Putakur** : the priest.

3. That is, the deer feels disquieted when exposed in a volcano so is my mate troubled by the many anxieties in my mind.

lest the same happens to her husband. How many sides am I to keep quiet ; is it proper to fly off with the whole family or, is it not right that to do good unto others is the highest virtue ? I shall not turn aside hastily. I see, I am not able to do any good to Shamanagara ; still, what work is there which is beyond the power of exertion ? Let me see what I can do.

Enter two PUNDITS

First P. My child, is the house of Goluk Chunder Bose in this quarter ? I heard from my uncle, that person is very honest—the grandeur of the Bose family.

Nobin. (Bowing before him) Sir, I am his eldest son.

First P. Yes ! Yes ! very honest : To have such a son is not the result of a little virtue.

To such a family is an unworthy child never born.
Can a piece of glass be found in a bed of rubies ?

What is said in the Shastras never proves wrong. Haven't you followed the sloka brother, Tarkalankar ?[1] *(Takes snuff.)*

Second P. We had been invited by Babu Arabindu, of Sougandha. To-day, we remain in the house of Goluk Chunder ; and shall do good unto you.

Nobin. This is my great fortune. Sirs, come by this way.

(Exit all

1. **Tarkalankar :** a title of Sanskrit logicians.

THIRD ACT

FIRST SCENE

Before the Factory in Begunbari

Enter GOPI CHURN *and a* NATIVE JAILOR

[*Khalasi, i. e. Warder*]

Gopi. As long as your share is not less, you donot care to bring anything to my notice.

Jailor. Can that filth be digested by one person eating the whole ? I told him, if you eat, give a part to the Dewanji ; but he says what power has your Dewan ? He is not so much the son of a Keot, *(shoe-maker caste)* that he shall direct the Saheb like unto one leading a monkey.

Gopi. Very well, now go. I shall show that Kaot what a club he is. I shall show how strong the son of a Kaot may be.

(Exit Khalasi

The fellow has got so much power through the authority of the younger Saheb. I shall also say it is a very easy thing for one to carry on his work, if his master be the husband of his sister. The elder Saheb becomes very angry at this word. But the fellow is very angry with me ; at every word, he shows me the Shamchand. That day he kicked me with his stocking on. These few days, I see that his temper is become somewhat mild towards me ; since Goluk Bose is summoned, he has expressed a little kindness. A person is considered very expert by the Saheb, if he can bring about the ruin of many. "One becomes a good Physician by the death of one hundred patients."

(Seeing Mr. Wood)

Here he is coming ; let me first soften up his mind by giving him some information about the Boses.

Enter MR. WOOD

Saheb, tears have now come out of the eyes of Nobin Bose. Never was he punished more severely. His garden is taken

away from him ; the small pieces of land he had are all included among the lands which are given to Gadai Pod (a low caste), his cultivation is nearly put a stop to, his barns are all become empty, and he was sent into Court twice ; in the midst of so many troubles, he still stood firm ; but now he has fallen down.

Planter: That rascal was not able to do any thing in Shamanagara.

Gopi. Saheb, the Munshis came to him ; but he told them, "my mind is not at rest now, my limbs are become powerless through weeping for my father, and I am, as it were, become mad." On observing the wretched condition of Nobin, about seven or eight ryots of Shamanagara have all given up, and all are doing exactly as your Honour is ordering them.

Planter. You are a very good Dewan, and you have formed a very good plan.

Gopi. I knew Goluk Bose to be a coward, and that if he were obliged to go to Court, he would turn mad. As Nobin has affection for his father, he will of course be punished ; and it was for this reason that I gave the advice to make the old man the defendant. Also, the plan which your Honour formed was not the less good. Our Indigo cultivation has been nearly made on the sides of his tank ; thus laying the snake's eggs in his heart.

Planter. With one stone two birds have been killed ; ten bigahs of land are cultivated with Indigo, and also that fool is punished. He shed much tears, saying that if Indigo be planted near the tank we shall be obliged to leave our habitation ; but I said, to cultivate Indigo in one's habitation is to the best advantage.

Gopi. And the fool brought an action in the Court, on hearing that reply.

Planter. That will be of no effect ; that Magistrate is a very good man. If the case turn into a civil one it will never be concluded in less than five years. That Magistrate is a

great friend of mine. Just see, by the new Act, the four rascals were thrown into prison only on the strength of your evidence. This Act is the become brother of the Shamchand.

Gopi. Saheb, in order that those four ryots might not suffer loss in their cultivation, Nobin Bose has given his own plough, kine, and harrow for the ploughing of their lands ; and he is trying his utmost that their families might not suffer great trouble.

Planter. When he is required to plough his land, for which advances are allowed, he says, "my ploughs and kine are less in number." He is very wicked ; and now he is very well punished. Dewan, now you have done very well, and now I see work may be carried on by you without loss.

Gopi. Saheb, it is your own favour. My desire is that advances should be increased very year. But that cannot be done by me alone ; some confident Amin and Khalasis are necessary. Can the Indigo cultivation be improved by those who, for the sake of two rupees, occasioned the loss of the produce of three bigahs of lands ?

Planter. I have understood it, the rascally Amin occasioned this confusion.

Gopi. Saheb, Chunder Goldar is a new-comer here, and has not taken any advance. The Amin once, according to regular custom, threw one rupee on his ground as an advance. That person, in order to be allowed to return that rupee, even shed tears and came along with the Amin as far as Ruthtollah, begging him earnestly to take it back. There he met with Nilkanta Babu, who has chosen the profession of an Attorney immediately after leaving the College.

Planter. I know that rascal ; he it is, who writes everything concerning me in the newspapers.

Gopi. Their papers can never stand before yours, can by no means bear a comparison ; and moreover, they are as the earthen bottles for cooling water compared to the jars of

Dacca.[1] But to bring the newspapers within your influence, great expense has been incurred. That takes place according to time ; as is said,

"According to circumstance, the friend becomes an enemy :"

"The lame ass is sold at the price of the horse."

Planter. What did Nilkanta do ?

Gopi. He sharply rebuked the Amin ; and the Amin with no little shame brought back that one rupee, with two rupees more, from Goldar's house. Chunder Goldar would have been able very easily to supply the Indigo for three or four bigahs. Is this the work of a servant ? If I can conduct the Dewanny and the business of the Amin ; then this kind of ingratitude can be stopped.

Planter. Great wickedness this is ; evident ingratitude.

Gopi. Saheb, grant pardon for this bad conduct ; the Amin brought his own sister to our younger Saheb's room.

Planter. Yes : Yes : I know ; that rascal and Podi corrupted our young Saheb. I must give that wicked fool some instruction very soon. Send him to my sitting room.

(Exit Mr. Wood

Gopi. Just see, in whose hand the monkey plays best. The Kayasth is one rogue, and the crow another.

"Now have you fallen under the stroke of the Khait (Kayasth), where even the grand-father of the sister's husband loses the game ! "

1. **Jars of Dacca** : Earthen jars of Dacca, a city of India, (now in East Pakistan), are proverbially large—Ed.

SECOND SCENE

The bed room of Nobin Madhab

NOBIN MADHAB *and* SOIRINDRI *sitting*

Soirindri. Lord of my soul, what is preferable, whether the ornament or my father-in-law ? That, for which thou art wandering about day and night ; that, for which thou hast left thy food and sleep ; that, for which thou art shedding tears incessantly ; that, for which thy pleasant face has been depressed ; and that which has occasioned thy headache ; my dear Lord, can I not for that give away this my trifling ornament ?

Nobin. My dear, you can, with ease, give ; but with what face shall I take it ? What great troubles the husband is to undergo in order to dress his wife ; he has to swim in the rapid stream, to throw himself into the deep ocean, engage in battles, to climb mountains, to live in the wilderness, and to go before the mouth of the tiger. The husband adorns his wife, with so much trouble ; am I so very foolish as to take away the ornament from the very same wife. O my lotus-eyed, wait a little. Let me see this day, and if, finally I cannot procure it, then I shall take your ornaments afterwards.

Soirindri. O my heart's love ! we are very unfortunate now ; and who is there that shall give you on loan the sum of Rs. 500/- at such a time. I am entreating you again, take my ornaments and those of our youngest Bou, and try to procure money from a banker. Observing your troubles the lotus-like young Bou is become sad.

Nobin. Ah ! my sweet-faced, the cruel words which you used struck on my heart like arrows of fire. Our youngest Bou, she is a girl ; good clothes and beautiful ornaments are objects of pleasure to her. What understanding has she now ? What does she know of family business ? As our young Bipin cries

and relations, the musical entertainments of the Voishnabas,[1] and also pleasant theatrical representations. I have expended such large sums, and even given as donations one hundred Rupees. Being so rich, now I am obliged to take away the ornaments of my wife and the wife of my young brother. What affliction ! God, thou didst give these, and thou hast taken them again. Then, what sorrow ?

Soirindri. My dear when I see you weep, my life itself weeps *(tears in her eyes)*. Was there so much pain in my fate ; am I thus destined to see such distress in my Lord ? Do not prevent me any more. *(Takes out the amulet)*.

Nobin. My heart bursts when I see your tears *(rubbing the tears)*. Stop my dear, of the moon-like face, stop *(taking hold of her hands)*. Keep these one day more, let me see.

Soirindri. My dear, what further resource is left ? Do, as I tell you now. If it be so destined, there shall be many ornaments afterwards *(aside sneezing)* ; *true, true.*[2] Aduri is coming.

Enter ADURI *with two letters*

Aduri. I can't say whence the letters came ; but my mistress told me to give them to you.

(Exit Aduri, after giving the letters

Nobin. It shall be known by those letters whether your ornaments are to be taken or not. *(Opens the first letter.)*

Soirindri. Read it aloud.

Nobin. (Reads the letter).

1. **Voishnabas** i. e. Vaishnavas : the followers of the religion called Vaishnavism (after lord Vishnu; a Hindu god) founded by Sri Chaitanya of Bengal. Non-voilence and Love are the chief tenets of this religion which commands a large number of followers even now.—Ed.

2. **True, true** : It was, and yet is, a custom among the female folk of the rural Bengal to utter these words as soon as somebody sneezes.—Ed.

Dear Friend,—This is to make it known to you, that to give a sum of money to you at present is only to make a return of favours. My mother has taken leave of this world yesterday ; and the day of her first funeral obsequies is very near. This have I written yesterday. The tobacco is not yet sold.

"I am, yours,
Ghonosyam Mukherji"

What misfortune is this ! Is this my assistance on the funeral obsequies of the honorable Mukherji ? Let me see what deadly weapon hast thou brought. *(Opens the letter.)*

Soirindri. My dear, it is very miserable to fall into despair after entertaining high hopes. Let the letter remain as it is.

Nobin. (Reads the letter).

Honored Sir,—I received your last letter, and noted the contents thereof. Be it known to you that your well-being is my well-being. I have already collected the sum of three hundred rupees, and shall take that along with me to you to-morrow. As to the remaining one hundred I shall clear that on the coming month. The great benefit, which you have bestowed on me, excites me to give some interest.

"I am, your most obdt. Servt.
Gokul Krishna Palita"

Soirindri. I think God has turned his face towards us, now, let me go, and give this information to our youngest Bou.

(Exit Soirindri

Nobin. (Aside) My life [wife] is, as it were, the idol of simplicity ; it is a piece of straw in a rapid stream. Let me take my father now to Indrabad, depending on this ; as to the future it shall be according to Fate. With me I have one hundred and fifty Rupees. As to the tobacco, if I had kept it for a month more, I would have sold that for the sum of five hundred Rupees ; but what can I do ? I am obliged to give it for three hundred and fifty Rupees ; since I have to pay much for the Officers of the Court ; and also heavy expenses for going to and returning from the place. If on account of this false case my father is

imprisoned then am I certain that the destruction of this land is very near. What a brutal Act is passed ! But, what is the fault of the Act ; or of those who passed the Act ? What misery can the country suffer if those, who are to carry out the Act, do it with impartiality ? Ah, by this Act how many persons are suffering in prison-houses without a fault ! It bursts the heart to see the miseries of their wives and children; the pots for boiling rice on the hearths are remaining as they are ; the several kinds of grain in their yards are being dried up; their kine in the rooms are all remaining bound in their places ; the cultivation of the fields is not fully carried out, the seeds are not sown, and the wild grass in the rice fields is not cut off. What further prospects are there in the present year ? All are crying aloud, with the exclamation: "Where is my lord ? Where is my father ?" Some Magistrates are dispensing justice with proper consideration ; in their hands this Act is not become the rod of death. Ah ! had all Magistrates been as just as the Magistrate of Amarnagara is, then could the harrow fall on the ripe grain and the locusts destroy the fields ? Had that been the case, would I ever have been thrown into so many dangers ? O, thou Lieutenant Governor ! Hadst thou engaged men of the same good character as thou hadst enacted laws, then the country would never have been miserable. O, thou Governor of the land ! Hadst thou made such a regulation, that every plaintiff, when his case is proved false, shall be put in prison, then the jail of Amarnagara would have been crowded with Indigo Planters ; and they would never have been so very powerful. Our Magistrate is transferred, but our case is to continue here to the end ; and that will occasion our ruin. *(Enter Sabitri*

Sabitri. If you are to give up all the ploughs, is it that even then you are to take the advance-money ? Sell all your ploughs and kine, and engage in trade ; we shall enjoy ourselves with the profits that shall accrue from that. We can no longer endure this.

Nobin. Mother, I also, have the same desire. Only, I wait till Bindu is engaged in some service. If we leave off ploughing the land, it will be impossible for us to maintain the family and it is for this reason that we have still, with so much trouble, kept these ploughs.

Sabitri. How shalt thou go with this headache ? Oh ! Oh ! was such Indigo produced in this land ; Oh ! this hell of Indigo plantation ! *(Places her hand on Nobin's head.)*

Enter REBOTI

Reboti. My mother ! Where shall I go ! What shall I do ? They have done what ! Why is it that through ill fortune I brought her. Having brought one who now belongs to another family, I am become unable to preserve propriety. My eldest Babu ! Preserve me ; my life is on the point of bursting out. Bring me Khetromany ; bring me my puppet of gold.

Sabitri. What has happened ?

Reboti. My Khetromany went to fetch water in the evening from Das's tank along with Panchu's mother: while she was returning through the forest path, four club-men kidnappd her. That devil of the woman, Podi, was there to point her out, and to flee afterwards. Oh, eldest Babu ! What a terrible thing I did by bringing down my daughter here ! She is now a member of another family ! She is carrying. Oh, how I dreamt of celebrating it !

Sabitri. What misfortune ! These destroyers can do all things. Ye are taking by force the pieces of ground of men, their grain, their kine and calves. By the force of clubs, ye are cultivating Indigo, and the people are doing your work with cries and sobbings. But what is this—the violation of the modesty of women !

Reboti. My mother ! I am preparing the Indigo, taking only half the food. Those bigahs which they had marked, on

them I worked. When Ray works, he weeps with deep sighs ; if he hear of this my work, he would become, as it were, insane.

Nobin. Where is Sadhu now ?

Reboti. He is sitting outside, and is weeping.

Nobin. To a woman of good family, constancy in faithfulness to her husband is, as it were, the loadstone ; and how very beautiful does she appear (ramani ki ramaniya) when she is decorated with the ornament ! Is a woman of a good family carried off, when the Bhima-like[1] [son of] Svaropur of my father is still in existence ? At this very moment shall I go. I shall see what manner of injustice this is. The Indigo frog can never sit on the white waterlily-like constancy of a woman.

(Exit Nobin

Sabitri. Chastity is the store of gold which is given by Providence ; it is so valuable that it makes the beggar woman, a queen. If you can rescue this jewel before it is soiled, from the hands of the Indigo monkey, then shall I say that you have actually answered the purpose of my being your mother. Such injustice I never heard of. Now, Ghose Bou, let us go outside.

THIRD SCENE

Mr. Rogue's Chamber

MR. ROGUE *sitting*

Enter PODI MOYRANI *and* KHETROMANY

Khetro. My aunt, don't speak of such things to me; I can give up my life, but my chastity never ; cut me in pieces, burn me in the fire, throw me into the water, and bury me under ground, but as to touching another man that can I never do. What will my husband think ?

1. **Bhima** : a mythical hero of the great Indian epic Mahabharata.

Podi. Where is your husband now, and where are you ! This shall no one know. Within this night, I shall bring you back with me to your mother.

Khetro. Very well the husband may not know it—but God above will know it, and I shall never be able to throw dust in His eyes. Like the fire of the brick-kiln it will still burn within my breast, and the more my husband shall love me for my constancy, the more my soul shall be tortured. Openly or secretly, I never can take a paramour.

Planter Rogue. Padma ! why don't you get her down here to the bed ?

Podi. My child, come, come to the Saheb. Whatever you have to say, say to him. To speak to me is like crying in the wilderness.

Planter Rogue. To speak to me is throwing pearls at the hog's feet. Ha, ha, ha, we Indigo Planters, are become the companions of Death. Right in our presence our men have burnt down villages. Women died in the fire with babies at their breasts. Have we ever shown any compassion ? Can our Factories remain, if we have pity ? By nature, we are not bad ; our evil disposition has increased by Indigo cultivation. Before, we felt sorrow in beating one man ; now, we can beat ten women with the Ramkant (leather strap), making them senseless ; and immediately after, we can, with great laughter, take our dinner or supper. I like women more. They give me stimulus for my work at the Indigo factory. Every thing—big or small—has lost itself in the waters of the ocean. Podi, are you not strong enough to drag her down to me ?

Podi. Khetromany, my sweet little daughter, be seated on his bed. The Saheb promises you a Lady's gown.

Khetro. Hell with your gown ! Better to wear a gunny bag. Auntie, I feel very thirsty. Please accompany me to my home so that I can quench my thirst. Oh ! I fear my mother has committed suicide by putting noose round her neck by this

time, my father has broken his skull by a stroke of the axe, and my uncle is rushing about like a wild buffalo. I am the only child not only to my parents but also to my uncles. Please let me go, send me to my home. Auntie Podi, I am at your feet and ready to swallow your excretions. Oh Mummy, I die, I die of thirst.

Planter Rogue. There is drinking water in that earthen pot, give her some.

Khetro. Being a Hindu girl how can I drink water from a Saheb's pot ? The club-men have touched me, I cannot even enter my house before I wash myself clean.

Podi. *(Aside)* Religion or caste I have none. *(Openly)* What can I do, my daughter ? It is very hard to extricate oneself from a Saheb's clutches. Oh, younger Saheb ! let Khetro go home to-day. She will come some other time.

Planter Rogue. Then you stay with me and enjoy yourself. Get out of the room you damned hoar. If I am strong I shall subdue her, or I shall send her back with you. I fear you created some obstacles, and did not allow her to come on her own; that is why club-men had to be engaged to bring her here. Did I ever engage club-men of our Indigo Factory to such jobs? You untruthful Podi !

Podi. You call your Koli. It seems she is dearer to you now.

(Exit Podi

Khetro. Auntie ! Oh Auntie ! please do not go away. Oh ! you leave me alone in the pit of a deadly serpent? I am horrified, trembling with fear, my body is quaking, my lips are perched with thirst.

Planter Rogue. Dear ! Dear ! come, come here *(holds both her hands).*

Khetro. Oh, Saheb ! you are my father, my father ! Let me go, please send me home with Auntie Podi. The night is very dark, I shall not be able to go alone *(tries to extricate herself)*. You are my father, my father ! If you touch me I shall be an out-caste.

Planter Rogue. I like to be the father of your child ! I am not swayed by any pleadings. Come to my bed or I shall burst open your belly with a kick.

Khetro. Oh Saheb ! have pity. I am now carrying, and my child will die.

Planter Rogue. You will not behave yourself unless you are stripped *(catches her outer clothes)*.

Khetro. Oh Saheb ! I am your mother. Do not make me naked, you are my son. Please let go my clothes. *(She makes a scratch on Rogue's hand by her finger nails.)*

Planter Rogue. Infernal bitch ! *(takes a cane and brandishing it)* Now I shall make an end of your false chastity.

Khetro. Finish me all at once. I shan't protest. Let a sword be thrust on my heart so that I go straight to heaven. You, son of a beast who live on excretions, you son of a barren woman, let two of your dear ones die simultaneously. Touch me again, and I'll scratch your hand, and bite your hand, till it comes off in bits. Haven't you your own mother and sister ? Why don't you go and make them naked ? You, brother of a man who corrupts his own sister, beat me, finish me all at once. I cannot stand any more.

Planter Rogue. Shut up you sinful woman, no more tall talks from a low-bred. *(Lands a blow on her belly and pulls her by the hair)*.

Khetro. Where is my father : Oh my mother ! Behold your Khetro dies. (She trembles with fear)

(Breaking through the window enter NOBIN *and* TORAPA *)*

Nebin. (Helping Khetro's hair from Rogue's grip) Dehumanised Indigo Planter of evil disposition ! Is this the sample of your Christian asceticism, your Christian kindness, humility and manners ? Such rude behaviour to a poor helpless girl, going to be a mother !

Torapa. The brother of my wife looks like a wooden doll —speechless now. Oh, Elder Babu ! has he got a conscience

that will follow your moral preachings ? If he is a mad dog, I am the right whip. If he makes a face, I have a strong fist. *(He holds Rogue by his neck and slaps him on his face.)* If you cry aloud, I shall send you to hell. *(gags him.)* A thief may have many opportunities to steal, but an honest man also has his day. You have beaten us so often and now it is our turn *(pulls him by the ear)*.

Nobin. Have no fears, Khetro. Arrange your clothes. *(Khetro arranges her clothes.)* Torapa, gag him so that he may not shout. Let me first escape with Khetro on my shoulders. When I go past the area of pig raisers, you let the Saheb go and run for your safety. It is very difficult to travel by the bank of the river. My whole body is torn by thorns. The people there are in deep sleep by this time, but even if they remain alert, they won't create any trouble for you, when they come to know your mission. Then you meet me in my house, and tell me all about your escape from Indrabad and your whereabouts now.

Torapa. I will swim across the stream to my house, this night. What more shalt thou hear of my fate ; I broke down the window of the Attorney's stable, and immediately ran off to the Zemindary of Babu Bosonto, and then, in the night came to my wife and children. This Planter has stopped every thing ; has he left any means for men to live by ploughing ? How very terrible are the thrusts of the Indigo ? Again, the advice is given to betray you. *(To Rogue)* Now, Sir, where are your kicks with your shoes on, and your beating on the head ? *(Thrusts him with his knees)*.

Nobin. Torapa, what is the use of beating him ? We ought not to be cruel, because they are so ; I am going.

(Exit Nobin, with Khetromany

Torapa. Do you want to show such ill-usage and bad conduct [to these Boses]? Speak to your old father (Mr. Wood) and carry on your business by mutual consent ; how

long shall your force of hand continue ? You shall not be able to do anything, when the ryots shall fly. There is no abuse more horrid than to say, Die ! When the ryots abscond *en masse* your factory will go to ruins. Just settle our eldest Babu's account of the last year ; and take what he consents to sow of Indigo in the present year. It is owing to you that they have fallen into a state of confusion. It is not merely to load one with advances, but cultivation is necessary. Good evening, our young Saheb. Now, I go.

(Throws him about, lying on his back, and flies off.

Plunter Rogue. By Jove ! Beaten to jelly !

FOURTH SCENE

The Hall in the House of Goluk Basu

Enter SABITRI

Sabitri. (With a deep sigh.) O thou cruel Magistrate ! why didst not thou also give me a summons ? I would have gone to the Zillah with my husband and my child ; that would have been far better than remaining in this desert. Ah ! my husband always remains in the house, never goes out to another village even on invitation. Is he destined to suffer so much ? The peadahs taking him away, and he himself to go to the jail. Bhagavati[1], my mother ! was there so much in thy mind ? Ah, he says that he can never sleep but in a room very long and broad ; he eats only the boiled Atapa rice[2] ; he takes the food prepared by no other hand but that of the eldest Bou. Ah ! he brought blood out of his breast by severe slaps ; he made his eyes swollen by tears ; and at the same time he took his leave, he said "this is my going

1. Hindu Goddess.

2. When the rice is cleansed from its husks by being placed in the sun, instead of being boiled, it is called the Atapa rice.

to the side of the Ganges[1]" *(weeps)*. Nobin says, "Mother, call on Bhagavati. I must return home having gained my object and bring him also." Ah ! the face of my son, like unto that of gold, is blackened ; what great troubles for the collection of money ! Wandering about without rest, his brain is become like a whirlpool. Lest I give away the ornaments of the Bous, my son encourages me, saying, "My mother, what want of money ? What large sum will be necessary for this case ?" How did my child grieve, when my ornaments were given in mortgage for our suit on small portions of land, said "as soon as I get a small sum of money, I shall immediately bring back the ornaments". My son has courage in his tongue, and tears in his eyes. My dear Nobin, in this heat of the sun, went to Indrabad ; and I, a great sinner, remained confined in my room. Is this the life thy mother should spend ?

Enter SOIRINDRI

Soirindri. Mother, it is now too late. Now bathe. It is our unfortunate destiny : else, why shall such an occurrence come to pass ?

Sabitri. (With tears) No my daughter, as long as my Nobin does not return, I shall never give rice and water to my body. Who shall serve food to my son ?

Soirindri. His brother has a lodging house there, and they have a Brahmin cook ; there will be no disturbance. You had better come and bathe.

Enter SARALOTA *with a cup of oil*

Young Bou, you had better rub the oil on her body, and make her bathe, and bring her to the cook-room. Let me go to prepare the place.

(Exit Soirindri

1. That is, leave for ever.

(Saralota rubs the oil on her mother-in-law's body)

Sabitri. My parrot[1] is become silent ; my daughter has no more words in her mouth ; she is faded like a stale flower. Ah ! Ah ! for how long have I not seen Bindu Madhab ? I am waiting in expectation that the College will be closed, and my son will come home. But this danger is come. *(Applying her hand on Saralota's chin)* Ah, the mouth of my dear one is dry, I think you have not yet taken any food. While I have fallen into this danger, when shall I examine, whether any have taken their food or not ! Let me bathe, you go, and take some food. I am also going.

(Exit both

1. The word parrot here refers to Saralota. As the parrot [famous as a talking bird] is generally an object of fondness to persons, so Saralota was called a parrot, because she was much loved by her mother-in-law.

FOURTH ACT

FIRST SCENE

The Criminal Court of Indrabad

Enter MR. WOOD, MR. ROGUE, *the Magistrate, and an officer, sittting.* GOLUK CHUNDER, NOBIN MADHAB, BINDU MADHAB, *the Attorneys of the Plaintiff and the Defendant, the Agent, Nazir, a Bailiff, Servants, Ryots etc. standing*

Defendant's Attorney. May the prayer in this application be granted. *(Gives the application to the Sheristadar).*

Magistrate. Very well ; read it. *(Speaks with Mr. Wood and laughs).*

Sheristadar. (To the Defendant's Attorney). You have written here what equals the length of the Ramayana. Can the petition be read without its being in abstract ? *(Turns to another page of the application).*

Magistrate. (Having spoken with Mr. Wood, and concealing his laughter.) Read clearly.

Sheristadar. In the absence of the defendant and his attorneys, the evidence is already taken from the witnesses of the plaintiff. We pray that the witnesses of the plaintiff be again called.

Plaintiff's Attorney. My Lord, it is true that attorneys are given to lying, deceiving and forgery ; they easily forge and tell lies, and are incessantly engaged in immoral action. Leaving their wives, they spend their time in the 'blissful abode' of prostitues. The Zemindars hate the attorneys ; but for effecting their special purposes, they call them, and give them a seat on their couch. My Lord, the very profession of the Attorneys is a cheating one. But the Attorneys of the Indigo Planters can never deceive. The Indigo Planters are Christians ; falsehood is accounted a great sin in the Christian Religion. Stealing, licentiousness, murder, and other actions

of that nature are also looked upon as hateful in that religion. Not only taking evil actions into consideration, even forming evil designs in the mind dooms a man to burn in the fire of hell. The main aim of the Christian Religion is to show kindness, to forgive, to be mild, and to do good unto others ; so, it is by no means probable that the Indigo Planters, who follow such a true and pure religion, ever give false evidence. My Lord, we do serve such Indigo Planters ; we have reformed our character according to theirs, and even, if we desire, we can, by no means, teach the witness anything false ; since if the Sahebs, the lovers of truth, find the least fault in their servants, they punish them according to the rules of justice. The Amin of the Factory, the witness of the defendant, is an example of that. Because he deprived the ryot of his advances, the kind Saheb drove him from his office ; and being angry on account of the cries of the poor ryot, he also beat him severely.

Wood, the Planter. (*To the Magistrate*) Extreme provocation ! Extreme provocation !

Plaintiff's Attorney. My Lord, many questions were put to my witnesses ; had they been witnesses who were prepared ones (perjured) they would have been caught by those very questions. The lawyers have said, "The Judge is as the advocate of the defendant," consequently, the questions to be put by the defendant, are already asked by your Honour. Therefore, there is no probability of any advantage to the defendant, if the witnesses be brought here again ; but on the other hand, it will prove very disadvantageous to them. Honored Sir, the witnesses are poor people who live by holding the plough. By the plough they maintain their wives and children ; their fields become ruined if they do not remain there for the whole day ; so much so, that because it proves a loss to them if they come home, their wives bring boiled rice and refreshments bound in handkerchiefs to them in the fields and make them eat that. It proves an entire loss to the ryots to come away from the fields for one day ; and at such

a time, if they be brought to such a distant part of the Zillah by summons, then the labours of the whole year will go for nothing. Honored Sir, Honored Sir, do as you think just.

Magistrate. I don't see any reason for that *(as advised by Mr. Wood).* There seems no necessity for that.

Defendant's Attorney. My Lord, the ryots of no village take the advances of the Indigo Planters with their full consent. The Indigo Planter, accompanied by the Amins and servants, or his Dewan, goes on horse-back to the field, marks off the best pieces of land, and orders the preparation of the Indigo. Then the owner of the land brings the ryots to the Factory, and having made known to them the particulars of the matter, takes their signatures for the advances. The ryots, taking the money in advance, come home with tears in their eyes ; and the day on which any of them comes home with the money, his house becomes filled, as it were, with the tears of persons weeping for the death of a relative or friend. On the payment of the Indigo to the Indigo Planters, even if the latter have something still to pay to the farmers above the sum of the advances as the price of that article, yet they keep it in their Account-books that the farmers have still something to pay. The ryots, when they have once taken the advance, will suffer pain for not less than seven generations. The sorrow, which the ryots endure in the preparation of the Indigo, is known only to themselves and the Great God, the Preserver of the poor. Whenever some sit together, they converse about the advances and inform each other of their respective sums ; and also try how to save themselves. They have no necessity for forming plans and mutually taking the advice of each other. Of themselves they are become as mad as the dog who received a blow on the head. The witnesses gave evidence that the ryots were willing to prepare Indigo, but that the person who has engaged me had, by advice and intimidation, stopped their engaging in the preparation of Indigo. This is a very striking and an evident forgery. Honored Sir, once more bring them

before the Bench, and your servant will by two questions disclose the falsity of their evidence. I do acknowledge that Nobin Madhab Bose, the son of Goluk Chunder Bose, who engaged me tried his utmost to extricate the helpless ryots from the hands of the giant-like Indigo Planters. I do acknowledge this. He also proved himself successful in stopping the tyranny of Mr. Wood, which is known fully by the case which was brought here for the burning of the village of Polaspore. But Goluk Chunder Bose is of a very peaceful character ; he fears the Indigo Planters more than the tigers, never engages in any quarrels ; at no time injures another, and even is not courageous enough to save another from danger. My Saheb, that Goluk Chunder Bose is a man of a good character, is known to all persons in the Zillah, and can be known even by enquiring of the Amlas of the Court.

Goluk. Honored Sir, the whole sum due for my Indigo of the last year was not paid ; still only through fear of coming into Court, I consented to take the advance for sixty bigahs of land. My eldest son said, "Father, we have other ways of living ; the loss in Indigo for one year or two might stop feasts and religious ceremonies, but will not produce want of food. But those who entirely depend on their ploughs ; what means have they ? Losing this case, if we be obliged again to engage in the Indigo cultivation, all will be obliged to do the same afterwards." He said this as a wise man ; and consequently I told him to make the Saheb, by entreaties and supplications, to agree to fifty bigahs. The Saheb said nothing, neither 'Yes' nor 'No' ; and secretly made preparations to bring me in my old age, to gaol. I know that the only way to get happiness is to keep the Sahebs contented ; the country is the Sahebs', the Judges are their brothers and friends ; and is it proper to do anything against them ? Extricate me, and I make this promise, that if I cannot prepare the Indigo from want of polughs and kine, I will annually give the Saheb Co.

Rs. 100 in the place of that. Am I a person to tutor the ryots ? Do I meet them ?

Defendant's Attorney. Honored Sir, of the four ryots who came as witnesses, one is of the Tikiri caste[1] ; he has no knowledge of what a plough is ; he has no lands and no rents to pay ; has no kine and no cow-house ; and this can be best known by proper examination. Kanai Torofdar is a ryot of a different village ; and as to our Babu, he has no acquaintance with him. For these reasons we do pray that these men be brought again. The legislators have said, before the decision, the defendant ought to be supplied with all proper means. Saheb, if this my prayer be granted, I shall have no more reasons for complaint.

Plaintiff's Attorney. Saheb.

Magistrate. *(Writes a letter).* Speak, Speak ; I am writing with my finger, not with my ears.

Plaintiff's Attorney. Saheb, if at this time, the ryots be brought here they will suffer great loss ; else, I, also, would have prayed for their being brought here again, since the offences of the defendant, which are already proved, may receive stronger confirmation. Sir, the bad character of Goluk Chunder Bose is known throughout the country ; he who benefits him, in return, receives injuries. The Indigo Planters crossing the immeasurable ocean have come to this land, and have brought out its secret wealth ; have done great benefit to the country, have increased the royal treasure, and have profited themselves. What place, besides the prison, can best befit a person who thus opposes the great actions of these noble men ?

Magistrate. *(Writes the address).* Chaprasi.

Chaprasi. Sir ! *(Comes to the Saheb).*

Magistrate. *(Advises with Mr. Wood).* Give this to Mrs.

1. **Tikiri Caste :** the class of day-labourers.

Wood. Tell the Khansamah, the Saheb, who is come here, will not go to-day.

Sheristadar. Sir, what orders are to be written ?

Magistrate. Let it remain within the *Nathi* or Court documents.

Sheristadar. *(Writes)* It is ordered that it remains pending within the *Nathi (signed by the Magistrate)*. Saheb, thou hast not yet made a signature on the orders to the reply of the defendant.

Magistrate. Read it.

Sheristadar. It is ordered, that the defendant is to give Rs. 200, or two persons as security, and that the subpoenas be sent to the truthful witnesses. *(The Magistrate gives the signature)*.

Magistrate. Bring the case of the robbery in Mirghan to the Court to-morrow.

(Exit Magistrate, Mr. Wood, Mr. Rogue, Chaprasi, and Bearers

Sheristadar. Nazir, take the security bond from the defendant properly.

(Exit Sheristadar, agent, the plaintiff's Attorney, the ryots

Nazir. *(To the Defendant's Attorney)*. How can we write now, while it is evening ; moreover, I am somewhat busy now.

Defendant's Attorney. *(speaks with the Nazir)*. They (i.e. the Boses) are great only in name. Not much wealth left. This amount was had by selling the jewellery.

Nazir. I have no estates, have no trade, nor lands for cultivation. This is my whole stock. It is for your sake only that I have agreed to take Rupees 100. Let us go to our lodging. Be careful that the Dewan does not hear this. They have been paid elsewhere.

(Exit all

SECOND SCENE

Indrabad : The Dwelling of Bindu Madhab

NOBIN MADHAB, BINDU MADHAB *and* SADHU *sitting*

Nobin. I am now obliged to go home. My mother will die as soon as she hears of this. What more shall I do now for you ? See that our father does not suffer great sorrow. I have now determined on leaving our habitation. I shall sell off everything, and send the money. Whoever wants any sum you will give him that.

Bindu. The Jailer does not want money ; only, for fear of the Magistrate, he does not allow the cooking Brahmin to be taken there.

Nobin. Give him money and also entreat him. Ah ! His body is old ; he had been without food for three days ! I explained to him, and entreated him greatly. He says, "Nobin, let three days pass and then shall I think whether I shall take food or not ; within these three days, I shall not take anything".

Bindu. I do not find any means how I can be able to make my father take some boiled rice. The hand which he has placed on his eyes from the time when the Magistrate, the slave of the Indigo Planters, ordered him to be kept in the prison, that hand he has not yet removed. The hand is filled with the tears ; and the place where he was made to sit down at first, is still that where he now is. Being entirely silent, and remaining weak in body and without power to move, he is become like a dead pigeon in this cagelike prison. This day is the fourth, and to-day I must make him take food. You had better go home, and I shall send a letter every day.

Nobin. O God, what great sorrow art thou giving to our father ! If they do allow you, my dear Bindu, to remain day and night in the prison ; then can I quietly go to our house.

Sadhu. Let me steal, and you bring me before the Court as a thief. I will make the confession ; they will put me in prison, then I will be best able to serve my master.

Nobin. O Sadhu, thou art the actual Sadhu (the honest man). Ah ! you are now very anxious on learning the deadly illness of Khetromany ; and the sooner I can take you home, the better.

Sadhu. *(Deep sigh)* My eldest Babu ! Shall I see my daughter on my return ? I have none other.

Bindu. If you make her take that draught which I gave you, she must be cured by that. The Doctor heard every particular of her disease, and gave that medicine.

Enter the Deputy Inspector

Dy. Inspector. Bindu Babu, Mr. Commissioner has written very urgently about releasing your father.

Bindu. There is no doubt the Lieutenant-Governor will grant him release.

Nobin. After what time can the notice of the release come ?

Bindu. It will not be more than fifteen days.

Dy. Inspector. The Deputy Magistrate of Amaranagara gave an order of imprisonment for six months to a certain Mooktyar according to this law, but he had to remain for sixteen days in the gaol.

Nobin. Shall such a time ever come, that the Governer, becoming friendly, will destroy the evil desires of the unfriendly Magistrate ?

Bindu. There is a God, the Lord of the Universe ; and he must do it. Sir, you had better start, for there is a long way to go.

(Exit Nobin, Bindu, and Sadhu

Dy. Inspector. Alas ! The two brothers burnt up by these anxieties have, as it were, become dead, while living. The order of release from the Lieutenant-Governor will be as the resto-

ration of life to them. Babu Nobin Chunder is of a brave spirit, does good to others, is very munificent, a great improver of learning, and also of a patriotic mind ; but the mist of the cruel Indigo Planters withered all his good qualities in the bud.

Enter the Pundit (a Sanskrit teacher) of the College

Welcome, Sir !

Pundit. My body is naturally somewhat of a warm nature. I cannot bear the sunshine. The heat of the sun makes me, as it were, mad in the months of March, April and May. I had a very severe head-ache for a few days ; and was not able to attend Bindu Madhab at all.

Dy. Inspector. The Vishnu Toila (a kind of oil) can do you some good. The oil is prepared for Babu Vishnu, and to-morrow I shall send some to your house.

Pundit. I am much obliged to you for that. A man of a healthy constitution becomes mad by teaching children ; such am I.

Dy. Inspector. Why don't we see our elder Pundit any more ?

Pundit. He is now trying some means to leave this doggish service. While his good son is making some acquisition of property, the family will be maintained like that of a king. It does not seem good for him now to go to and come from the college looking, with his books under his arm, like a bull yoked to the plough. He is now of age.

Re-enter BINDU MADHAB

Bindu. The Pundit is come.

Pundit. Did the sinful creature show so much injustice ? You did not hear it ; at Christmas he spent ten days continually in that Factory. The ryot is to have justice from him ! Can the Hindu celebrate his religious services before the Kazi (the Mahommedan judge).

Bindu. The decree of Providence.

Pundit. Whom did you appoint as Muktyar ?

Bindu. Pradhan Mullik.

Pundit. Why did you appoint him your Mukhtear ? It would have been better if you had engaged some other person. "All Gods are equal. To make a separation from the wicked, the village becomes empty."[1]

Bindu. The Commissioner has made a report to the Government recommending the release of my father.

Pundit. One is ashes and so is the other ; as is the Magistrate such is the Commissioner.

Bindu. Sir, you know not the Commissioner ; and therefore, you spoke thus of him. The Commissioner is very impartial, and is always desirous of the improvement of the natives.

Pundit. Whatever that be ; now if through the blessing of God your father be released, then all shall be well. In what condition is he in the gaol ?

Bindu. He is shedding tears day and night, and for the last three days has taken no food. Just now I shall go to the gaol, and shall make him happy by giving him this good news.

Enter a Chaprasi

Art thou a chaprasi of the gaol ?

Chaprasi. Sir, come quickly to the gaol. The Darogah has called you.

Bindu. Have you seen my father this day ?

Chaprasi. Come Sir. I cannot say anything.

Bindu. Come Sir *(to the Pundit)*. I don't suppose all good. I go.

(Exit Bindu Madhab and Chaprasi

Pundit. Yes ; let us all go. I think some bad accident has taken place.

(Exit Both

1. This is a proverb, signifying that one cannot separate the tares from the wheat.

THIRD SCENE

The Prison-House of Indrabad

The dead body of Goluk Chunder swinging, bound by his outer garment twisted like a rope ; the Darogah of the Gaol and the Jamadar sitting.

Darogah. Who is gone to call Babu Bindu Madhab ?

Jamadar. Manirodi is gone there. Till the Doctor comes, we cannot bring it down.

Darogah. Did not the Magistrate say, he will come here this day ?

Jamadar. No, Sir, he has four days more to come. At Sachigunge on Saturday, they have a Champagne-party and ladies' dance. Mrs. Wood can never dance with any other but our Saheb ; and I saw that when I was a bearer. Mrs. Wood is very kind ; through the influence of one letter, she got me the Jamadary of the jail.

Darogah. Ah ! Babu Bindu Madhab expressed great sorrow at his (father's) not eating food. When Babu Bindu sees this, he will quit life.

Enter BINDU MADHAB

All things are by the will of God.

Bindu. What is this ! What is this ! Ah ! ah ! My father is dead while bound above ground with a rope ! I was coming to try some means for his release. What sorrow ! *(places his own head on the breast of the dead body, then clasps the corpse, and weeps.)* Oh father ! Hast thou at once broken the ties of affection towards us ? Shalt thou no more praise Bindu before other men for his English education ? Calling Nobin Madhab by the name of "Bhima[1] of Svaropur" ; is

1. Bhima or Brikodar was the second brother of Yudhistira and the second son of Pandu (The Mahabharata). Bhima had a mighty

that now put at an end ?. You have now at last made your peace with Bipin with whom you had so often quarrelled over the eldest Bou saying : "She is my mother, my mother." Ah, as in the case of a heron and its mate with their young ones flying in the air in search of food, if the heron be killed by a fowler, the mate with her young ones falls into great danger, so shall my mother be when she hears of your being put to death, while hung above ground by a rope.

Darogah. *(Bringing Babu Bindu aside by taking hold of his hands).* Babu Bindu, do not be so impatient now. Get the permission of the Doctor, and try to take the corpse soon to the Amritaghata.

Enter Deputy Inspector and the Pundit

Bindu. Darogah, do not speak of anything to me. Whatever consultation you have to make, make that with the pundit and the Deputy Inspector. Through sorrow, I have lost the power of speech ; let me take my father's feet once on my breast. *(Sits up, taking the feet of Goluk on his breast).*

Pundit. *(To the Deputy Inspector.)* Let me take Bindu Madhab on my lap; you better unloose the rope. It is never proper to keep such a godly body in this hell.

Darogah. It will be necessary to wait for a short time.

Pundit. Are you the chowkidar (gate keeper) of hell, else why have you such a character ?

Darogah. Sir, you are wise, you are wrongly reproaching me.

Enter the Doctor

Doctor. Ho ! Ho ! Bindu Madhab ; God's will. The pundit is come. Bindu must not leave the College.

physique, and possessed rare strength and courage. Nobin Madhab, a very strong and courageous person, has been likened here to Bhima.—Ed.

Pundit. It is not proper for Bindu to leave the College.

Bindu. As to our estates and possessions, we have lost every thing ; at last, our father has left us beggars *(weeps)* , how can studying be any more carried on ?

Pundit. The Indigo Planters have taken away the all of Bindu Madhab and his family.

Doctor. I have heard of these Planters from the Missionaries and also I have seen them myself. Once as I was coming from a certain Planter's Factory at Matanganagar, while I was sitting in a village, two ryots of the place were passing by the side of my palanquin ; one of them had some milk with him, which I wanted to buy. Immediately, one whispered to the other, "The Indigo giant, The Indigo giant." Then having left the milk, they ran off. I asked another ryot, and he said, that these persons ran off for fear of being compelled to take advances for Indigo ; and as they had taken the advance for Indigo, so why should they have to go to the godown again ? I understood, they took me for a planter ; I gave the milk into that ryot's hand, and went away from that place.

Dy. Inspector. A certain Missionary was passing through a village within the concern of Mr. Vally. As soon as the ryots saw him they began to cry aloud, "The Indigo ghost is come out, the Indigo ghost is come out," and having left that path, flew into their own houses. But as the ryots found, by and by, the bounty, mildness, and forgiving temper of these gentlemen, they began to wonder ; and as much as the Missionaries showed heartfelt sorrow for the tortures which the poor people suffered from the Indigo Planters, so much the more they began to love them, and to have faith in them. Now the ryots say to each other, "All bamboos are of one tuft ; but of one is made the frame of the Goddess Durga, and of another the sweeper's basket."

Pundit. Let us take away the dead body.

Doctor. I shall have to examine the body a little. You can bring it out then.

(Bindu Madhab and the Deputy Inspector, loosening the rope, bring out the corpse.)

(Exit all

FIFTH ACT

FIRST SCENE

Before the Office of the Begunbari Factory

Enter GOPINATH *and Herdsman*

Gopi. How did you get so much information ?

Cowherd. We are their neighbours ; day and night we go to their house. Whenever we are in want of anything, either a little salt or a ladle of oil, we immediately go to them and bring it ; if the child cry, we bring a little molasses from them and give it to the child ; we are getting our support for nearly seven generations from the Bose family ; and can't we get information about them ?

Gopi. Where was Bindu Madhab married ?

Cowherd. Oh, it is in a village to the west of Calcutta. In which they wanted to have the Kaistas wear the poita.[1] We cannot satisfy all the Brahmins now in existence in a great feast, and still they wanted to increase the number of the Brahmins. The father-in-law of our young Babu is greatly respected. The Judge or Magistrate, when they come to him, take off their hats. Even the Governor takes off his hat while coming to meet him. Do such men give their daughters to men of these places ? Observing the improvements in learning made by our young Babu, they did not care about the village belonging to ryots. People say that the women in cities are showy, and that there is no distinction between them and those who live in the bazzar.[2] But we do not at all find a young woman of a mild temper as the Bou of the Bose family is. The mother of Goma goes to their house every day, still, although she has been married for nearly five years, she has never seen her face.

1. **Poita** : Sacred thread worn usually by the Brahmins, the highest caste of the Hindu society.

2. Signifying the distinction between the women of a good and those of a licentious character. [between household women and prostitutes.]

We saw her only on that day when she came here. We thought that the Babus in the city keep company with the Europeans ; therefore they have brought their females into public like English ladies.

Gopi. But the Bou is always engaged in attending on her mother-in-law.

Cowherd. Dewanji, what shall I say? The mother of Goma says : I heard a report that, had not the youngest Bou been in in the house when the news of Goluk Bose being bound by the rope and thus killed came, the mistress of the family would have died. We have heard also that the women in the city treat their husbands as sheep (slaves) and murder their parents by not giving them any support ; but observing this Bou, I now know that it is a mere hearsay.

Gopi. I think, the mother of Babu Nobin Chunder also loves her.

Cowherd. I don't see any one in the world whom she does not love. Ah! She is an Annapurnah[1] (full of rice). But have you kept the rice that she shall be full of it ? The vile Planters have swallowed up the old man, and they are now on the point of swallowing up the old woman.

Gopi. Thou braggart fool, if the Saheb hear this, he will bring out your new moon.[2]

Cowherd. What can I do ? Is it my desire to sit in the Factory and abuse the Saheb ? It is you who are drawing the venom out of me.

Gopi. I am very sorry that I have destroyed this man of great honour by a false law-suit. I have also felt great pain on hearing of Nobin's severe headache and the miserable condition of his mother.

1. **Annapurnah :** This is one of the names of Durga, the goddess of plenty.

2. **Bring out your new moon :** That is, he will make everything dark to you, as at the time of new moon. In short, he will kill you.

Cowherd. It is the cold attacking a frog.[1] Dewanji, don't be angry with me, I am as a mad goat ; shall I prepare the tobacco ?

Gopi. This filth-eater of Nanda's family is very senseless.

Cowherd. The Sahebs are doing all ; they are the blacksmiths and you are the scimitars ; the scimitars fall wherever they wish. If a flood comes whirling into the Factories of the Sahebs the villagers would bathe therein for relief.[2]

Gopi. You are very foolish, I don't want to hear any more. Go out, the Saheb will come very soon.

Cowherd. Now, I am going, You must attend to my milk bill, and also give me one rupee to-morrow. We shall go to bathe in the Ganges. *(Exit Cowherd*

Gopi. I think the thunder-bolt will strike this head, which is aching. No one will be able to stop the Saheb from sowing the Indigo seed on the sides of your tank. The Sahebs did something improper. These persons engaged themselves to sow Indigo on fifty bigahs of land, although they did not get the full price of the last year. Yet the Sahebs are not satisfied ; these disputes arose only for certain pieces of ground ; and it would have been good for Nobin Bose to have given them these—to keep the goddess Sitola well-pleased[3] is the best. Nobin will bite once more even after his death. *(Seeing the Saheb at a distance.)* Here the white-bodied man with a blue dress is coming, I think, I am to remain as a companion [i.e. in prison] with the former Dewan for some days.

Enter MR. WOOD

Wood. There will be a great riot at Matanganagar ; and all the latyals will be there. Let no one hear this. For this

1. That is nothing to you, as the cold has no effect on the frog.
2. That is, purify themselves by bathing.
3. **Sitola:** the goddess of small-pox ; and the meaning of the above is that if that goddess be kept satisfied, the diesease cannot come ; and if it comes it will pass away.

place, make a collection of ten of the poda caste of spearmen I, Mr. Rogue, and you are to go there. The fool, while he has taken his cacha,[1] will not be able to increase the row greatly. He is sick ; then how can he go to bring assistance from the Darogah ?

Gopi. The extreme weakness to which these are reduced makes it unnecessary to bring any spearmen : among the Hindus, for a person to die with a rope round his neck, especially within a prison, is very disgraceful ; so he is greatly punished by this occurrence.

Wood. You do not understand this. The rascal is become very happy on the death of his father. He took the advances for a long time only through fear of his father ; now that fear is gone, and he will do as he likes. The rascal has given a bad name to my Factory, and I will imprison him tomorrow and keep him along with Mozumdar. If the Magistrate be of the same character with him of Amaranagara, the wicked people will be able to do every thing.

Gopi. With respect to what they planned about the case of Mozumdar, I cannot say how very terrible it would have been, had not Nobin Bose fallen into this great danger. I cannot say what they still will do. Moreover, as the Magistrate, who is coming, we have heard, is on the side of the ryots ; and when he comes to the villages, he brings along with him his tents.—Observing this, we may say, it might occasion great confusion, and also it is somewhat fearful.

Wood. You are always puzzling me with speaking of fear ; the Indigo Planters, in nothing whatever, have any fear. If you don't desire it, leave your business, thou great fool !

Gopi. Sir, fear comes on good grounds. When the former Dewan was put in prison, his son came to ask for the last

1. This refers to Nobin Bose. The **cacha** signifies the piece of cloth kept by the sons on the death of their parents for one month, when the pinda offering to the dead is made.

six months' salary of his father. On which you told him to make an application. Then, on his making the application, you again say the salary cannot be given before the accounts are closed. Honored Sir, is this the judgement on a servant when he is put in prison ?

Wood. Did not I know this ? Thou stupid, ungrateful creature ! What becomes of your salaries ? If you did not devour the price of the Indigo, would there be any deadly Commission ? Would the poor ryots have gone to the Missionaries with tears in their eyes ? You, rascal, have destroyed every thing. If the Indigo lessen in quantity, I shall sell your houses and indemnify myself ; thou arrant coward, hellish knave !

Gopi. Sir, we are like butcher's dogs ; we fill our bellies with the intestines. Had you, Sir, taken the Indigo from the ryots in the very same way as the Mahajans (factors) take the corn from their debtors, then the Indigo Factories would never have suffered such disgrace ; there would have been no necessity for an overseer and the khalasis, and the people would never have reproached me with saying, " Cursed Gopi ! Cursed Gopi !"

Wood. Thou art blind, thou hast no eyes.

Enter an Umadar (an Apprentice)

I have seen with my own eyes *(applying his hand to his own eyes)* the Mahajans go to the rice-field and quarrel with the ryots (their debtors.) Ask this person.

Apprentice. Honored Sir, I can give many examples of that. The ryots say, it is through the grace of the Indigo-Planters only that we are preserved from the hands of the Mahajans.

Gopi. (Aside, to the Apprentice.) My child, it is vain flattery. No employment is vacant now. *(To Mr. Wood)* It is true that the Mahajans go to the rice-flelds and dispute with the ryots ; but if your Honor had been acquainted with the myste-

rious intention of the Mahajans in going to the fields and raising disputes, you would never have compared with the going of the Mahajans to the fields, the punishment of the poor with Shamchand resembling the tortures which Lakshman the son of Sumitra, suffered by the Sakti-sela,[1] while they are without food. [The Mahajans' going to the fields and your torturing with Shamchand the starving poor—the Lakshmans (sons of Sumitra) hit by Sakti-sela,—are not comparable.]

Wood. Very well, explain it to me. There must be some reason why these fools speak to us of every thing else ; but of the Mahajans they don't say a single word.

Gopi. Honored Sir, these debtors, whatever sum of money they require for the whole year, they take from the Mahajans, and that quantity of rice, which is necessary for them for that time, they also take from their creditors. [These debtors take from the Mahajans whatever sum of money they require for the whole year, and it is from the Mahajans again that they take whatever quantity of rice they need]. At the end of the year, the debtors clear their debts either by selling the tobacco, sugar-cane, sesamum, and other things which they have, and then giving the sum collected to their creditors with the interest on the sum for the time ; or by giving those very articles according to the market price : and of the corn which grows, they send to the Mahajans' houses, a part half-prepared. That, which remains, proves sufficient for the expenses of the family for three or four months. If through famine or any improper expenses of the debtors, there fall any arrears in their supplies, the remainder of the debt is carried into the new account-book. Then, by and by, the remainder is filled up. The Mahajans never bring an action against their debtors ; consequently the falling into arrears appears to them, as it

1 Lakshman was the brother of Rama. When they were gone to make war with Ravana of Lanka (Ceylon), in a certain battle, Lakshman suffered very much by the Sakti-sela (the name of a superior grenade in a battle.)

were, a present loss. I suppose the Mahajans for that reason, sometimes go to the fields, observe the the tillage and also enquire whether the extent of land for which the debtors have asked the revenue from them, is all cultivated with grains. Some inexperienced persons, taking under false pretences a large sum than is necessary, and thus being burdened with heavy debts, cause losses on the part of the Mahajans and also themselves suffer great troubles. The Mahajans go to the fields for stopping these, and not like "Indigo Giants" *(strikes his tongue).*[1] Sir, the stupid, shameless Mahajans speak thus.

Wood. I see, Saturn[2] has come upon you to your destruction ; else why art thou become so very inquisitive, and why so presumptuous, you stupid, incestuous brute?

Gopi. Sir, we are made to swallow abuse, to submit to shoe-beating, and also we are the men to go to the Shrighur[3] (the prison); should there be a dispensary or school in the Factory you get the credit; should there be murders, we are the men. When I come to you for advice, you, sir, become angry. That anxiety which I have felt for the law-suit of the Mojumdars, is only known to the Lord of all.

Wood. The fool is such, that whenever I tell him to do any action requiring courage, he brings to my ears the law-suit of the Mojumdars. I am saying always that thou art an ignorant fool ; why don't you become satisfied with sending Nobin Bose to the Godown of Sochigunge?

Gopi. Thou, Sir, art the parent of this poor man ; it would be good, if for the benfit of thy poor servant, thou sendest him once to Nobin Bose to ask him about this case.

Wood. Stop, thou upstart of a son. Shall I go to meet

1. This is a sign of shame or fear.

2. The planet Saturn is said to have very bad influence. Whenever it comes upon one, the utter ruin of that person is thought very near.

3. The House of Prosperity, used ironically.

a dog for you? You coward son of a Kaista *(throws him down with kicks)*. Were you sent as witness to the Commission you would have ruined everything, you, diabolical nigger *(two kicks more)*; with such a tongue you shall do your work like a Caot [1]. You stupid kaet. Were it not for your work on to-morrow, I would send you to the jail.

(Exit Mr. Wood and the Apprentice

Gopi. (Rubbing his body all over and rising up). A person becomes the Dewan of an Indigo Planter after being born a vulture[2] seven hundred times ; else how are numberless kicks dealt by legs wearing stockings digested ? Oh ! what kickings ? Oh the fool is, as it were, the wife [wearing a gown] of a student who is out of College.[3] *(Aside)* Dewan, Dewan.

Gopi. Your servant is present. Whose turn is it?

"In the sea of love are many waves."

(Exit Gopi

SECOND SCENE

The bed room of Nobin Basu

Aduri crying when preparing Nobin's bed

Aduri. Ah ! ah ! ah ! Where shall I go ? My heart is on the point of bursting. They have beaten him so severely that the pulse is moving very slowly ; our mistress will die as soon as she sees this. When Nobin was taken by force to the Factory, they were tearing themselves and weeping

1. **Caot** is the name of a mean caste: and the word **Kaet** is only a common form of expression for the term **Kaista.**

2. The vulture is taken for a detestable bird.

3. **The wife . . . . . college** : the enlightened Bengali wife of those days was a departure from the run of ordinary women, in so far as she would not easily submit to her husband, but would, on the contrary, demand submission from him—Ed.

under the shade of that tree ; but when brought towards our house they did not see that. Only hearing that Nobin was taken by force to the Factory, they rolled on the ground under the tree and cried. They did not see that he was being carried home by the peasants.

(Aside) Aduri, we shall take him into the house.

Aduri. Bring him into the house. None of them are here.

Enter SADHU *and* TORAPA *bearing the senseless* NOBIN *on their shoulders*

Sadhu. (Making Nobin Madhab to lie on the bed) Madam, where art thou ?

Aduri. They began to see standing under the tree. When this person *(pointing to Torapa)* fled away with him, we thought he was taken to the Factory. They began to tear themselves under the tree. I came to the house to call certain persons. Will our mistress remain alive when she sees this dead son ? Do you stand ; let me call them here.

(Exit Aduri

Enter the Priest

Priest. Oh God, hast thou killed such a man ! Hast thou stopped the provision of so many men ! We do not find any such symptom that our eldest Babu sit up again.

Sadhu. God's will. He can give life to a dead man.

Priest. On the third day, Bindu Babu, according to the shastras, celebrated the offering of the funeral cake (pinda-dan) on the banks of the Ganges ; it is through the entreaties of his mother that preparations are being made for the monthly ceremony (Shradh). It was determined that after the celebration of the ceremony, their dwelling place is to be removed ; and I also heard that they will no more meet with that cruel Saheb ; then why did he go there to-day ?

Sadhu. Our eldest Babu has no fault, nor has he any

want of judgement. Our madam and the eldest Bou forbade him many times. They said, "During the days we are to remain here, we will bathe with the water of the well, or Aduri will bring the water from the tank ; we shall have no trouble." The eldest Babu said, "With a present of 50 Rupees, I shall fall at the Saheb's feet, and thus stop the cultivation of the Indigo on the side of the tank: nothing of the dispute in such a dangerous time." With this intention our eldest Babu took me and Torapa with him, and going there with tears in his eyes, said to the Saheb, "Saheb, I bring you a present of 50 Rupees ; only for this year, stop the cultivation of the Indigo in this place ; and if this be not granted, take the money, and delay that business only till the time when the ceremony is to be performed." There is sin even in repeating the answer which the wretch gave, and the hairs of our body stood on an end. The rascal said, "Your father was hung in the jail of the Yabans[1] with thieves and robbers ; therefore keep your money for the sacrifice of many bulls which are necessary for his ceremony." Then placing his shoe on one of the eldest Babu's knees, he said "This is the gift for your father's ceremony."

Priest. Narayan ; Narayan[2] *(Placing his hand on his ears).*

Sadhu. Instantly the eyes of the eldest Babu became red like blood, his whole body began to tremble. he bit his lips with his teeth and then remaining silent for a short time, gave the Saheb a hard kick on the breast, so that he fell on the ground upside down like a bundle of bena (certain grass). Kes Dali,[3] who is now the Jamadar of the Factory, and other ten spearmen immediately stood round him. The eldest Babu

1. This term 'Yabana' has reference to the Mohammedan, the European, or any other person not belonging to Hindu religion.

2. The name of Vishnu, God.

3. **Dali, i.e. Dhali** : a certain low caste of Bengal employed by landlords for rioting etc.

had once saved them from a case of robbery in which they were involved ; so they felt a little ashamed to raise their hands against him. Mr. Wood gave a blow to the Jamadar, took the stick out of his hand and smote with it the head of the eldest Babu. The head was cracked, and he fell down senseless on the ground ; I tried much, but was not able to go into that crowd. Torapa was observing this from a distance; and as soon as the men stood round the eldest Babu, he with violence rushed into this crowd like an obstinate buffalo, took him up, and flew off.

Torapa. I was told [by the eldest Babu] "to stand at a distance, lest they take me away by force." The fools hate me very much ! Do I hide myself when there is a tumult? If I had gone a little before, I would have brought the Babu safe, and would have sacrificed two of those rascals in the Durgah of Borkat Bibi (the temple of Benediction). My whole body was shrunk on observing the head of the Babu ; then, when should I kill these ? Oh ! Allah ! The eldest Babu saved me so many times, but I was not able to save him once. *(Beats his forehead and cries).*

Priest. I see a wound from a weapon on his breast.

Sadhu. As soon as Torapa rushed into the crowd, the young Saheb struck the Babu with the sword. Torapa saved the Babu by placing his own hand, in front of his, which was cut, and there was the sign of a slight bruise on the Babu's breast.

Priest . (Deeply thinking for some time, says to himself) "Man knows this for certain, that understanding and goodness are necessary in the friend, the wife, and in servants." I do not see a single person in this large house ; but a person of a different caste and of another village, is weeping near the Babu. Ah ! the poor man is a day-labourer, and his very hand is cut off. Why is his face all daubed over with blood ?

Sadhu. When the young Saheb struck his hand with the sword, like an ichneumon making a noise when its tail is cut

off, he in agony from the pain of hand flew off after seizing with a bite the nose of the elder Saheb.

Torapa. That nose I have kept with me, and when the Babu will rise up alive again I will show him that (*shows the nose cut off.*). Had the Babu been able to fly off himself, I would have taken his ears ; but I would not have killed him, as he is a creature of God.

Priest. Justice is still alive. The Gods were saved from the injustice of Ravana,[1] when the nose of Surpanaka[2] was cut off ! Shall not the people be saved from the tyranny of the Indigo Planters by the cutting off of the elder Saheb's nose ?

Torapa. Let me now hide myself inside the barn ; I shall fly off in the night. That fool will overturn the whole village on account of his nose.

(Exit Torapa bowing down twice on the earth near Nobin Madhab's bed

Sadhu. So very weak is our madam become by the death of her husband, that there is no doubt she will die, when she see Babu Nobin in this condition. I applied so much water, rubbed my hand over the head so long ; but nothing is bringing him to his senses again. You, Sir, call him once.

Priest. Eldest Babu ! Eldest Babu ! Nobin Madhab *(with tears in his eyes)* Guardian of ryots ! Giver of food ! Moving his eyes now. Ah ! The mother will die immediately. When she heard of his[3] being bound with ropes above ground, she resolved not to take the rice of this sinful world for ten days. This is the fifth; this morning, Nobin Madhab taking hold of her shoulders shed much tears and said, "Mother, if thou dost not

1. **Ravana :** the mythological demon King of Lanka, who carried away Sita, wife of Rama, and was later killed by Rama in a battle described in the epic 'The Ramayana'—Ed.

2. **Surpanaka :** sister of Ravana, who tried to ensnare Rama, and was punished by Rama's younger brother Lakshmana who cut off her nose—Ed.

3. This pronoun "his" stands for Goluk Chunder, the father of Nobin Madhab.

take food this day, then I shall never take the rice with clarified butter, thus placing the sin of disobedience to the mother on my head ; but shall remain without food." On which the mother kissing her son Nobin, said, "My son, I was a queen, now am I become the mother of a king. I would never have been sorry, had I once been able to place his[1] feet on my head at the time when he departed this Life. Did such a virtuous person die an inauspicious death ? It is for this reason that I am remaining without food. Ye are the children of this poor woman ; looking on you and Bindu Madhab, I shall, this day take for my food the orts of our reverend priest. Do not shed your tears before me." Saying so much, she took Nobin Madhab on her lap as if he were a child of five.

(Aside, cries of sorrow

Coming.

Enter SABITRI, SOIRINDRI, SARALOTA, ADURI, REBOTI *the Aunt of Nobin, and other women of the neighbourhood*

There is no fear, he is still alive.

Sabitri. (Observing Nobin on the point of death.) Nobin Madhab ! my son, where, art thou ? Oh ! Alas !

(Falls senseless).

Soirindri. (with tears in her eyes.) Oh young Bou, take hold of our mother-in-law ; let me once see the Lord of my life, in the fulness of my heart. *(Sits near the mouth of Nobin.*

Priest. (To Soirindri.) My daughter, thou art a great lover of thy husband, a woman of constancy ; the frame of thy body was created in a good moment. For one who is so entirely devoted to her husband, and who has every thing good on her part, Fortune may give life to her husband again ; he is moving his eyes, serve him without fear. Sadhu, remain here till our madam be in her senses. *(Exit Priest*

1. This pronoun "his" stands for Goluk Chunder, the father of Nobin Madhab.

Sadhu. Just see and place your hand on her nose. The body is become stiffer than that of a dead person.

Saralota. (*Speaking slowly to Reboti, after placing the hand on the nose.*) Her breathing is full, the fire coming out of the head is so very intense that my throat, as it were burns.

Sadhu. Has the Gomastah (*head clerk*) fallen into the hands of the Sahebs while he is gone to bring the physician ? Let me go to the lodging-house of that physician.

(*Exit Sadhu*

Soirindri. Ah ! Ah ! my Lcrd ! That mother for whose abstinence from food thou hast grieved so much ; that mother, for whose weakness thou hadst served her feet ; that mother who for some days was, by no means, able to sleep without placing thee in her lap, that very same dear mother is now lying senseless before thee, and thou art not seeing her once (*seeing Sabitri*). As the cow, losing her young one, wanders about with loud cries, then being bit by a serpent falls down dead on the field, so is the mother lying senseless on the ground being grieved for her son. My Lord, open thine eyes once more ; call thy maid-servant[1] once more with thy sweet voice and thus satisfy her ears once. The sun of happiness has set at noon for me ; what shall my Bipin do ? (*With tears in her eyes falls upon the breast of Nobin Madhab*).

Saralota. Ye who are here take hold of our sister.

Soirindri. (*Rising up*) I became an orphan while very young ; it is for this death-like Indigo that my father was taken to the Factory, and he returned no more. That place became to him the residence of Yama *(Death)*. My poor mother took me to the house of my maternal uncle, and there through grief for her husband, she bade adieu to the world. My uncles preserved me ; I remained like a flower accidentally

1. The term 'Maid-servant' here refers to Soirindri herself, the wife of Nobin Madhab.

let fall from the hand of the gardener. My Lord took me up with love and increased my honor. I forgot the sorrow for my parents, and in the life of my husband my parents were, as it were, revived *(deep sigh)*. All my griefs are rising up anew in my mind. Ah ! If I be deprived of that husband who keeps every thing under the shade of his protection, I shall again become the same helpless orphan.

Nobin's Aunt. (Raising her with the hands.) What fear my daughter ? Why become so full of anxiety ? A letter is sent to Bindu Madhab to bring a doctor. He will be cured when the doctor comes.

Soirindri. My aunt-in-law, while I was a girl, I made a celebration of a certain religious observance ; and placing my hands on the Alpana[1] (the white-washing prepared for the festival) prayed for these blessings ; that my husband be like Rama, my mother-in-law like Kousalya, my father-in-law like Dasaratha, my brother-in-law like Lakshman. My aunt ! God gave me more than I prayed for. My husband is as Raghunath (Rama)—brave and a provider of his dependants ; my mother-in-law is as Kousalya, having a sweet speech and an earnest love for her sons' wives ; my father-in-law was always happy in saying *Badhumata, Badhumata*[2] and was the brightener of the ten sides.[3] Bindu Madhab who surpasses the autumnal moon in purity, is dearer to me than was Lakshman-deva to Sitadevi. My aunt, all has taken place according to my desire; only there is one in which I find some disagreement: I am still alive. Rama is making preparations for going to the forests, but there is no preparation for Sita's going with

1. It is a general custom in this country to apply the alpana on the floor nearly in all religious observances.

2. This term signifies the wife of one's son.

3. This expression "the brightener of the ten sides" signifies that he did good wherever he went. The ten sides are the north, south, east, and west, north-west, the top and the under sides.

him.[1] Ah ! he was so much grieved on the abstinence of his father ; again he took the cacha for the celebration of his funeral ceremony but before that was done he is preparing to go up to heaven (to die). *(looking on his face with a steady sight)* Ah ! His lips are dry. Oh my friends and companions, call my Bipin at once from the school ; I shall once more *(with weeping eyes)* through his hands pour a littte water of the Ganges into his dry mouth. *(Places her mouth on his).*

All (at once). Ah ! Ah !

Nobin's Aunt. (Takes hold of her body and raises her) My daughter, do not speak such words now *(weeps)* ; if my sister were in her senses, her heart would have been burst.

Soirindri. Oh mother, my desire is that my husband be happy in a future state in the same proportion as he had suffered misery in this. My Lord, I, your bond-maid, will pray to God for life ; thou wast most virtuous, the doer of great good to others and the supporter of the poor. The Great Lord of the Universe, who provides for the helpless, must give you a place. Ah ! take me, my Lord, with thee, that I may supply thee with the flowers for the worship of God. Ah ! what loss ! what ruin ! I see that Rama is going to the wilderness leaving his Sita alone. What shall I do ? Where shall I go ? And how shall I preserve my life ? Oh friend of the distressed, oh Romanath ; Oh Great Wealth of the woman, supply me some means in this distress, and preserve me. I see that Nobin Madhab is now being burnt in the fire of Indigo. Oh, Lord of the distressed ! Where is my husband going now, making me unfortunate and without support *(placing her hand on the breast of Nobin, and raising a deep sigh)*. The husband now takes leave of

1. The reference here is to the wanderings of Rama in the wilderness of the Deccan. The signification of the original is that the husband Nobin is on the point of death, there is no prepartion for his wife to die with him.

his family, having placed all at the feet of God. Oh Lord, thou who art the sea of mercy, the supporter of the helpless, now give safety, now save.

Saralota. Sister, our mother-in-law has opened her eyes ; but is looking on me with a distorted countenance. *(Weeping.)* My sister, our mother-in-law never turned her face towards me with eyes so full of anger.

Soirindri. Ah ! Oh ! Our mother-in-law loves Saralota so much, that it is through insensibility only that with such an angry face she had thrown this champa on the burning pot.[1] Oh my sister, do not weep now, when our mother-in-law becomes sensible she will again kiss you and with great affection call you "the mad woman's daughter" *(Sabitri rises up and sits near Nobin, looking steadily on him with certain expression of pleasure).*

Sabitri. There is no pain so excessive as the delivery of a child, but that invaluable wealth which I have brought forth, made me forget all my sorrows on observing its face *(weeping.)* Ah ! (what a pity) if Madam Sorrow[2] (planter's wife) did not write a letter to Yama (Death) and thus kill my husband, how very much would he have been pleased on seeing this child. *(Clasps with her hands).*

All (at once.) Ah ! Ah ! She is become mad.

Sabitri. Nurse, put the child once more on my lap ; let me pacify my burnt limbs. Let me once more kiss it in the name of my husband. *(Kisses Nobin).*

Soirindri. Mother, I am your eldest Bou ; do you not see me ? Your dear Rama is senseless ; he is not able to speak now.

Sabitri. It would speak when it shall first get rice. Ah !

1. That is, she had expressed so much anger against her ; or as in the original, thrown her into the burning-pot of disgust and hatred. The Champa is the name of a fragrant yellow flower.

2. **Madam Sorrow :** Refers to the wife of a planter whose letter had considerable influence on a magistrate.

Ah ! Had my husband been living, what great joy ! How many musical performances ! *(Weeps).*

Soirindri. It is misfortune upon misfortune ! Is my mother-in-law mad now ?

Saralota. Take our mother-in-law from the bed, my sister; let me take care of her.

Sabitri. Did you write such a letter, that there is no musical performance on this day of joy ? *(Looking on all sides and having risen from the bed by force, then going to Saralota)* I do entreat thee, falling at thy feet, madam, to send another letter to Yama, and bring back my husband for once. Thou art the wife of a Sabeb ; else, I would have fallen at thy feet.

Saralota. My mother-in-law, thou lovest me more than a mother, and such words from your mouth have given me more pain than that of death. *(Taking hold of the two hands of Sabitri)* Observing this your state, my mother, fire is, as it were, raining on my breast.

Sabitri. Thou strumpet, stupid woman, and a Yabana, why dost thou touch me on this eleventh day of the moon ?[1] *(Takes off her own hand).*

Saralota. On hearing such words from your mouth I cannot live *(lies down on the ground taking hold of her mother-in-law's feet.)* My mother, I shall take leave of this world at your feet. *(Weeps).*

Sabitri. This is good, that the bad woman is dead. My husband is gone to heaven ; but thou shalt go to hell. *(Claps with her hand and laughs).*

Soirindri. (Rising up) Ah ! Ah ! Our Saralota is very good-natured. Now having heard harsh words from her mother-in-law she is become exceedingly sorry. *(To Sabitri)* Come to me mother.

1. This day is kept sacred by the widows of the country.

Sabitri. Nurse, hast thou left the child alone ? Let me go there. *(Goes to Nobin hastily, and sits near him).*

Reboti. (To Sabitri). Oh my mother ! Dost thou call that young Bou a bad woman who, you said, was imcomparable in the village and without whose taking food you never took food. My mother, you do not hear my words ; we were trained by you, you gave us much food.

Sabitri. Come on the Ata Couria[1] of the child, and I shall give you many sweetmeats.

Nobin's Aunt. My sister, Nobin will be alive again ; do not be mad.

Sabitri. How did you know this ? That name is known to no one. My father-in-law said, when my daughfer-in-law gets a child, I shall give it *(if male)* the name"Nobin Madhab." Now the child is born, I shall give it that name. My husband always said, "When shall the child be born, and I shall call him by the name *Nobin Madhab*" *(Weeps).* If he had been alive, he would have satisfied that desire on this day. *(Aside, a sound)* There, the musicians are coming. *(Claps with her hands).*

Soirindri. Bou, go into that room, the physician is coming.

Enter SADHU CHURN *and the* PHYSICIAN

(Exit Saralota, Reboti, and all the neighbouring women ; and Soirindri, putting a veil on her head, stands in one side of the room.)

Sadhu. Our madam has risen up.

Sabitri. (Weeps.) Is it because that my husband is not here that you have left your drums at home ?

Aduri. She has no understanding ; she is become entirely

1. **Ata Couria** : A ceremony performed on the eighth day after the birth of a child for securing its good fortune.

insane. She called that elder Halder "My infant child," and chastised the young Halder's wife, calling her an European's wife. That young woman is weeping severely. Again, she is calling you musicians.

Sadhu. So great a misfortune has now come to pass !

Physician. *(Sitting near Nobin)* It is very probable and also according to the Nidana[1] that while she is not taking food for the death of her husband, and while she has seen this miserable condition of her dearest son, she should become thus. It is necessary to see her pulse once. Madam, let me observe thy pulse once. *(Stretches out his hand towards her).*

Sabitri. Thou vile man must be a creature of the Factory, else why dost thou want to take hold of the hand of the woman of a good family ? *(Rising up)* Nurse, keep your eyes upon the child ; I go to take a little water. I shall give you a silk shari.

(Exit Sabitri

Physician. Ah, the light of understanding will not brighten again. I will send the Hima Sagara Toila *(a medicinal oil)* which is now necessary for her. *(Observing the pulse of Nobin)* His pulse is only very weak, but I do not find any other bad symptom. The doctors are ignorant in other matters, but in anatomical operations they are very expert. The expense will be heavy, but it is of urgent necessity to call one in.

Sadhu. A letter has been sent to the young Babu to come along with a doctor.

Physician. That is very good.

Enter Four Relatives

First. We never even dreamt that such an accident would come to pass. At noon-day, some were eating, some bathing, and some were going to lie down in their beds after dinner. I heard of it now.

1. **Nidana :** a treatise on the science of medicine.

Second. The stroke on the head appears fatal. What ill-fated accident ! There was no probability of a quarrel on this day ; or else, many of the ryots would have been present.

Sadhu. Two hundred ryots with clubs in their hands are crying aloud, "Strike off," "Strike off," and are weeping with these words in their mouths : "Ah ! eldest Babu ! Ah ! eldest Babu !" I told them to go to their own houses, since if the Saheb get the least excuse, he will, on account of the pain in his nose, burn the whole village.

Physician. Now, wash the head and apply turpéntine to it ; in the evening, I shall come again and try some other means. To make noise in a sick person's room is to increase his disease ; so, let there be no noise here.

(Exit the Physician, Sadhu Churn and the relatives in one way, and Adhri, the other ; Soirindri sits down).

THIRD SCENE

The Room of Sadhu Churn.

On one side, Khetromany in great torment on her bed, and Sadhu on the other side, Reboti, sitting.

Khetro. Sweep over my bed ; mother, sweep over my bed !

Reboti. My dear, dear daughter, why art thou doing so ; I have swept on the bed, there is nothing then on the coat of shreds. I have placed another which your aunt gave.

Khetro. Thorns are pinching me, I die ; I die ; oh ! turn me to my father's side.

Sadhu. (Silently turning her to the other side. To himself).

This agony is the presage to death. *(Openly)* Daughter, thou art the precious jewel of this poor man ; my daughter, take a little food. I have brought some pomegranates from Indrabad, and also the ornamented shari but you did not at all express your pleasure when you saw that.

Reboti. How very extravagant are my daughter's desires ! She said once, "Give me a flower garland at the time of Semonton".[1] What is that countenance now become ? What shall I do ? Oh, Oh ! Oh, oh ! *(Places her mouth on the mouth of her daughter)* Ah ! my Khetro of gold is become a piece of charcoal. Where are the pupils of the eye ? See, see.

Sadhu. Khetromany ; Khetromany ; open your eyes fully my daughter.

Khetro. My mother ! My father ! Ah ! it is an axe ; *(turns on the other side).*

Reboti. Let me take her on my lap ; she will remain quiet there. *(Comes to take her on her lap).*

Sadhu. Do not take her up ; she will faint.

Reboti. Am I so very unfortunate ! Ah ! Ah ! My Harana is as Kartika on his peacock.[2] How can I forget him ? Dear me ! My Siva ! (My son !)

Sadhu. Ray Churn is gone a long time ago ; he is not yet come.

Reboti. Our eldest Babu preserved her from the grasp of the tiger. Oh ! what a kick did that son of a barren woman give on Khetro's belly ! There was a miscarriage, and since then my child has been dying minutely. Ah, ha ! my grand-son was born—a lump of blood—yet it had developed all features—even those tiny fingers, oh ![3] The young Saheb killed my daughter, and the elder one killed the eldest Babu. Ah ! Ah ! There is no one to preserve the poor.

Sadhu. What virtuous actions have I done, that I shall see the face of my grand-child ?

1. **Semonton** : a ceremony performed on the completion of the seventh month of pregnancy--Ed.

2. **Kartika** : Taken to be the most lovely in appearance among the gods, the symbol of male beauty. He is the son of Siva and Durga.

3. This portion, occurring in the original, was left out.

Kheiro. My body is cut off. My waist is pricked by a tangra fish.[1] Ah ! Ah !

Reboti. I think the ninth of the moon is closed,[2] my image of gold is to go to the water, and what means shall I have ? Who shall call me "Mother ! Mother" ? Did you bring her for this purpose ? *(Taking hold of Sadhu's neck, weeps).*

Sadhu. Be silent, don't weep now ; she will faint.

Enter RAY CHURN *and the* PHYSICIAN

Physician. How is she now ? Did you give her that medicine ?

Sadhu. The medicine did not act, and whatever went down immediately came up by a vomit. See her pulse once more now ; I think, it is a sign of her end.

Reboti. She is crying out, *thorns, thorns.* I have prepared her bed so thickly, still she is tossing about. Now save her by a good medicine. Dear Sir, this relative is very dear unto me.

Sadhu. We don't see any sign of the pulse.

Physician. (taking hold of the hand). In this state, it is good for the pulse to be weak. Weakness makes the pulse strong ; to have a strong pulse is fatal".[3]

Sadhu. At this time, it is the same thing, either to apply or not to apply the medicine. The parents have hope to the very end ; therefore see, if there by any means.

Physician. The water with which the Atapa *(dried rice)* is washed is now necessary. The application of the Suuchikavaran (a medicine) is required.

1. **Tangra fish** : a kind of fish having sharp fangs.—Ed.

2. Here the reference is to the last of the three days. in which the goddess Durga is worshipped, and the last day is taken to be one of great pain, because on that day she is to take her departure from her parents to go to her husband Siva.

3. In the original this is in the form of a Sanskrit verse taken from the Hindu Medicinal Shastras.

Sadhu. That Atapa which the Barah Ranee[1] sent for offerings of prayer is in the other room. Ray Churn, bring that here.

(Exit Ray Churn

Reboti. Is Annapurnah[2] now awake, that she shall with the rice in her hands come to my Khetromany ? It is through my ill-fate that our mistress is become mad.

Physician. She is already full of sorrow for the death of her husband ; again, her son is on the point of death ; her insanity is on the increase. I think she shall die before Nobin ; she is become very weak.

Sadhu. Sir, how did you find our eldest Babu, to-day ? I think, with his pure blood he has extinguished the fire of tyranny of the giants, the Indigo Planters. It is probable, that the Indigo Commission might produce to the ryots some advantages ; but what effect has that ? If one hundred serpents do bite at once my whole body I can bear that ; if on a hearth made of bricks, a frypan be placed full of molasses, and the same be boiling by a great fire ; I can also bear the torment, if by accident I fall into the pan ; if in the dark night of the new-moon a band of robbers with terrible sounds come upon and kill my only son who is honest and very learned, take away all the acquisitions made during the past seven generations, and then make me blind : all these also I can bear ; and in the place of one, even if there be ten Indigo Factories in the village, that also I can allow ; but to be separated even for a moment from that elder Babu, who is so much the supporter of his dependants, that can I never bear.

Physician. The blow through which the brain has oozed out is fatal. I have found the pulse indicate that death is near;

1. **Barah Ranee** : i. e. the eldest female member of a royal family. Here the words refer to Sabitri, wife of Goluk Bose.

2. **Annapurnah** : One of the names of goddess Durga. The term signifies "full of rice", or the goddess of plenty.

either at mid-day or in the evening life will depart. Bipin gave a little water of the Ganges in his mouth, but it came out by its sides. Nobin's wife is quite distracted ; but she is trying her utmost for his safety.

Sadhu. Ah ! Ah ! Had our mistress not been insane, her heart would have been burst asunder on seeing this. The doctor has also said, that the bruise on the head is fatal.

Physician. The doctor is a very kind-hearted man. When Babu Bindu wanted to give money, he said "Babu Bindu, the manner in which you are already troubled makes it improbable that the funeral ceremony of your father will be performed. I cannot take anything from you now, and also it is not necessary for you to give money for the bearers who brought me and who will now take me away". Had Dushasan, the doctor, been called he would have taken away the money kept for the ceremony. I have seen that kind of doctors twice ; he is as scurrilous as avaricious.

Sadhu. Our young Babu brought along with him the doctor to see Khetromany ; but he said nothing with certainty. The doctor, observing my want owing to the tyranny of the Planters, gave me two rupees in the name of Khetromany.

Physician. Had Dushashan, the doctor, been called, he would have taken hold of the hand, and said, she would die ; and he would have taken the money by selling your kine.

Reboti. I can give money by selling off whatever I have, if they can only cure my Khetro.

Enter RAY CHURN *with the rice*

Physician. Having washed the rice, bring the water here. *(Reboti takes the rice.)* Do not give much water. I see the plate is very beautiful.

Reboti. Our mistress *(Sabitri)* went to Gaya[1], and brought

1. **Gaya** : a sacred place, belonging to Bihar, where Hindus go to perform the last funeral rites.

many plates ; and she gave this to my Khetro. Ah, the same mistress is now turned mad, and her hands are bound with a rope, because she is slapping her cheeks.

Physician. Sadhu, bring the stone-mortar, I have the medicine here. *(Opens his box of medicine).*

Sadhu. Sir, don't bring out your medicine ; just see, how her eyes appear. Ray Churn, come here.

Reboti. Oh mother ! What is my fate now ! Oh mother, how shall I forget the figure of Harana ! Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! Khetro, Oh Khetro ! Khetromany ; my daughter ! Wilt thou not speak any more, my daughter? Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! *(Weeps).*

Physician. Her end is very near.

Sadhu. Ray Churn, take hold of her, take hold of her *(Sadhu Churn and Ray Churn take Khetromony from the bed, and go outside).*

Reboti. I cannot leave my Laksmi of gold to float on the water. Where shall I go ? Had she lived with the Saheb, that would have been better. I would have remained at rest by seeing her face. My daughter ! Oh, Oh, Oh ! *(Goes behind Khetro, slapping herself).*

Physician. I die ; I die ; I die ! What pains does the mother bear , it is good not to have a child.

(Exit all

FOURTH SCENE

The Hall In The House of Goluk Chunder Basu

Sabitri sitting with the dead body of Nobin on her lap

Sabitri. Let my dear child sleep ; my dear keeps my heart at rest. When I see the sweet face, I remember that other face[1] *(kisses)*. My child is sleeping most soundly. *(Rubs the hand over the head of the corpse).* Ah ! what have

1. The face of her husband.

the mosquitoes done ? What shall I do for the heat ? I must not lie down without letting the curtains fall. *(Rubs the hand on the breast of the body.)* Ah ! Can the mother suffer this, to see the bugs bite the child and let drops of blood come out. No one is here to prepare the bed of the child ; how shall I let it lie down ? I have no one for me ; but all gone with my husband. *(Weeps).* Oh, unfortunate creature that I am ; I am crying with my child here *(observing the face of Nobin).* The child of the sorrowful woman is now making deala[1] *(kissing the mouth).* No. my dear, I have forgotten all distress in seeing thee ; I am not weeping *(placing the pap on its mouth)* my dear, suck the pap my dear, suck it. I entreated the bad woman so much, even fell at her feet, still she did not bring my husband for once, he would have gone after settling about the milk of the child. This stupid person has such a friendship with Yama, that if she had written a letter, he would have immediately given him leave. *(Seeing the rope in her hand)* the husband never gets salvation if on his death the widow still wears ornaments ; although I wept with such loud cries, still they made me wear the Shanka[2]. I have burnt it by the lamp, still it is in my hands *(cuts off the rope with her teeth).* For a widow to wear ornaments it does not look good and is not tolerable. On my hands there has arisen a blister *(cries).* Whoever has stopped my wearing the shanka, let her shanka be taken off within three days[3] *(snaps the joints of her fingers on the ground.)* Let me prepare the bed myself *(prepares the bed in fancy).* The mat was not washed *(extends her hands a little).* I can't reach to the pillow ; the coat of shreds is become dirty *(rubs the floor with her hand).* Let me make the child lie down *(placing the dead body*

1. **Deala :** It sometimes happens, that during sleep the child cries or laughs ; that is called, the **deala** of the child.

2. An ornament made of shell for the wrists of married women.

3. That is, let the woman who has made me a widow become a widow herself within three days.

slowly on the ground.) My son, what fear near a mother ? You lie down peacefully. I shall spit here *(spits on its breast).*[1] If that Englishman's lady come here this day, I shall kill her by pressing down her neck. I shall never have my child out of my sight. Let me place the bow round it *(gives a mark with her finger round the floor, while reading a certain verse as a sacred formula read to a god)*. "The froth of the serpent, the tiger's nose, the fire prepared by the Sala's[2] resin, the whistling of the swinging machine, the white hairs of seven co-wives bhanti leaves, the flowers of the dhutura, the seeds of the Indigo, the burnt pepper, the head of the corpse, the root of the maddar, the mad dog, the thief's reading of the Chundi[3] : these together make the arrow to be directed against the gnashing teeth of Yama".

Enter SARALOTA

Saralota. Where are these gone to ? Ah ! She is turning round the dead body. I think, my husband, tired with excessive travelling has given himself up to sleep, that goddess who is destroyer of all sorrows and pains. Oh, Sleep ! how very miraculous is thy greatness, thou makest the widow to be with her husband in this world, thou bringest the traveller to his country ; at thy touch, the prisoner's chain breaks ; thou art the Dhannantari[4] of the sick ; thou hast no distinction of castes in thy dominions ; and thy laws are never different on account of the difference of nations or castes ; thou must have made my husband a subject of thy impartial power ; or else, how is it, that the insane mother brings away the dead son from him. My husband is become quite distracted by being deprived of his father and his brother. The beauty of his countenance has faded by and by, as the full

1. By so doing superstitious people believe to keep danger away.
2. The **sala** is the native name of the tree, Shorea Robusta.
3. **Chundi :** a religious book of the Hindus.
4. **Dhannantari** is the Physician of the Gods.

moon decreases day by day. My mother, when hast thou come up ? I have left off food and sleep, and am looking after thee continually, and did I fall into so much insensibility ; I promised that I shall bring thy husband from Yama, in order to cure thee, and therefore, thou remainedest quiet for some time. In this formidable night, so full of darkness, like unto that which shall take place on the destruction of the Universe ; when the skies are spread over with the terrors of the clouds, the flashes of lightning are giving a momentary light, like the arrows of fire, and the race of living creatures are given up, as it were, to the sleep of Death ; all are silent ; when the only sound is the cry of jackals in the wilderness and the loud noise of the dogs, the great band of enemies to thieves. My mother, how is it possible, that in such a night as this thou wast able to bring thy dead son from outside the house. *(Goes near the corpse)*.

Sabitri. I have placed the circle ; and why do you come within it ?

Saralota. Ah ! my husband shall never be able to live on seeing the death of this land-conquering and most dear brother. *(Weeps*

Sabitri. You are envying my child : you all-destroying wretch and the daughter of a wretch ! Let your husband die. Go out, just now ; be out ; or else, I shall place my foot on your throat, take out your tongue and kill you immediately.

Saralota. Ah ! such Shoranan[1] (six-mouthed) of gold, whom our father-in-law and mother-in-law had, is now gone into the water.

Sabitri. Don't look on my child ; I forbid you—you destroyer of your husband. I see, your death is very near. *(Goes a little towards her).*

1. **Shoranan** : One of the names of the god Kartikeya. Nobin Madhab is being compared with this god—Ed.

Saralota. Ah ! how very cruel are the formidable arms of Death ? Ah ! Yama ! You gave so much pain to my honest mother-in-law.

Sabitri. Calling again ! Calling again ! *(Takes hold of Saralota's neck by her two hands, and throws her down on the ground.)* Thou stupid, beloved of Yama ! Now will I kill thee *(stands upon her neck).* Thou hast devoured my husband ; again, thou art calling your paramour to swallow my dear infant. Die, die, die, die now ! *(Begins to skip upon the neck).*

Saralota. Gah, a, a ! *(death of Saralota)*

Enter BINDU MADHAB

Bindu. Oh ! She is lying flat here. Oh mother, what is that ? Thou hast killed my Saralota *(taking hold of Saralota's head.)* My dear Sarala has left this sinful world. *(after weeping, kisses Saralota.)*

Sabitri. Gnaw the wretch and destroy her. She was calling Yama to devour my infant ; and therefore I killed her by standing on her neck.

Bindu. As the sleeping mother having destroyed the child she was fondling for making it sleep on her lap, on awaking will go to kill herself, so wilt thou, oh my mother ! go to kill thyself, if thine insanity passing off, thou canst understand that thy most beloved Saralota was murdered by thee. It will be good if that lamp no more give its light to thee. Ah ! how very pleasant it is for a woman to be mad, who has lost her husband and son ! The deer-like mind being enclosed within the stone walls of madness can never be attacked by the great tiger, Sorrow. I am thy Bindu Madhab.

Sabitri. What, what do you say ?

Bindu. Mother, I can no longer keep my life, becoming mad by the death of my father bound by the rope, and the death of my elder brother ; thou hast destroyed my

Saralota, and thus hast applied salt to my wounded heart.

Sabitri. What ! Is my Nobin dead ! Is my Nobin dead ! Ah, my dear son, my dear Bindu Madhab ! Have I killed your Saralota ? Have I killed my young Bou by becoming mad *(embracing the dead body of Saralota)*. I would have remained alive, although deprived of my husband and my son. Ah, but on murdering you by my own hands, my heart is on the point of being burnt. Oh, Oh Mother ! *(Embracing Saralota, she falls down dead on the ground).*

Bindu. (placing his hands on Sabitri's body.) What I said, took place actually. My mother died on recovering her understanding. What affliction ! My mother will no more take me on her lap, and kiss me. Oh mother ! The word *ma ma*[1] will no more come out of my mouth, *(weeps)*. Let me place the dust of her feet on my head *(takes the dust from her feet and places that on his own head)*. Let me also purify my body by eating that dust. *(Eats the dust of her feet).*

Enter SOIRINDRI

Soirindri. I am going to die with my husband ; do not oppose me, my brother-in-law ! My Bipin shall live happily with Saralota. What's this ? Why are our mother-in-law and Bou both lying in this manner ?

Bindu. Oh eldest Bou ! our mother first killed Saralota, then getting her understanding again, she fell into such excess of sorrow, that she also died.

Soirindri. Now ! In what manner ? What loss ! What is this ! What is this ! Ah ! Ah ! my sister, thou hast not yet worn that most pleasant lock of hair on the head which I prepared for thee ! Ah ! Ah ! thou shalt no more call me, 'sister' *(cries)*. Mother-in-law, thou art gone to your Rama, but didst not let me go there. Oh my mother-

1. **Ma Ma** : Bengali synonyms of 'mother'.

in-law, when I got thee, I did not for a moment remember my mother.

Enter ADURI

Aduri. Oh eldest Haldarni, come soon ; thy young Bipin is afraid.

Soirindri. Why did you not call me thence ? You left him there alone. (*Goes out hastily with Aduri*)

Bindu. My Bipin is now the pole-star in the ocean of dangers ! (*with a deep sigh*). In this world of short existence, human life is as the bank of a river which has a most violent course and the greatest depth. How very beautiful are the banks, the fields covered over with new grass, most pleasant to the view, the trees full of branches newly coming out ; in some places the cottages of fishermen ; in others the kine feeding with their young ones. To walk about in such a place enjoying the sweet songs of the beautiful birds, and the charming gale full of the sweet smell of flowers, only wraps the mind in the comtemplation of that Being who is full of pleasure. Accidentally a hole small as a line is observed in the field, and immediately that most pleasant bank falls down into the stream. How very sorrowful ! The Basu family of Svaropur is destroyed by Indigo, the great destroyer of honour. How very terrible are the arms of Indigo !

The Cobra decapello, like the Indigo Planters, with mouths full of poison, threw all happiness into the flame of fire. The father, through injustice, died in the prison ; the elder brother in the Indigo-field, and the mother, being insane through grief for her husband and son, murdered with her own hands a most honest woman. Getting her understanding again, and observing my sorrow, the ocean of grief again swelled in her. With that disease of sorrow came the poison of want ; and thus without attending to consolation, she also departed this life.

cessantly do I call : Where is my father ? Where is my father ? Embrace me once more with a smiling face. Crying out, Oh mother ! Oh mother ! I look on all sides ; but that countenance of joy do I find nowhere. When I used to call, *ma, ma,* she immediately took me on her breast, and rubbed my mouth. Who knows the greatness of maternal affection ? The cry of *ma, ma, ma, ma,* do I make in the battle-fields and the wilderness whenever fear arises in the mind. Oh my brother, dear unto the heart, in the place of whom there is not one as a friend in this world ! Thy Bindu Madhab is come ! Open thine eyes once more and see. Ah ! ah ! it bursts my heart. not to know where my heart's Sarala is gone to. The most beautiful, wise, and entirely devoted to me—she walked as the swan, and her eyes were handsome as those of the deer. With a smiling face and with the sweetest voice thou didst read to me the Betal. The mind was charmed by thy sweet reading which was as the singing of the bird in the forest. Thou, Sarala, hadst a most beauteous face, and didst brighten the lake of my heart. Who did take away my lotus with a cruel heart ? The beautiful lake became dark. The world, I look upon, is as a desert full of corpses, while I have lost my father, my mother, my brother, and my wife"[1].

Ah ! where are they gone to in search of the dead body of my brother ? I am to prepare for going to the Ganges as soon as they come. Ah ! how very terrible, the last scene of the drama of the lion-like Nobin Madhab is ? *(Sits down, taking hold of Sabitri's feet.)*

(THE CURTAIN FALLS DOWN

HERE ENDS THE DRAMA NAMED NIL DURPAN

1. The entire passage is in the form of a verse in the original.

TRIAL

OF THE

REV. JAMES LONG,

OF THE

CHURCH MISSONARY SOCIETY FOR LIBEL

Calcutta Supreme Court, 19th, 20th and 24th July, 1861

Friday, the 19th instant, having been fixed for the trial of the case of the *Queen V. Long*, for publication of certain libels in the celebrated pamphlet called Nil Durpan, the Court was crowded with Europeans of every class. Civilians of every grade from Secretaries of Government and Special Commissioners, down to the "unfledged eagles" of the Service, were there ; a number of the missionaries too, to countenance their confrere in his "hour of trial" ; and such numbers of the merchants, bankers, and traders of all classes, with here and there a stray Indigo Planter, that the remark was made that there could be nobody left to carry on the business of Calcutta. It was universally felt that not only the Reverend James Long, but the Government of Bengal, was on its trial ; and the leaders on both sides were watching a struggle of fierce political action under the rigid forms of the Law. The late Secretary for Bengal was on the bench, almost beside a leading member of the Landholders' Association, at the Bar table the son of the Lieutenant Governor was opposite to the protesting member of the Indigo Commission ; whilst Mr. Montresor, the late Special Commissioner to Nuddea, was surrounded by men of the Indigo Deputation, whose statements he had so broadly discredited ; and the crowd was diversified by the stout figures of numbers of influential Natives. The presiding Judge was Sir M. L. Wells who entered the Court at 11 o'clock and commenced what we have already called the first of the State Trials of India under the Empire.

LIBEL

The Rev. James Long was indicted for the publication of various libels in a pamphlet known as the Nil Durpan.

Mr. Peterson and Mr. Cowie prosecuted.

Mr. Eglinton and Mr. Newmarch appeared for the defendant.

On the special jury being sworn, an objection was raised by Mr. Eglinton, on the ground that only seventeen out of twenty-four special jurymen had been summoned. Under his Lordship's direction the summoning officer was examined, and deposed that the absent jurymen were away from Calcutta, in England and elsewhere.

On the Jury being sworn, Mr. R. L. Eglinton, one of the Jury, was challenged by the Counsel for the prosecution, but ultimately objection was withdrawn, and the jury stood as follows :—

S. Apcar, Esq., Foreman.

R. L. Eglinton, Esq.
A. G. Avdall,
W. S. Atkinson, Esq.
W. B. Bailey, Esq.
A. Boyle,
R. Blechynden, Esq.
E. Creighton, Esq.
J. Mott, Esq.
E. Palmer, Esq.
Manickjee Rustomjee, Esq.
J. W. Robert, Esq.
J. Stevenson, Esq.
C. Weskins, Esq.
L. A. D'Souza, Esq.

Mr. Peterson said it was unnecessary for him to tell them that the case was one of great importance, not alone to the particular individual whom he represented, but as affecting the whole Christian community at large. It would be as idle as unnecessary for him to attempt to blind them (the Jury) as to the real prosecutor in this case. His client was Mr. Walter Brett, the Editor and Managing Proprietor of the Englishman Press, and the prosecution had been instituted at the desire and with the entire concurrence of the Landholders' Association of British India and the general body of Indigo Planters. He made these preliminary remarks in order to clear up all doubt which might otherwise exist as to who was responsible for the present prosecution. This admission would save his learned friends on the other side some trouble in enquiring into the motive for instituting these proceedings. With these remarks, he would proceed to comment upon the case generally. Sorry was he to stand in his present position

of prosecutor aginst the defendant, who, whatever his views or position might be, was nevertheless in holy orders ; and no matter to what denomination of religion a man belonged, he (the learned Counsel) naturally felt some compunction and regret at having to prosecute in a case where the defendant was in holy orders. But when that reverend defendant was the propagator of slander of a most dangerous kind, when he used his position and means for the purpose of vilifying and slandering his fellowmen without cause, then any feelings of compunction or regret vanished, and the performance of a public duty due to society at large, gave way to all minor or private feelings in the matter. Slander was a most dangerous thing to use at any time, or under any circumstances, but more especially when no reason or cause existed. A man, or any set of men, were not to be held up to public odium without some good and sufficient cause for so doing. Any man is at liberty to think as he likes, or exercise his own judgement, provided that he does not enter into personalities, or attack individuals or particular bodies of men. It was perfectly idle to attempt to deny that a great struggle has for years existed, and was still going on between the official and non-official community in India. The different phases of society in India have been, and are daily canvassed by the press of this country, and what sensible man objected to a free and open discussion by means of the press ? But, the defendant had adopted no such course of expressing his views ; he had gone secretly to work. At the last sessions, the printer Manuel was indicted and pleaded guilty, disclosing the name of his principal, namely, the Rev. James Long. He must first put to them what constituted libel. The man, who publishes slanderous matter calculated to defame and vilify another, must be presumed to have intended to do that which the publication is calculated to bring about, and the onus of proof lay with the defendant that he did not do so. It might be said, why was not a civil action brought instead of a criminal :—his answer was, that a civil action would not lie, because no particular individual was libelled, and hence the present criminal indictment. He regretted for many reasons that the reverend defendant was debarred from an opportunity of justifying his conduct in a civil action. The Act 32 of George III has not been extended to this country, but powers were held by the Judge the same as in England. He thought

the malice spoke for itself. Possibly the defendant would say that he was only the translator, and was not responsible for the opinion expressed in the pamphlet, but he would be prepared to shew that no Native translated that pamphlet ; the errors and mis-interpretations were too gross and serious to admit of any doubt on that point. One word he would particularly call their attention to ; Soorki was interpreted to mean brickdust-makers, whereas it must have been known to any native to mean spear-men. This was only one of many similar errors. It shewed that no Native could have been the translator. His Lordship would direct them in respect to the case, and the real question for their consideration would be libel or no libel. The connection of the defendant with the publication would be proved beyond doubt ; the printer would prove having received the MSS. from the defendant and the corrections in the press-proof were in his hand-writing. It was difficult to believe that these pamphlets were circulated through the highest office of the Government with a view of mending the morals of the Natives and he mentioned this circumstance only to show the way in which the whole thing had been carried out. It proved that the defendant was no mere fanatic, or one holding strong opinions upon any particular subject, and who might have erred by expressing too pointedly those opinions ; nothing of the kind. This pamphlet was not written with a view of setting wrong right, or of mending the existing state of morals ; it was written with a view of setting race against race, the European against the Native. The contents of this pamphlet disclosed a state of things which are a shame and disgrace to any Government in the world, and he maintained that the Government of the country were on their trial, and that the Advocate General ought more properly to have been in his position as public prosecutor. Now for the pamphlet itself. It was in the form of a drama, that style of literary production being most congenial to the Native mind, and consequently most likely to draw the attention which was required. Some dramas, particularly the French, dealt with caricature and other harmless productions at which no sensible man would think of questioning. But when arson, forgery, fornications, and other cardinal vices, form the subject of the drama, then he maintained the caricature dropped to the ground. He maintained that the press or the drama were at liberty to

hold up or demonstrate any particular state of society by way of caricature. Where would our great satirists be unless this liberty were recognized ; and what sensible man would object ? None. Now for the author's preface. He would wish the Court to follow him and correct, if it considered necessary, any comments he might make. He called on the Jury who had no interest whatever on the production of indigo, to consider well the evidence which would be disclosed and in accordance with the oaths which they had taken to render strict and impartial justice. He would direct their attention specially with reference to the first count in the indictment to the following portion of the preface to this pamphlet :—

"The editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What a surprising power of attraction silver has ! The detestable Judas gave the great Preacher of the Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder then, if the proprietors of two newspapers, becoming enslaved by the hope of gaining one thousand rupees, throw the poor helpless people of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths."

Having in view the publisher and his calling, could there be anything more offensive from a teacher of Christianity to a Christian mind than the comparison with Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Saviour ? And leaving the Christian element out of view, could anything be more offensive to all honourable feeling than the comparison of the sale of political freedom with the sale by the traitor for those thirty pieces of silver ? Could anything be, to men of high feeling and sensitive honor, more likely to lead to parties taking the law into their own hands, when they were thus maligned as selling for so paltry a bribe, the cause of the weak, and singing the praises of those Indigo Planters, who, if this preface were anything but a libel, had cast an everlasting stain on the English name. But he must pass to the recital from the pamphlet, of the more prominent passages in which his clients were libelled by wholesale under the second count. Although he would occupy their time no longer than was necessary with the repulsive details of the charges brought directly, or insinuated, against the whole body of Indigo Planters,

he must necessarily refer to numerous passages upon the various points included in the indictment. The learned Counsel then read from the *Nil Durpan* itself a large number of passages in which, as he showed, most serious and disgraceful, libels were perpetrated against a particular class, who, as he would prove by the evidence he should lay before them, could be none other in intention of their reverend traducer than the Indigo planters. He read numerous passages, appealed not to their feeling, but to their reason on the libellous matters which he thus read to them, charging upon the Indigo planters every variety of crime held most abhorred amongst all civilised men, and which he had already detailed to them. The avowed object of the *Nil Durpan* was to describe certain states of society. Was it nothing with such an avowed object to represent, under the fictitious names of Wood and Rose, the whole body of planters ? The story of the book commenced with the picture of a once happy valley,—happy in the production of rice, grain, pulse, seeds, oil, and fish. The women, simple-minded and happy in their allegiance to their husbands ; the ryots happy ; no evil to complain of ; the ryots' daughters virtuous and therefore happy. But alas, a change came over the spirit of their dream ; the Indigo monster arrives. In the short period of three years, indebtedness, starvation, neglected fields, imprisonment, forgery, attempted violation, murder, sudden death, and suicide came on the scene. The virtue of the Bengalee, his women, and his ryots, remain unchanged until the closing scene, when death, in some shape or another, puts an end to all their sufferings. But how is this brought about ; by swarms of Mahratta horsemen ? By hordes of Tartars ? By locusts ? By fire or flood, or some like calamity ? No, but by means of the introduction of the Indigo monsters, represented by the *dramatis personae,* Wood and Rose. Bengalee dewans, once pure, are converted into demons ; ameens, once harmless, become tigers ; magistrates, supposed to be just, are converted into oppressors. The planter's wife !—and here he felt that he was no longer the mere Counsel—he was the Englihman pursuing with a righteous indignation the libeller who had dared to cast the deepest stain upon the fair fame of his country women, whom before the world he had assiduously represented as the means of satisfying the lust of the Justice, for the purpose of making him the tool of the planter. The ever-virtuous

sweetmeat seller, Podi Moyrani, who had fallen a victim to the older Sahib, who has no longer the power to continue his vile practices, is made the tool for satisfying the lust of the chota (younger) sahib ; but even she has some reluctance, bad as she is, but neither of the sahibs have any. The virtuous ryots all die or are killed off under the oppression of triumphant vice, and the sole cause of all these misfortunes is the Indigo Planter ! If such be indeed the state of society, where was the Government that was powerless alike to restrain such vice, or to see the effects of such pictures of it ? If such be not the state of society, what right had any mischief-maker, under any guise—religious, fanatic, political, partizan, or what they would—to make it appear to be so ?

The learned Counsel thought he had cited sufficient passages from the drama, to show its general purport ; he would not detain the Jury much longer, but must make a few remarks on the leading points of the case, though the libel spoke for itself. He would ask the Jury if they believed that the state of society among the European Indigo planters was such as represented in that drama. If such was not the state of society, then what right, he would ask, had a libellous mischief-maker to give utterance to calumnious slanders, and thereby set caste against caste, and race against race. But if the jury did believe that such was actually the state of society, their belief must be grounded on good and unimpeachable evidence, they must further be satisfied that the intention of the publisher was an honest one, and if they did believe so, they would also have to believe the unfounded suggestions of a person of authority, and cast to the winds that which had been written 40 years ago by Lord William Bentinck, Lord Metcalfe, and many other eminent men to an entirely different effect. It was of no use to blink the question, they would believe the Indigo planters as a body, guilty of arson, rape, forturing and forcibly expelling and driving ryots and their families from their home. They would believe that the small body of Indigo planters were striving to effect, nay, were actually effecting the extinction of a race, which numbered thousands, wherever they (the planters) could shew one individual alone. If the Jury should be satisfied that the defendant was the publisher, they would also find by the evidence which he, the learned Counsel, would call, that the publication was carried on in secret, and that when printed, the

copies were sent in secret to the Bengal Secretariat. The mode of publication alone was sufficient to destroy the strongest conviction of the existence of an honest or rightful intention on the part of the writer. The very engine by which the libel was propagated, itself prevented the possibility of entertaining for a moment the thought that an honest intention could have existed in the mind of its promulgator. No, there was some hidden and invisible agent at work to libel the Christian population of this country, (and it was not to enlist the sympathies of the jury that he said so, for he saw among them a gentleman of another creed) and it was to vindicate their character that his clients had brought this matter into Court. He would prove the secret manner of the publication, and that the intention was worse than malicious. That invisible agent had caused a respectable community to be attacked in a manner that gave them no other opportunity of protecting their character from the imputations cast upon it by a gross and calumnious slander. He did not care if that invisible agent was in Court, nor if he was listening. He must know if that drama was propagated in England in the quarters where it was wished to be distributed, before it was known here, and if so, he must know if the Indigo planters were informed of the existence of such a production before notice was received from Lahore in the shape of an envelope enclosing a copy of this production. Whether such copy was sent by a Government servant or not, he would not now enquire ; that formed the subject for another trial which he hoped would be instituted. If such secrecy had been maintained, he must assert that the intention of the writer of that drama could not have been to bring to light the truth, but must have been to calumniate a community without giving them an opportunity of vindication, or in other words, "to stab in the dark." He did not address the jury on behalf of his clients only, but on behalf of the whole Christian community. It was for the whole Christian population of British India that he stood there to accuse the defendant of being the writer and publisher of a gross and calumnious slander. Perhaps, too, he felt that he was one of that population and so might seem to sink the counsel in the client. From what could they find that the intention of the writer was a praiseworthy one ? Did anything that could be gathered from the

preface lead to such a conviction ? No ! But there was one great fact which, he insisted, argued against the honesty of the writer's intention ;—that great fact was the secrecy of its publication. None but a favoured few had been able to get a copy of it in this country, and he doubted if persons, even in England, but those intended to be the receptacles of the writer's calumnies, had been able to obtain an example of that precious production. How its existence became known in Calcutta, he had already stated, but he would ask why it had not propagated in the districts inhabited by the parties attacked, that they at least might have had an opportunity of clearing their character from imputations which, if true, lowered them below the brute creation, disgraced the country they belonged to, and the Government which had not ere this checked with a strong hand such a fearful state of iniquity and evil.

He warned the Jury against being led away by assertions which would doubtless be made, for there were able men on the other side of the question, that the production was published with the view of promoting the public good, but they must consider the evidence, and see if there was anything in the defendant's conduct in regard to the publication of that production that would corroborate such an assertion. He knew that there were members of that jury who were men of strong religious feelings, he felt sorry to attack a body of men of such high calling, but he could not refrain from saying that the word missionary had become synonymous with mischief-maker, for wherever mischief was in any colonial community, some missionary was sure to be found connected with it. The Jury would probably remember the case of the missionary Smith who suffered the extreme penalty of the law at Demarara for inciting the negroes to insurrection, mutiny and rapine. The troubles at the Cape must still be fresh in their recollections, and he need go no further than the sister colony New Zealand, where insurrections and bloodshed are now raging, attributable to missionaries alone. He entertained a sincere and profound respect for true religion. But its messengers had .a holy calling, namely, to promote peace on earth and good will to all men, and not to act as the harbourers of calumny and the originators of evil. These were strong words, but he would consider him justified in using them, if he

could bring home to the reverend gentleman, the defendant, the fact of the publication of the *Nil Durpan*. He felt certain that the jury would agree with him that such a publication was not the method best calculated to promote the spread of the Gospel, nor to ensure the safety of the lives of those Europeans who resided alone among thousands of natives without any hope of assistance in the hour of need. The fault was not the less grave, let it arise from what it may, even if from a misplaced over-zeal to promote Christianity.

Had we not seen by what a tender thread we hang ? Have not the late mutinies taught us how unsafe is our position ? Can we permit persons, impelled by over-zeal, to endanger our safety and induce the belief among people in England, already too prone to believe evil of their countrymen at a distance, that Englishmen in India are guilty of the wrong and disgraceful conduct imputed to them ? Was this publication carried out as it was, calculated to promote Christianity ? Was it calculated to "turn the wicked from his wickedness" and do that which is lawful and right ? The late Right Reverend Bishop of Calcutta frequently denounced individuals, and spoke to them from the pulpit. Such a proceeding might not be in accordance with the usages of society, but it was the proof of an honest intention, there was no concealment about it, and the bold man was the good man. How different was his proceeding to that of the publisher of that Bengali document! Was that the act of a kind and Christian adviser ? No, to say the least of it, it was rather the act of a fanatic. It was the duty of a missionary to regard the white and black population with the same kindly feelings ; it was the duty of a missionary to be the propagator of the Light and Truth, and not the propagator of slander. Christian love itself would incline the Gospel preacher to speak kindly to his Christian brethren. If his intention was to do good, why did he not send information to the heads of mercantile houses here, who have large capital at stake, of the atrocious proceedings of which he accused the Indigo planters ? This he did not do, but contented himself with publishing the calumnies contained in a Bengalee play. For even if the translator be a Native, he, by the fact of publishing the play, adopted it. Why did he not send a copy to the parties concerned, to the Landholders' and commercial

Association, and to the Indigo planters ? The learned Counsel would not deny that there were bad men among the Indigo planters, no such large community could exist without containing a portion of the bad element as well as the good. He could not shut his eyes to the fact that Indigo planters had been attacked by more persons than one belonging to the defendant's cloth, but such attacks had been made openly in the public press, and had been answered in the same public way by planters, who had not hesitated to append their names. But how differently was this attack made, not publicly and openly, but with strict injunction as to secrecy ! The book was printed by Manuel, the copies sent to Mr. Sandys, and from him to the Bengal Secretariat. The motive that induced this publication was a secret there, and whether it was a political conspiracy or not, of which the Revd. Mr. Long was the working agent, was question which would doubtless be answered some day.

Granting even that the publication was a drama having no particular object, political or otherwise, still if it was likely to create among the Natives a false impression regarding the character and conduct of their European brethren it was the duty of the Revd. Mr. Long, whose occupation was to convert the Heathen to Christianity, to destroy the copies that gave rise to the false impression. That was a much more charitable office than to disseminate slander, and one more conductive by far to the avowed end he had in view, the propagation of the Gospel. How could he expect to make a single convert while the calumnies in that drama were allowed to exist, and painted in the blackest dye the characters of men brought up in that faith of which he was professedly the promoter among the Heathen ? Had the conduct of any planters been half as oppressive as made against them ? He would not say that there were not some among their body, whose conduct required reprobation, but he utterly denied that any body of civilised men, men moreover whose interest it was to treat the Natives well, could be guilty of the attrocities, could revel in such a glut of vice as depicted in that libellous drama, the *Nil Durpan*. When the publication had gone forth no definite information could be obtained concerning it, and the Indigo planters' only resource was to select the person who by an Act of Parliament was compelled to put his name to everything

issuing from his press. They did so, acting on the principle that if you get the cub, the dam will soon be caught. They indicted the printer, and thereby obtained the admission that Mr. Long was the publisher. Had his clients been vindictive they could have pressed for the punishment of the printer, it was sufficient to say they did not do so. The learned Counsel would be the last person in the world to press for conviction in ordinary abuses of the press ; such were not dangerous, for the press had its uses in which the abuses found their antidote. But there was no antidote to charges made without giving any opportunity of promulgating the truth. The only means of vindicating their character left open to his clients was to come into that Court to obtain the verdict of the Jury who would not, he hoped, become parties to the propagation of a libel. The question of justification could not arise. It was impossible for the defendant to justify himself according to law, though he acted under the belief that the libel was true, though he acted on information he had received, even though he produced parties who had seen acts of oppression committed. But the libel contained within itself the proof of malice, and if the jury did not believe the existence of the state of society therein depicted, they must admit it to be a libel ; if they did not consider it a libel they must believe in the truth of the charges made, not as against any planter, but as against the general body of European Indigo Planters ; they would believe them to be men placed beyond the pale of civilisation, and deserving of all they had got because guilty of the most horrid atrocities. They would believe that virtue existed among the Natives alone and some few officials. They would believe that on leaving England their countrymen forget all principles of Christianity, and that offences abhorred at home could be perpetrated with impunity here. They would believe magistrates, non-officials, the whole Christian community of British India, except a favoured few, regardless of all principles of honor and feeling. They would believe that not a European in India was more fit for the changing in Norfolk island than to govern here. They would believe that officials, acting under the fascinations of imaginary planters' wives, permitted injustice to be committed which resulted in wholesale destruction, ruin and death to the ryot !

The Jury had been carefully selected, there was no taint

of the Indigo dye among them, there was not one of them, interested in its cultivation, their sympathies would not therefore be enlisted on the side of his clients, yet he felt confident that they could come to no other conclusion than that the defendant was the publisher and promulgator of a gross and calumnious libel, and the learned Counsel would be content to leave him to the mercy which was a well-known attribute of that Court.

He was sorry that he could go no further into the subject ; he was but faintly doing his duty, he felt that no words of his could sufficiently portray the consequences of that libel if allowed to remain unheeded and uncontradicted. If that reckless slander had been promulgated among the warlike tribes of the North-West, it must have inevitably led to the extermination of the Europeans. It was just and right to attribute the disturbed state of the country to a set of slanderers, who would effect, (if allowed to remain unpunished) by a forced combination of the Natives, what the Bengalees have never been able to effect, the ejectment of the Europeans. Would natives come and offer their labour if they believed they would be compelled to take advances, ill-treated, ruined and their daughters violated ? He shuddered in contemplating the consequences of that libel. If distributed in the bazars, if spread through villages, future generations would point to the rule of the English as more pregnant of evils than the sway of Mahratta horde or Moslem host. These were among the serious and dangerous consequences of that libel which had been but feebly portrayed. He would sit down in the entire confidence that the Jury would come to no other conclusion than that demanded by Truth and Justice, and necessary for the vindication of the character of his clients.

Clement Henry Manuel, examined by Mr. Cowie, stated that he was proprietor of the Calcutta Printing and Publishing Press, and printed the *Nil Durpan* in April or May last, under orders received from Mr. Long in person. He sent portions of manuscript from time to time. Received direction from defendant to print five hundred copies which were struck off, and sent to Mr. Long's house. That was the way he generally did business. He was not a publisher, but only a printer. The manuscripts were returned to the defendant with the proof sheets. He did not know what became of the printed copies after he sent them to the defendant. He had charged nearly Rs. 300 for printing,

which was paid by Mr. Long. He had been indicted as the printer of the *Nil Durpan*. The defendant had authorized witness's Counsel to give up his name. Did not know if that authority was given on the day of trial or before. Had not given any information as to the author or publisher of the pamphlet.

By the Court,—Would have felt himself at liberty to give the author's name, if he had been called upon to do so. Could not swear to defendant's handwriting, but believed the proofs to have been passed in his writing. He meant by "passed" that proof sheets, after being corrected, were sent to the author for final approval. The proof sheets were sent to Mr. Long. [Some proof sheets were produced in Court, and the witness pointed out the order for the printing, and some corrections as made in Mr. Long's writing].

By Mr. Eglinton,—Mr. Long came himself to witness's office without any mystery. Had never been pressed to give up his name ; gave it at this trial on Mr. Long's own authority. Had not seen much of Mr. Long's writing. Did not speak with certainty regarding it.

By the Court,—From the opportunities he has had, he believed those corrections to have been made in Mr. Long's writing.

Walter Brett, examined by Mr. Cowie, stated that he was Managing Proprietor and, at present, Editor of the *Englishman*. Had been Managing Proprietor about two years, and sole Editor since his coadjutor, Mr. Saunders, went home. Previously Mr. Saunders was the Editor, and witness, Managing Proprietor and Joint Editor. He was aware that there had been much discussion on matters connected with the cultivation of Indigo, and had taken a large part in that discussion. A Commission had been appointed by Government to enquire into the rights of ryots and planters. The *Englishman* naturally took a view favourable to the Indigo planters upon the evidence given before the Commission. The *Bengal Hurkaru* naturally took the same view. He believed The *Englishman* and the *Hurkaru* to be the two papers stated in the *Nil Durpan*, "to have their columns filled with the praises" of the Indigo planters. He first received a copy of this publication (holding the *Nil Durpan*) on May 27th of the present year ; that was to the best of his belief, but he could not swear to a day either way. One of his own peons brought it to him. He had asked officially for a copy, and while waiting for an answer, had

sweetmeat seller, Podi Moyrani, who had fallen a victim to the older Sahib, who has no longer the power to continue his vile practices, is made the tool for satisfying the lust of the chota (younger) sahib ; but even she has some reluctance, bad as she is, but neither of the sahibs have any. The virtuous ryots all die or are killed off under the oppression of triumphant vice, and the sole cause of all these misfortunes is the Indigo Planter ! If such be indeed the state of society, where was the Government that was powerless alike to restrain such vice, or to see the effects of such pictures of it ? If such be not the state of society, what right had any mischief-maker, under any guise—religious, fanatic, political, partizan, or what they would—to make it appear to be so ?

The learned Counsel thought he had cited sufficient passages from the drama, to show its general purport ; he would not detain the Jury much longer, but must make a few remarks on the leading points of the case, though the libel spoke for itself. He would ask the Jury if they believed that the state of society among the European Indigo planters was such as represented in that drama. If such was not the state of society, then what right, he would ask, had a libellous mischief-maker to give utterance to calumnious slanders, and thereby set caste against caste, and race against race. But if the jury did believe that such was actually the state of society, their belief must be grounded on good and unimpeachable evidence, they must further be satisfied that the intention of the publisher was an honest one, and if they did believe so, they would also have to believe the unfounded suggestions of a person of authority, and cast to the winds that which had been written 40 years ago by Lord William Bentinck, Lord Metcalfe, and many other eminent men to an entirely different effect. It was of no use to blink the question, they would believe the Indigo planters as a body, guilty of arson, rape, torturing and forcibly expelling and driving ryots and their families from their home. They would believe that the small body of Indigo planters were striving to effect, nay, were actually effecting the extinction of a race, which numbered thousands, wherever they (the planters) could shew one individual alone. If the Jury should be satisfied that the defendant was the publisher, they would also find by the evidence which he, the learned Counsel, would call, that the publication was carried on in secret, and that when printed, the

copies were sent in secret to the Bengal Secretariat. The mode of publication alone was sufficient to destroy the strongest conviction of the existence of an honest or rightful intention on the part of the writer. The very engine by which the libel was propagated, itself prevented the possibility of entertaining for a moment the thought that an honest intention could have existed in the mind of its promulgator. No, there was some hidden and invisible agent at work to libel the Christian population of this country, (and it was not to enlist the sympathies of the jury that he said so, for he saw among them a gentleman of another creed) and it was to vindicate their character that his clients had brought this matter into Court. He would prove the secret manner of the publication, and that the intention was worse than malicious. That invisible agent had caused a respectable community to be attacked in a manner that gave them no other opportunity of protecting their character from the imputations cast upon it by a gross and calumnious slander. He did not care if that invisible agent was in Court, nor if he was listening. He must know if that drama was propagated in England in the quarters where it was wished to be distributed, before it was known here, and if so, he must know if the Indigo planters were informed of the existence of such a production before notice was received from Lahore in the shape of an envelope enclosing a copy of this production. Whether such copy was sent by a Government servant or not, he would not now enquire ; that formed the subject for another trial which he hoped would be instituted. If such secrecy had been maintained, he must assert that the intention of the writer of that drama could not have been to bring to light the truth, but must have been to calumniate a community without giving them an opportunity of vindication, or in other words, "to stab in the dark." He did not address the jury on behalf of his clients only, but on behalf of the whole Christian community. It was for the whole Christian population of British India that he stood there to accuse the defendant of being the writer and publisher of a gross and calumnious slander. Perhaps, too, he felt that he was one of that population and so might seem to sink the counsel in the client. From what could they find that the intention of the writer was a praiseworthy one ? Did anything that could be gathered from the

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He warned the Jury against being led away by assertions which would doubtless be made, for there were able men on the other side of the question, that the production was published with the view of promoting the public good, but they must consider the evidence, and see if there was anything in the defendant's conduct in regard to the publication of that production that would corroborate such an assertion. He knew that there were members of that jury who were men of strong religious feelings, he felt sorry to attack a body of men of such high calling, but he could not refrain from saying that the word missionary had become synonymous with mischief-maker, for wherever mischief was in any colonial community, some missionary was sure to be found connected with it. The Jury would probably remember the case of the missionary Smith who suffered the extreme penalty of the law at Demarara for inciting the negroes to insurrection, mutiny and rapine. The troubles at the Cape must still be fresh in their recollections, and he need go no further than the sister colony New Zealand, where insurrections and bloodshed are now raging, attributable to missionaries alone. He entertained a sincere and profound respect for true religion. But its messengers had a holy calling, namely, to promote peace on earth and good will to all men, and not to act as the harbourers of calumny and the originators of evil. These were strong words, but he would consider him justified in using them, if he

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Association, and to the Indigo planters ? The learned Counsel would not deny that there were bad men among the Indigo planters, no such large community could exist without containing a portion of the bad element as well as the good. He could not shut his eyes to the fact that Indigo planters had been attacked by more persons than one belonging to the defendant's cloth, but such attacks had been made openly in the public press, and had been answered in the same public way by planters, who had not hesitated to append their names. But how differently was this attack made, not publicly and openly, but with strict injunction as to secrecy ! The book was printed by Manuel, the copies sent to Mr. Sandys, and from him to the Bengal Secretariat. The motive that induced this publication was a secret there, and whether it was a political conspiracy or not, of which the Revd. Mr. Long was the working agent, was question which would doubtless be answered some day.

Granting even that the publication was a drama having no particular object, political or otherwise, still if it was likely to create among the Natives a false impression regarding the character and conduct of their European brethren it was the duty of the Revd. Mr. Long, whose occupation was to convert the Heathen to Christianity, to destroy the copies that gave rise to the false impression. That was a much more charitable office than to disseminate slander, and one more conductive by far to the avowed end he had in view, the propagation of the Gospel. How could he expect to make a single convert while the calumnies in that drama were allowed to exist, and painted in the blackest dye the characters of men brought up in that faith of which he was professedly the promoter among the Heathen ? Had the conduct of any planters been half as oppressive as made against them ? He would not say that there were not some among their body, whose conduct required reprobation, but he utterly denied that any body of civilised men, men moreover whose interest it was to treat the Natives well, could be guilty of the attrocities, could revel in such a glut of vice as depicted in that libellous drama, the *Nil Durpan*. When the publication had gone forth no definite information could be obtained concerning it, and the Indigo planters' only resource was to select the person who by an Act of Parliament was compelled to put his name to everything

issuing from his press. They did so, acting on the principle that if you get the cub, the dam will soon be caught. They indicted the printer, and thereby obtained the admission that Mr. Long was the publisher. Had his clients been vindictive they could have pressed for the punishment of the printer, it was sufficient to say they did not do so. The learned Counsel would be the last person in the world to press for conviction in ordinary abuses of the press ; such were not dangerous, for the press had its uses in which the abuses found their antidote. But there was no antidote to charges made without giving any opportunity of promulgating the truth. The only means of vindicating their character left open to his clients was to come into that Court to obtain the verdict of the Jury who would not, he hoped, become parties to the propagation of a libel. The question of justification could not arise. It was impossible for the defendant to justify himself according to law, though he acted under the belief that the libel was true, though he acted on information he had received, even though he produced parties who had seen acts of oppression committed. But the libel contained within itself the proof of malice, and if the jury did not believe the existence of the state of society therein depicted, they must admit it to be a libel ; if they did not consider it a libel they must believe in the truth of the charges made, not as against any planter, but as against the general body of European Indigo Planters ; they would believe them to be men placed beyond the pale of civilisation, and deserving of all they had got because guilty of the most horrid atrocities. They would believe that virtue existed among the Natives alone and some few officials. They would believe that on leaving England their countrymen forget all principles of Christianity, and that offences abhorred at home could be perpetrated with impunity here. They would believe magistrates, non-officials, the whole Christian community of British India, except a favoured few, regardless of all principles of honor and feeling. They would believe that not a European in India was more fit for the changing in Norfolk island than to govern here. They would believe that officials, acting under the fascinations of imaginary planters' wives, permitted injustice to be committed which resulted in wholesale destruction, ruin and death to the ryot !

The Jury had been carefully selected, there was no taint

of the Indigo dye among them, there was not one of them, interested in its cultivation, their sympathies would not therefore be enlisted on the side of his clients, yet he felt confident that they could come to no other conclusion than that the defendant was the publisher and promulgator of a gross and calumnious libel, and the learned Counsel would be content to leave him to the mercy which was a well-known attribute of that Court.

He was sorry that he could go no further into the subject ; he was but faintly doing his duty, he felt that no words of his could sufficiently portray the consequences of that libel if allowed to remain unheeded and uncontradicted. If that reckless slander had been promulgated among the warlike tribes of the North-West, it must have inevitably led to the extermination of the Europeans. It was just and right to attribute the disturbed state of the country to a set of slanderers, who would effect, (if allowed to remain unpunished) by a forced combination of the Natives, what the Bengalees have never been able to effect, the ejectment of the Europeans. Would natives come and offer their labour if they believed they would be compelled to take advances, ill-treated, ruined and their daughters violated ? He shuddered in contemplating the consequences of that libel. If distributed in the bazars, if spread through villages, future generations would point to the rule of the English as more pregnant of evils than the sway of Mahratta horde or Moslem host. These were among the serious and dangerous consequences of that libel which had been but feebly portrayed. He would sit down in the entire confidence that the Jury would come to no other conclusion than that demanded by Truth and Justice, and necessary for the vindication of the character of his clients.

Clement Henry Manuel, examined by Mr. Cowie, stated that he was proprietor of the Calcutta Printing and Publishing Press, and printed the *Nil Durpan* in April or May last, under orders received from Mr. Long in person. He sent portions of manuscript from time to time. Received direction from defendant to print five hundred copies which were struck off, and sent to Mr. Long's house. That was the way he generally did business. He was not a publisher, but only a printer. The manuscripts were returned to the defendant with the proof sheets. He did not know what became of the printed copies after he sent them to the defendant. He had charged nearly Rs. 300 for printing.

which was paid by Mr. Long. He had been indicted as the printer of the *Nil Durpan*. The defendant had authorized witness's Counsel to give up his name. Did not know if that authority was given on the day of trial or before. Had not given any information as to the author or publisher of the pamphlet.

By the Court,—Would have felt himself at liberty to give the author's name, if he had been called upon to do so. Could not swear to defendant's handwriting, but believed the proofs to have been passed in his writing. He meant by "passed" that proof sheets, after being corrected, were sent to the author for final approval. The proof sheets were sent to Mr. Long. [Some proof sheets were produced in Court, and the witness pointed out the order for the printing, and some corrections as made in Mr. Long's writing].

By Mr. Eglinton,—Mr. Long came himself to witness's office without any mystery. Had never been pressed to give up his name ; gave it at this trial on Mr. Long's own authority. Had not seen much of Mr. Long's writing. Did not speak with certainty regarding it.

By the Court,—From the opportunities he has had, he believed those corrections to have been made in Mr. Long's writing.

Walter Brett, examined by Mr. Cowie, stated that he was Managing Proprietor and, at present, Editor of the *Englishman*. Had been Managing Proprietor about two years, and sole Editor since his coadjutor, Mr. Saunders, went home. Previously Mr. Saunders was the Editor, and witness, Managing Proprietor and Joint Editor. He was aware that there had been much discussion on matters connected with the cultivation of Indigo, and had taken a large part in that discussion. A Commission had been appointed by Government to enquire into the rights of ryots and planters. The *Englishman* naturally took a view favourable to the Indigo planters upon the evidence given before the Commission. The *Bengal Hurkaru* naturally took the same view. He believed The *Englishman* and the *Hurkaru* to be the two papers stated in the *Nil Durpan*, "to have their columns filled with the praises" of the Indigo planters. He first received a copy of this publication (holding the *Nil Durpan*) on May 27th of the present year ; that was to the best of his belief, but he could not swear to a day either way. One of his own peons brought it to him. He had asked officially for a copy, and while waiting for an answer, had

received another copy which was sent enclosed simply in a cover and addressed to the Editor of the *Englishman*. He did not know who addressed it. Received the copy he had applied for, immediately afterwards. That was from a source which he was not at liberty to refer to, in this trial. Had since received several copies. He was not acquainted with Mr. Long's handwriting. He concluded that the *Englishman* and the *Hurkaru* were the papers alluded to in the Nil Durpan, from his knowledge of the line they had taken with reference to the disputes between the Indigo planters and ryots. He had no doubt his conclusion was correct. There was one other daily paper in Calcutta the *Phoenix*. It took the other line ;—unnaturally of course. He had read the publication called the Nil Durpan, and believed the European Indigo planters to be the persons pointed at throughout that production.

By Mr. Eglinton,—He was a member of the Landholders' and Commercial Association. The Association prosecuted, not a section of them. Had not heard on authority that any members dissented from the prosecution, but believed it to be the case. Had nothing to do with Indigo. Was certainly not an Indigo planter of Lower Bengal. He saw the first copy of the pamphlet on May 27th, but had seen parts of the libel before then. Could not doubt the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers alluded to in the Nil Durpan, because those papers had been constantly written of as the Indigo journals by anti-Indigo papers. They were here not mentioned by name. There were several daily papers in India, some were in favour of the Indigo planters' interest, and some were opposed to it. He knew nothing of native papers properly so called ; he meant papers published in the vernacular. The *Hindoo Patriot* and *Indian Field* were papers under native influence. They took a contrary view to that taken by the *Englishman*. In those papers the planters had been represented as guilty of great cruelties. He was aware that those two papers represented that there existed considerable feeling among the native population regarding the alleged oppression of Indigo planters. He did not know as a fact that there was a strong feeling among ryots against planters, as represented by those papers. To the best of his belief there was a strong prejudice among the ryots against Indigo planters whether justly or not, he could not say, but on the evidence before him the balance was quite against them. The *Englishman*

had a large circulation ; it had not decreased since the publication of ·the libel. The question of the respect and deference shown to the *Englishman* was a question for outside opinion and not for him to determine. He had a number of Indigo planters on his subscription list, but not a large number proportionately to the whole number of subscribers. He did not feel called upon to state the actual number, as he declined to go into the details of his subscription list. Before answering on question regarding any numbers, he would ask the protection of the Court that he might not be asked any further question regarding the numbers in his subscription list.

The Court did not think such a question should be put unless it bore directly upon the facts of the case.

Mr. Eglinton explained that he considered editors as men who write for gain ; hired writers to uphold a certain interest. He thought it requisite to ascertain the number of that interest in order to prove that the view taken by the *Englishman* with reference to the Indigo question was calculated to bring additional subscribers.

Cross examination by Mr. Eglinton continued :—He was not prepared to say how many subscribers he had among the Indigo planters, but did not believe his subscription list as regards them had increased by one since the publication of the Nil Durpan. He explained that there were constant changes in the constituency of a paper, but that he did not believe that there was any virtual difference. The subscription list of the *Englishman* had been increasing steadily on a stated average for the last two years. He most certainly declined to answer whether or not he received more than Rs. 1000 yearly from his subscribers among the planters.

Mr. Eglinton would press the question. *The Court* in that case would direct Mr. Brett to answer, but must say, it considered the question quite irrelevant.

Cross-examined by Mr. Eglinton,—He did receive more than Rs. 1000 per annum from subscribers among the Indigo planters. He knew newspapers advocated particular interests and opinion all over the world.

Re-examined by Mr. Cwic,—He did not advocate the Indigo interest or any other interest, with the view of gaining Rs. 1000 or any other sum. He believed that he was charged in the passage read out of the introduction

to the Nil Durpan by Mr. Peterson with being bribed to advocate the interests of Indigo planters.

Alexander Forbes, examined by Mr. Peterson,—Was present editor of the *Bengal Hurkaru.* Had been so for the last eighteen months. Had read part of the Nil Durpan. Believed the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers alluded to in the passage regarding the praising of Indigo planters because those papers had advocated the Indigo interests. Had no doubt that Mr. Brett and himself were referred to. He had rightly or wrongly advocated the cause of Indigo planters. He had not like Judas Iscariot taken thirty rupees and sold the ryots' cause. Had been directly concerned in the cultivation of Indigo fifteen years and indirectly, three or four years. A planter could not manage his business if he struck a single ryot. The duties of a factory Ameen were to make advances to ryots, and to superintendent generally the cultivation of the Indigo. It was his province to mark out land for Indigo within his division. There were Ameens in all factories, generally one to every 200 bigghas. A passage read from the Nil Durpan about a ryot being made to drink the water of seven factories meant a threat of confinement in the factory godown ; another passage meant compulsory cultivation ; another meant compelling ryots to give false evidence by confining them. Another passage meant that the Ameen was taking his youngest daughter to the Sahib's room for bad purposes. The drama was a favorite mode of representing the state of society among Bengalees. That mode was adopted in village and other places as truly representing states and phases of society.

To the Court :—These dramas are looked upon as fictions with a great deal of truth in them.

To Mr. Peterson :—Thought this drama would be believed by natives not acquainted with Indigo planters as a true representation of their conduct. Believed it was so accepted in Calcutta. He knew Mr. Long's handwriting. The order for the printing and some of the corrections in the proof sheets he held were in Mr. Long's hand, but written rather plainer than he usually writes.

To Mr. Newmarch :—He could not say if the *Hurkaru* was the most strenuous advocate of the Indigo interest, but hoped so. He did not know it upheld that interest before he joined, as he had not read it for many years. Had never looked at the subscription list, but knew that many planters

became subscribers when he became editor. Had not the least idea whether or not the circulation of the *Hurkaru* among the Indigo planters afforded a yearly sum of Rs. 1000. There were several daily papers in India. He believed there were six.

To Mr. Newmarch :—There is much difference in opinion as to whether ryottee cultivation is beneficial or not.

Mr. Newmarch :—Have not some of those papers taken an opposite view of the question from that taken by you ?

Mr. Forbes :—In Bengal, with the exception of one daily paper, the others advocated the cause of the planters.

Mr. Newmarch :—Don't you believe that those who entertained different opinions from you, did so conscientiously ?

Mr. Forbes :—When it arose from ignorance of the subject. I believe there are no conscientious men who know anything about the subject who hold a different opinion from myself as to Indigo planting. There are many conscientious men who believe so, but I don't think they are a large body. I know a great deal of Native society. There is a large body of Natives who have a strong feeling against the Europeans.

Mr. Peterson :—That being your feeling, do you think the publication of the Nil Durpan would bring about a good feeling ?

Mr. Forbes :—Certainly not ; I think the feeling against the Europeans will be greatly increased by it ?

Mr. Peterson :—Do you know where the original of the Nil Durpan had been published ?

Mr. Forbes :—I have been told, in Dacca.

Mr. Peterson :—Do you know that the drama has been represented there ?

Mr. Forbes :—Yes, I have heard so. I received the information by a letter from Dacca, that the drama was represented there.

By Mr. Peterson :—No conscientious person would write that pamphlet. I have never seen any publication written in opposition to the Nil Durpan.

By the Court :—I don't think my paper has been injured by the pamphlet. I cannot say what effect it may have in England.

Mr. Brett recalled :—The first intimation he had of the publication was a letter from Lahore containing an envelope,

which he produced. That was the first intimation. He received it from the editor of the *Lahore Chronicle*. This was two days before he got a copy of the pamphlet.

By the Court :—Beyond any personal annoyance I may have felt, I believe, from communications which I have received, that the pamphlet has been the means of creating a certain prejudice against the *Englishman* among the more educated Natives.

Thomas Jones, examined by Mr. Cowie : I am Registrar of the Bengal Secretariat, and have been so four and a half years. A large number of these pamphlets were circulated under my frank.

Mr. Cowie :-Who were they sent by ?

Mr. Eglinton :—I object to that question being put. You have a right to ask the witness any question as to what became of the numbers, but you have no right to trace them to the party from whom the witness had received them.

The Judge :-Indeed, I think it is a very legitimate and proper question.

Mr. Cowie :-Perhaps my learned friend is apprehensive that we might entrap the witness into making certain admissions. But that is not our intention ; we want to find out the mode of its publication.

The Judge :-I have the evidence before me that Mr. Long had paid 300 rupees for the printing of 500 copies. Therefore, I don't think that question matters much.

Mr. Eglinton :-I say it is an improper question, because you have no right to trace the publication to the person from whom the witness got it. You have the fact of the copies having come into the possession of the witness.

The Judge :-If Mr. Long parted possession of the books he must stand the consequence of its distribution in the same way as a person who entrusted a publication to a printer. I shall take care that not an atom of evidence which would affect Mr. Long would be taken down by me unless it was legal evidence.

Mr. Thomas Jones resumed :—These copies were circulated under my frank as Registrar of the Bengal Office. No communication was made to me on the subject by the Government. I believe they were sent by the Revd. Mr. Long. I believe the copies were sent for distribution. He had not asked me to distribute them. The distribution list was sent afterwards. About 500 copies were sent to the

Bengal Office. I believe the list was partly in the handwriting of Mr. Long. I think the copies were sent in the early part of May. I believe the envelope produced originally contained a copy of the pamphlet. The distribution occupied two or three days. The larger portion was distributed by me. Some copies were sent home to England previous to my receiving the list. I don't think any copies were sent to England after my receiving the list. I can't at present recollect the name of any person to whom they were to be sent.

The Judge :—I want you to explain to the Jury why copies were sent to a Government Department ?

Mr. Jones :—I can't, my Lord.

The Judge :—Do you know that any communication had been made to the Bengal Office before these papers were sent ?

Mr. Jones :—I am not aware of any in the present case.

The Judge :—Why do you draw the distinction ? Were you in the habit of receiving such papers before ?

Mr. Jones :—I have been in the habit of distributing such papers, but always under the authority of the Secretary.

The Judge :—Are papers received in the office without the knowledge of the Secretary, and circulated without his knowledge ?

Mr. Jones :—Certainly not, My Lord.

The Judge :—Were these papers sent in such a manner as the people would understand that they were circulated and directed from the Bengal Office ?

Mr. Jones :—They were, my Lord.

The Judge :—Was there anything in the envelope to show or to make any person suppose that the papers were not sent by the Government.

Mr. Jones :—None, my Lord.

The Judge:—I wish to know whether the course adopted in the Bengal Office in this case as to the circulation of the papers, had ever been followed before ?

Mr. Jones :—I have frequently circulated Native publications indicating Native feeling, and education, and improvement.

The Judge :—Have you read this publication ?

Mr. Jones :—I have not read half a page of it, my Lord.

The Judge :—Have you been in Court the whole day ? And have you heard the passages read by the learned Counsel for the prosecution ?

Mr. Jones :—I have, my Lord ; for first time this I knew its contents.

The Judge :—Have you seen similar productions to this before ?

Mr. Jones :—Within the range of my recollection I don't believe I have seen a similar one.

William Frederick Fergusson, examined :—This prosecution is instituted by the Landholders' Association of British India. The prosecution was instituted by the unanimous resolution of the members. I have perused the pamphlet, and have no doubt that it applies to the planters in Bengal. I think it would create much ill feeling.

By Mr. Eglinton :—No objection has been made by any member of the Association to proceed with this prosecution. I only heard one adverse opinion in respect to prosecuting Mr. Long ; and that was an objection to prosecuting a poor tool when there was a chance of flying at much higher game.

Simon de Cruz, examined :—I saw the distribution list a fortnight or a month ago ; it was in my department of the Bengal Office. Mr. Jones sent for it. An assistant took it away.

Mr. Jones, recalled :—I don't recollect receiving any list. I have been away a month. It could only be removed by the Secretary.

Mr. Cowie applied that the case for the prosecution might stand over until the document was searched for, and the Court having concurred, the case was adjourned until 11 o'clock of the following day.

SATURDAY, JULY 20th.

At the opening of the Court, a minor official of the Bengal Office was called for with a view to produce the missing distribution list ; but on an intimation from the Counsel for the defence, Mr. Cowie called, and proceeded with the examination of

E. Lushington, Esq, C.S., Secretary to the Government of Bengal. He produced the list of names of persons to whom the Nil Durpan was to be distributed. The list written in two different hands ; one was that of a clerk in his office,

the other was unknown to him. He did not know Mr. Long's handwriting. There was nothing written on the list to show that it was connected with the Nil Durpan. He found the list in his drawer where it had been kept ever since, except for a short period when it was borrowed by Mr. SETON-KARR. He could not say if Mr. Long had seen it since he had come in possession of it. The distribution of Nil Durpan took place before he took office.

Mr. Eglinton here admitted part of the list to be in the defendant's handwriting.

Cross-examined by Mr. Eglinton :—Had a great number of copies of the Nil Durpan in his possession, probably 200. When he took office, he took those copies into his own particular custody.

By the Court :—The copies were not distributed, but kept back on account of the proceedings taken in this Court. Did not believe that the persons, named in the small list in his hand, were those to whom the Government were in the habit of sending books in the Native languages and of Native composition, to show the style of literature and state of feeling among the Natives.

Cross-examinations by Mr. Eglinton, continued :—There have been several distributions of books since he had held office.

Mr. Peterson :—Would put into Court a proof copy of the Nil Durpan, marked *A*, and a corrected copy marked *A1* and two exhibits marked *C* and *C1*, being the distribution lists.

This closed the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Eglinton rose and said that, on whatever points he might disagree with Mr. Peterson, he must agree with him as to the importance of the decision of the Jury, not only as it regarded Mr. Long, but also as it concerned freedom of discussion and the public welfare. He could not forget what great interests would be affected by the decision of the Jury, nor could he forget that this case was a topic of conversation throughout the country, and created the most intense interest ; he therefore addressed the Jury with great diffidence, but not with the slightest misgiving as to their verdict, for he felt that he could so disprove the charges made against his client that no Jury would be justified in finding him guilty. In cases of this sort, semi-political in their nature, it was not uncommon for the Counsel to call upon a Jury to dismiss from their minds any political bias

that might make them lean towards either side. In this case it was peculiarly necessary that the Jury should not entertain an idea favourable to either the defendant or his accusers. The subject of this action had been discussed *usque ad nauseam* in the papers, and it was impossible that any Juryman would be perfectly void of some private feeling on this subject. But he felt convinced that they would judge the case on its merits ; that is, on the evidence as it supported or failed to support the terms of the indictment. Perhaps it was unnecessary for him to refer to the status, high position, and calling of the defendant. He had been known for many years past as a man of high honour, a gentleman whose character was blameless and without reproach. For this reason the learned Counsel addressed the Jury under peculiarly advantageous circumstances. The antecedents of Mr. Long and a view of his past career would prove, notwithstanding the observations of his learned friend, that he did not merit the obloquy of any one, and that he was not a likely person to commit the act, of which he stood charged, with any malicious intention. Mr. Long's position and status denied such an accusation, and the learned Counsel, in corroboration, would call attention to the names of the gentlemen who went bail for him. They were Mr. Hutton, a chaplain and Bishop's commissary, and Mr. Stuart, also a clergyman and Secretary to the Church Mission Society. When the defendant was supported by men of such rank and standing the Jury might be sure that his antecedents would bear the minutest test. Having made these prefatory remarks, the learned Counsel would proceed to consider the case itself. But before entering into the charge itself, he would bring to the notice of the Jury the mode of procedure adopted against him. His learned friend, Mr. Peterson, appeared to have been labouring under a difficulty on that point. There were three courses open to the prosecutors ; the first was a civil action, which the learned Counsel on the other side considered himself shut out from, by technical reasons. But there was another fair, open and manly mode of procedure, much more so than the one adopted, which was the harshest known in the English law. Though the prosecutors were not able to institute a civil action for technical reasons, they could at all events have applied for a criminal information. The Jury might not be acquainted with the nature of that proceeding ; he would therefore give some explanation regarding it. It was a mode of proceeding which did not close the defendant's mouth. The cases were

fully investigated by a Full Bench before they came to a jury. A rule *nisi* was applied for, and either made absolute, or discharged. In the case of a rule being made absolute the case was considered fit for the investigation of a Jury. The prosecutors had thrown this matter before a Jury without giving Mr. Long a chance of opening his mouth on his own behalf. The mode of procedure would win for the defendant the sympathy of the Jury, as in this country he was debarred from certifying or disavowing his connection with the pamphlet. This was not the state of the law in Westminster Hall ; for, sixteen or seventeen years ago an Act was passed to enable a defendant to enter into the question of the truth of the the charge. The learned Counsel was sorry to say, the Act had not been extended to this country, but that state of things now existed here, which existed in England at the close of the last century when political animus ran high, and held great sway. The learned Counsel would call attention to 6th and 7th of Victoria and Lord Campbell's remarks thereon, which approved of those Acts as salutary measures, and considered it necessary for a defendant to be able to enter into the truth of allegations cast on him. The learned Counsel would argue that there was no publication of the alleged libel. He would then enter into the question of the truth of the innuendoes, and subsequently as to whether the publication was a libel generally. His learned friend Mr. Peterson had indulged in a very long address, and had made remarks which he considered quite foreign to the case between the Crown and the defendant. He had entered into a long disquisition on the subject of advance made for cultivation of Indigo. Had the learned Counsel thought it was necessary for the just performance of his duties to be acquainted with the relations between planter and ryot, he would not have accepted the case, as his Lordship knew he had only accepted the conduct of the defence when assured it had nothing to do with the cultivation of Indigo. A great fallacy, in his opinion, pervaded his learned friend's speech. He had assumed that the Native mind was greatly exasperated by this publication : this was the crying evil complained of throughout Mr. Peterson's address. It would have been a very proper complaint if the pamphlet had been published in the Native language, but not without. Then Mr. Peterson spoke of its wonderful circulation. He expected that he would produce evidence of the ryots being

seen sitting each under his own banyan-tree reading the publication to their wives and children. His learned friend had also stated that this drama was a libel on the Government, and the Civil Service as well as the Indigo planters. If this were the case, why had not the parties presented their own indictment ? This question seemed to have puzzled his learned friend. He could not answer it. It was perhaps because those persons had taken competent legal advice, and found that the matter was not libellous. He did not assert that this had been the case, it might or it might not have been so. There was another point which greatly affected Mr. Long's position. It was said that he skulked behind others, and he had been termed an anonymous libeller. At Manuel's trial, Mr. Long was most anxious to have his name given up as having ordered the printing of that pamphlet. There had not been the slightest attempt on the part of Mr. Long to shield himself ; on the contrary, he had put himself forward as much as any man could do, and most certainly did not deserve the reflections cast upon him. The Jury might remember that Manuel on his trial said he had not been pressed to give up Mr. Long's name. Did Mr. Peterson expect Manuel to come forward and make gratuitous statement ? There was no concealment, the case was all the other way, add if there was a libel. Mr. Long had certainly not hesitated to acknowledge the share he had taken in it. His learned friend had said a great deal about the author and translator. Mr. Long was neither the one nor the other, but that was quite immaterial. If he was the publisher, that would be sufficient for the Law if the publication was a libel. If there was any necessity, Mr. Long would at the proper time divulge the names of both author and translator provided his Counsel should consider it to have a bearing on the verdict. Before entering into the gist of the question, he would do what might be considered presumption on his part, namely, to tell them what in his opinion were their duties in this case. First, they had to decide whether or not Mr. Long is the publisher. On that point he thought the evidence clear and conclusive. That fact is sufficiently established by the order given to Manuel for the printing, and the portion of the list admitted to be in his hand. Mr. Peterson had indulged in some remarks on this point with a mysterious commencement, a mysterious end, and a mysterious middle,

which he had not been able to understand. A simple fact, the giving of the manuscripts to the printer was not denied, and if that was not sufficient to establish the question of the publication, the list clinched the matter. The next question was the truth of the innuendoes set out in the indictment which involved a question, the solution of which he considered, the most important duty of the Jury ; that question was as to the truth of the matter in the indictment. He did not think so, and held Mr. Peterson's views to be incorrect. The third question was as to whether it was a libel or not. This was more within the province of a Jury to decide. In the last century, when political animus ran high, the Jury decided the first and second questions only, and the third was left to the Judge. This course was found to give the Judge too much power, and it was altered so as to enable the Jury to decide the question of libel and to allow the Judge to express his opinion on their decision.

The learned Counsel would not trespass much longer on their time, and would now consider the counts in the indictment without entering into the preliminary points. In the first count, the preface to the drama is set out, and a small portion of it treated as a libel on Mr. Brett, the editor of the *Englishman*. He would read the passage, and answer that it was no libel, and he hoped to be able to convince the Jury so. He did not intend to cast the slightest reflection on Mr. Brett, or the *Englishman* newspaper. Mr. Brett was a most respectable man, a man of high honor, so far as the learned Counsel knew, and far be it from the learned Counsel to question his honesty and integrity. Still the learned Counsel thought that editors and managers of newspapers should be the last persons to come into a Court and prefer complaints about public books, pamphlets or prints. Nowhere are criticisms so freely made on public acts, and perhaps on private character, as by the press of India. That press had deservedly a high character, yet he must say that there had been and still were, writings in that press, which were much stronger than they should be. For this reason an editor should be the last person to come into the Court so thin-skinned and prefer a complaint of a libel ; yet if himself aggrieved, he certainly had a right to ask for justice at he hands of that Court. The learned Counsel would dissect this alleged libellous matter. He read the passage, and observed that he really thought it amounted at most to an insinuation, that editors

wrote up the interest of the Indigo planters for fee and reward, and certainly if it implied nothing further, it was no libel. Mr. Peterson had given the jury his interpretation of the passage, but they must not on those grounds take it as a libel. They must judge for themselves. If they thought it implied no more than he had said, it was not a libel, because everyday there were newspapers, books and pamphlets written to advance a particular interest, as Mr. Brett had himself allowed in his evidence. Was it not a fact that every section of the community had its particular organ in London, from the highest conservative to the lowest radical ? Some among them favored the interests not only of the Established Church but of a hundred other sects. Some advocated the interests of the Law, some those of the Government, some those of the merchants, in short, every phase of life was represented by men who advocated its interests for money, and not for money alone, but for a livelihood, and the learned Counsel considered it a fair, legitimate, and honorable profession. It was this that was implied by the passage he had read and nothing more. The learned Counsel did not know if Mr. Peterson meant to compare editors with Judas Iscariot, and if the Jury believed his argument. They would see that this reference to Judas Iscariot was an illustration and not a comparison, which were very different. He would thus leave that portion of the case to them, first stating that if Mr. Brett thought that passage reflected on him, he was quite justified in bringing the matter into Court, but they must be quite satisfied on the question of libel or no libel before they gave a verdict.

Before proceeding to the consideration of the second count, which referred to the general body of Indigo planters, the learned Counsel must observe that it was a most unusual thing of a case to connect a private individual with one of a large body of men like the Indigo planters, and this method was calculated to embarrass Mr. Long in his defence. He would now consider the second count in the indictment. It alleged a libel upon the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal, and he must say that his learned friend Mr. Peterson had delivered himself of a good deal of indignation on the subject of those grievances. And more so than the planters themselves. Several friends of his connected with the Indigo interest were in Court, and he thought they looked very cheerful, and not at all like

men suffering from the sting of injurious calumnies. He did not think that there was a single planter who cared one farthing about the publication of the Nil Durpan. They were too well aware of their position. He believed that there was another motive for the prosecution, and not the one alleged of unmerited aspersions. Another observation suggested itself to him, viz. that if the planters had really felt themselves hurt, they would long ago have taken proceedings against the publishers of the Native copies promulgated, through the Indigo interest. If any copies did harm, surely they were the Native ones. As no proceedings had been taken, as they had waited so long, and judging from their placid demeanour, he felt satisfied that they did not feel themselves aggrieved. Yet that was no reason they should not complain if there had been a libel. He would argue there had not been, on four separate points. The first reason was that the parties maligned were not a definite body, and it was utterly oppossed to the rule in cases of libel that such a body could prefer an indictment. His learned friend seemed to have anticipated such an objection being raised, and he did raise it, and insisted strongly on it. Mr. Peterson referred the jury to three cases ; he would not trouble them with a long legal disquisition, but would briefly show how different those cases were from the present one. He did not deny that great public bodies had a right to prefer an indictment, but what a difference there was between a corporate body like the Directors of the East India Company, or the clergymen of the diocese of Durham, and a body like that of the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. They were met with here and there at intervals of 20 or 40 miles ! They had no connection with each other, no identity, no corporate existence, no association properly so called, not a single interest in common as was the case in the examples referred to by his learned friend. Mr. Peterson had been compelled to go so far back as of George II 1732. There was a case of some Portuguese Jews lately come from Portugal. A criminal information was prayed for regarding the murder of a Jewish woman. These Jews were represented to have lately come from Portugal and to be living in Broad Street. This at once established a connection between them, which did not exist among the Indigo planters. The case against the clergymen of the diocese of Durham was like-

wise dissimilar, for they all belonged to the Established Church, and that formed a bond of union between them. The case against the Directors of the East India Company was also different, for they were a corporate body, and any individual member might take to himself the libel on them all. A corporate body was entirely different from a body like the Indigo planters who had no collective existence, and if the Jury decided that a libel would lie in this case they would carry the Law further than it ever had been done before. Suppose now the policy-holders of Lower Bengal should prefer a complaint, the question would naturally arise who are they ? As another illustration he would say, suppose the lawyers of Bengal were to prefer an indictment, would that term include Judges ? He would be too sorry to say the Judges were no lawyers, which they were, and admirable ones. Would it include Barristers, Vakeels and Pleaders of the Small Cause Court ? It would be most unsafe to sanction the preferring of a complaint by such a body. Further, he would ask why the Indigo planters of Upper Bengal had not been included as well as those of Lower Bengal. By the preferment of this indictment the Jury had been asked to do what no Jury had ever been asked to do before. Supposing the doors to be thus thrown open to litigation, why should not the ryots subscribe together and indict any editor or writer whom they might consider to have libelled them ? A corporate body having a common interest had a right to come into the Court and prefer a complaint if they felt themselves aggrieved ; but the learned Counsel entirely denied that right where parties were concerned who had no corporate existence.

His second ground for opposing the charge of libel was that the publication was a drama, and not a pamphlet, and by every principle of propriety, usage, and custom no other character but that of a fiction could be assigned to a drama. He could not deny that there were atrocious characters such as Wood and Rose, represented in the play, but the jury's dramatical experience would teach them that every play had its evil genius. Because a certain barrister, clergyman or merchant is a scoundrel of the deepest dye, is that a reason that all barristers, clergymen, and merchants are of the same stamp ? It could not be denied that personages embodying half-a-dozen vices were introduced ; but because one possesses

vices is he to be considered a representative of his class ? No, certainly not, and therefore the monstrosities, Wood and Rose, are not to be taken as types of their class. If this was a libel the finest literature of ancient and modern times must be shut out. Look at Moliere's works ; they are but a series of venomous caricatures of the clergy and medical profession. But he need not go to foreign literature ; he would refer to works of the present day. It was a very common and growing practice to illustrate in books the state of society. 'Oliver Twist,' for example, which was written with the sole intent and purpose of doing away with the work-house system as formerly carried out ; it had been successful. Another work by the same author 'Nicholas Nickleby' was intended to expose and crush the abuses in Yorkshire schools. Were any legal proceedings instituted against Mr. Dickens ? No though many Yorkshire schoolmasters would have liked to do so had they dared, but they knew no jury would support them. The same difficulty occurred in defining Yorkshire schoolmasters, as in the case of the Indigo planters. There was another work to which he would call the attention of the Jury, namely, the Confession of Maria Monk. That book was devoted solely to expose malpracties alleged to have been carried on in convents and nunneries. There were no steps taken in the matter because the good sense of the parties avoided it. Mr. Harriet Becher Stowe's work 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was another instance. If the prosecutors in this case had cause to complain, surely the slave-holders had greater cause of complaint. The American law allowed actions for libel, yet none had been instituted, because Legree was not accepted as a type of the slave-holding populations ; so also Wood and Rose could not have been meant by the author as an embodiment and type of the Indigo planters. Another work in the Hindustani language had excited considerable attention here ; he referred to *Panchkowrie Khan* a work on the system of the Moffussil Courts. Many gentlemen might have been annoyed at it, yet no legal exception was taken to it, and why ? Because it was not a case for indictment. He thus left that portion of the case to the Jury. As to whether the matter was libellous or not, he would say that no general accusation could be charged on account of the atrocities committed by Wood and Rose, who must be

looked upon as the Legree of "Uncle Tom's Cabin". The learned Counsel proceeded to read extracts from the Nil Durpan, and to comment thereon. He pointed out passages in which Indigo planters were well spoken of, in order to show that if this pamphlet fell into the hands of the ryots they would know that there was a bright side to the picture as well as a dark one. His learned friend had observed that there were other parties maligned in the Nil Durpan besides the Indigo planters. It was self-evident that strong remarks were made in that publication with reference to missionaries and the civil service, but those remarks were quite different from such as would constitute a libel or justify the jury in returning a verdict of guilty against the defendant. The learned Counsel's fourth reason for denying the libel was the question of malice. In Law, if a person was found guilty of a libel, that was prima facie evidence of a malicious intention. If, notwithstanding Mr. Peterson's observations, the Jury were of opinion that Mr. Long had no cause of complaint against the Indigo planters, or any motive to traduce or injure them, there had been no malice proved. He submitted with perfect confidence the fact that Mr. Long approached his subject with a perfectly unbiassed mind, and had done merely what he had been doing for many years in this country. He had had much to do with the Native community commenting on their publications as a proof of their style of literature and thoughts. He preferred to leave this part of the case to the work itself, and probably Mr. Long's feelings were best conveyed in the preface, which is expressive of a desire for conciliation between planter and ryot. His learned friend had made some very severe remarks which were not justified by the evidence. Mr. Long repudiated several notions contained in that pamphlet, and he had only become the publisher of that work with a view of illustrating the Native opinion. The learned Counsel felt strongly on this case, and must say that if the Jury gave a verdict of guilty, they would be carrying the law further than it had ever been done. This was a case of the last importance to Mr. Long ; it was likely to interfere with his prospects as a clergyman, nor was it a less important case for the country generally. Therefore he hoped the Jury would not be led away by any remarks, but give the subject their calm and temperate consideration with regard to the evidence and the work

itself. Thus he left the case in the hands of the Jury in the full confidence that they would give a verdict compatible with truth and justice.

Mr. Eglinton asked permission for Mr. Long to read a statement, to which Mr. Peterson objected.

The Court considered it irregular to allow it be read, but recommended Mr. Eglinton to read it as part of his speech. Mr. Peterson was quite willing that it should be read, but if it contained any new facts he should consider himself entitled to a reply.

Mr. Eglinton then declined to read it.

No witnesses were produced for the defence.

His Lordship then addressed the Jury, telling them that now the case for the defendant had closed, it remained for them to determine the question of guilty or not guilty. He had never felt deeper anxiety in the discharge of his judicial duties because a question was involved in the consideration of this case, which had been but faintly glanced at by the learned Counsel on either side. The question he alluded to was a great constitutional one, being of the liberty of the press and the freedom of discussion in public writing ; and the remarks he would make on that subject would not have been left unsaid by a Single Judge in England, and he felt convinced, would meet the views of the learned Chief Justice of that Court. It was the first time such a question had been submitted to a Jury in India, for this was the first prosecution of the kind, as he believed, that had taken place in India, and it therefore behoved the Jury to consider not the history of India but that of England, to see how Juries had dealt with this all-important question ; important to the body of men who alleged that they had been most cruelly slandered, important to the reverend defendant, important to every human being throughout the length and breadth of this country, because it concerned every man ; a question that, it should never be said, had been lightly passed over by the presiding Judge of this Court. He would not rely on his own personal opinions, but those which had been well established and accepted as authorities at Westminster Hall. The Indictment contained two counts. He would first deal with the first count, and then come to the all-important question involved in the second. The first count deserved the most serious attention, and His Lordship could not agree with

Mr. Eglinton in dismissing it so abruptly from their notice. How far it was wise for those respectable gentlemen who conducted public journals to enter into a question of libel was not for the Jury to determine. That was beyond their province and beyond his. They had to consider the proprietor of a newspaper as an ordinary individual, for though an editor was necessarily possessed of great power and influence, yet every individual had the same right to freedom of discussion ; and, on the other hand, if an editor was maligned he had as perfect a right to seek redress from the Courts of Justice as any other person. His Lordship would give no opinion, nor would he invite the Jury to do so, as to how far it was wise in those who should place themselves in the foremost ranks to contend for the liberty of the press to come into that Court as prosecutors in a case of libel. The only question for their consideration was whether the publication was a libel or not. There was no disguise in the fact that the first count stood on quite a different footing to the second ; and His Lordship must say that this mode of indictment, so far as it related to the second count, did not entirely meet with his approbation, because a personal wrong and injury was, to a certain extent, mixed up with a public one. If the gentleman who conducted the *Englishman* felt himself aggrieved, his redress might have been a civil action ; but if he preferred, instead of putting damages in his pocket, to vindicate his character by a criminal prosecution, he had a perfect legal right to do so. The first count referred to a libel or supposed libel on the two leading journals of the city of Calcutta. He did not wish unduly to influence the Jury in giving their verdict, but it remained for them to say if those two papers were meant by the allusions in the preface to the pamphlet. There was at present, that is to say, as regards the first count, only one part of the book relied on by Mr. Peterson, viz. the author's preface. There had been no observation made on the first part, and he would read the passage complained of. (His Lordship here read the preface). The Jury had to deliberate if that was a libel. They must first consider if the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers alluded to. How did the evidence bear on this point ? Mr. Brett had stated in his evidence that he had been for two years managing proprietor, and was formerly joint editor, and was now sole editor of the

Englishman newspaper, and that he believed, from the views he had naturally adopted and expressed upon the evidence given before the Government Commission to enquire into the unhappy disputes between the planters and ryots, that it was to his paper that the libel pointed. The Jury must not look at this question in a quibbling manner, but as they would view the ordinary affairs of life. They must exercise their common sense, and he would ask if there could be any doubt on the evidence that the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers pointed at. That was one question which had been raised for the defence for other considerations. The Counsel for the defence had examined Mr. Brett as to whether there were other daily papers in India, and he had answered that certainly there were others at Bombay and Madras, but the contents of the pamphlet shewed that they could not have been referred to. Had newspapers in Madras and Bombay nothing of more immediate interest to their local interests and constituency to write about than the cultivation of Indigo in Lower Bengal ? In His Lordship's opinion it was trifling with their understanding to say that the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were not the papers pointed at. Then, if that question were answered in the affirmative, it remained to be seen whether or not the language adopted amounted to a libel. They must judge if it cast a doubt on the honor and integrity of those who had the important duty of conducting these journals, whether they were men likely to be attracted by filthy lucre to advocate any side of any opinion, whether or not they were men capable, for the sake of gain, of being corrupted to advocate any set of views, to the injury of others, and to abstain from giving vent to the honest opinions which their conscience might dictate. It was important to the interests of public liberty that rights of the Press should be amply shielded.

The second part of the passage ran as follows :—(It was here read by His Lordship.)

Did that mean, or did it not mean that those respectable gentlemen who conduct newspapers in Calcutta would sell the best interests of society for Rs. 1000, that they would sacrifice the welfare of society to the promotion for a corrupt purpose of private interests ? If it meant that, would it not be a libel ! That the jury had to determine. His Lordship had a right, according to the law, to express his opinion, as a matter of advice to them in

deciding that question ; but he would rather leave it entirely to them. If those gentlemen had not belonged to the press but had been private individuals, how would the case have stood if such persons had been charged with taking bribes to vilify the character of a neighbour for £100 ? Would they not lay themselves open to such disgrace that they could never again hope to hold up their heads among their fellow men ?

It seems to be perfectly settled that any reflection on a man's character calculated to bring him into ridicule and contempt, or to expose him to public hatred, amounts to a libel in the indictable sense of the word. Therefore, it remained for the jury to decide whether that passage did or did not reflect on Mr. Brett as managing proprietor and editor of the *Englishman* newspaper.

The first count might be important to Mr. Brett, but the second count concerned the interests of society at large, and his Lordship hoped the jury would anxiously realize the importance of the question involved in the second count. He hoped every one of the jury would apply his utmost intelligence to the solution of that question, and maintain an earnest and strong guard over his sympathies, for unless they kept their sympathies under control they might commit an injury on society at large. The second count was the alleged libel on that portion of the community designated as the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. Mr. Eglinton contended that a libel would not lie against a class, and that this count was too general, and not sufficiently pointed ; but His Lordship was sure the jury would defer to his opinion, and he entertained no sort of doubt that an indictment would lie, though no particular individual was referred to. This question had long been decided in Westminster Hall, that general imputations upon a body of men are indictable. Though no individual can be pointed out, it is not necessary they should reflect upon the character of any particular individual. In the case of *Rex V. Osborne*, 2, *Barnhardiston*, 138, an information was prayed against the defendant for publishing a paper containing an account of a murder committed upon a Jewish woman and her child by certain Jews lately arrived from Protugal, and it was objected that no information could be granted because it did not appear in particular who the persons reflected upon were ; but the Court granted the information, because many Jews in many

parts of the city had been threatened with death. In the case of *Rex V. Williams,* 5 B. and A. 597, when a publication stated that upon the death of Her late Majesty none of the bells of the several churches in Durham were tolled, and ascribed this omission to the clergy, and then proceeded to make some very severe observations on that body, a criminal information was granted ; and in *Rex V. Burdett,* 4 B. and A. it was held that it was a libel to impute crime to any of the King's troops, though it did not define what troops in particular were referred to, and that the innuendo of "the said troops" meant the undefined part of those troops. In *Rex V. Jenour 7 Mod.* 400, Lec. C. J. observed :- "When a paper is published equally reflecting upon a number of people it reflects upon all readers according to their different opinions may apply it so, and other decisions in which classes of the public had sought redress for calumnious charges. The jury would, therefore, accept from him the principle that a libel might be levelled against a class as against an individual. He would now ask them to decide whether or not the libel pointed to the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. This, and all circumstances connected with the pamphlet, the Jury would have to decide.

A criminal intention is the essence of the offence of libel, and this question the jury would have to decide. Lord Mansfield in delivering the judgement of the Court in *Rex V. Woodfall,* 5 Burr, 2661, observed : "When an act, in itself indifferent, becomes criminal when done with a particular intent, then the intent must be proved and found. But when the act in itself is unlawful, as in the case of a libel, the proof of justification or excuse lies on the defendant, and in failure thereof the law implies a criminal intent." Lord Mansfield, in the same case, expresses himself further : "There may be cases where the publication may be justified or excused as lawful or innocent, for no act which is not criminal, though the paper be a libel, can amount to such a publication of which a defendant ought to be found guilty." The doctrine, thus clearly expressed, has always been considered as a settled principle of Law. In *Rex V. Crecevy,* I. M. and T., 272, Lord Ellenborough stated : "The only question is whether the occasion of the publication rebuts the inference of malice arising from it." Mr. Justice Le Blanc says : "where the publication is defamatory, the law infers malice, unless anything

can be drawn from the circumstances of the publication to rebut that inference". In *Rex V. Harvey* Mr. Justice Bayley says, "assuming malice to be necessary in all cases to constitute a libel, malice ought to be inferred from the publication of defamatory matter, unless some excuse for the publication be shewn." In the same case Mr. Justice Best says, "malice is the gist of this prosecution. Malice in law relative to libel means legal malice." Whatever your opinion may be as regards the contents of the books ; however much you may condemn the filthy and immoral allusions in different parts of this pamphlet, still you would not be justified in finding a verdict of guilty, unless you are clearly of opinion that the manner of the publication and circulation does not rebut the inference of malice. That decision was given in a State prosecution, and meant that if there was an absence of circumstances showing that the defendant was actuated by an honest and conscientious belief that he was promoting the interests of society, it remained for the jury to consider how far the conduct of the defendant was liable to the charge of a criminal intention. That was entirely a matter for their determination. Until the passing of Fox's Act, (which had been occasioned by repeated differences between Judges and Juries, and was immediately caused by a dispute between Mr. Erskine and Mr. Justice Buller in the well-known case of *Rex V. Dean of St. Asaph*) the Jury and Judge pulled in different directions, the Court endeavouring to annihilate altogether the province of the Jury, and Juries often times receiving with disgust and alienation the directions of the Judge, until the Act was passed, which was stated to be declaratory of the law. This Act, the 32 Geo, III, C 50, gave the jury full power to determine the question of libel, and there was afterwards no attempt on the part of the Judges to dictate that question. The Judge was still at liberty to state his opinion as to the question of libel or no libel. He would read extracts from cases to show the extent of freedom of discussion and the liberty of the press. (These extracts were read.) It is the undoubted right of every member of the community to publish his own opinion, on all subjects of public and common interest ; and so long as he exercises this inestimable privilege candidly, honestly, and conscientiously, he is not amenable as a criminal. The people have a right to

discuss any grievance that they have to complain of. In *Rex V. Thomas Packe*, Mr. Erskine in his celebrated speech, on behalf of the defendant, contended "that every man not intending to mislead but seeking to enlighten others with what his own reason and conscience, however erroneously, have dictated to him as truth, may exert his whole faculties in pointing out the most advantageous changes in establishments which he considers to be radically defective or sliding from their object of this country, has a right to do, if he contemplates only what he thinks would be for its advantage, and but seeks to change the public mind by the conviction which flows from reasonings dictated by conscience." In the same case Mr. Erskine uttered these remarkable words—"As infallibility and prefection belong neither to human individuals nor to human establishments, except to be the policy of all free nations, as is most peculiarly the principle of our own, to permit the most unbounded freedom of discussion." I believe in the present day the opinions so expressed by this truly great and good man, are recognised as sound and constitutional principles, and which I unhesitatingly put forth for your consideretion and guidance in determining the all —important question of libel or no libel.

In a recent case, *Rex V. Collins,* Mr. Justice Littledale (in summing up) says, "every man has a right to give every public matter a candid, full, and free discussion. The people have a right to discuss any grievances that they have to complain of." Many other cases establish the same doctrine. Supposing the pamphlet in qeustion was a libel in their opinion, it remained to be seen whether Mr. Long had been actuated by an honest and conscientious conviction that he was acting for the best interests of society, not merely reflecting the opinion of the Native community, as had been suggested on his behalf ; for, this, he was bound to say, would not afford a shadow of an excuse. The question was whether or not the act of Mr. Long in publishing and circulating the book would negative the legal inference of malice. If Mr. Long had acted as the tool of a Native community, that would be no justification whatever, unless he had a conscientious belief at the time that he was forwarding the interests of society by publishing that pamphlet. How were corruptions to be attacked if the liberty of the press were not to exist ? Did not the press

fairly claim the privilege of attacking men in authority, men of high station in the Church, and in the profession to which His Lordship has the honor to belong ? When there existed abuses, there the press had a right to comment upon them, and rightly too ; and it is perfectly lawful to discuss the merits of the decisions of a Judge, provided it be done with candour and decency. If the press were right, the Judge was wrong, and if the press attacked unjustly, the Judge, aided by that public opinion to which even the press must bow, could live it down. The Jury should not approach that great constitutional question, the liberty of the press, without being fully warned. It should never be said that he, as presiding Judge in that Court, failed to put these doctrines fully before the Jury, in a case which concerned the freedom of the press and of public discussion. He therefore did not hesitate to say that if the defendant, in publishing the pamphlet in question, were actuated solely by an honest and conscientious desire to inform the public of abuses, which he thereby hoped to ameliorate, and by no other motive, he would be within the pale of that privilege which the law afforded to every man who acted with good faith in the discharge of a public duty. And especially as a minister of religion would he be entitled to every protection in his efforts to suppress vice and ameliorate the public morals, even although he might in the warmth of feeling and language, express sentiments which should not be otherwise than painful to individuals addressed. The question for the Jury, therefore, would be whether or not upon a consideration of the whole contents of the pamphlet, which formed the subject of this prosecution, there was on the part of the defendant solely a desire, honestly and conscientiously, to benefit society, free from any admixture of other and less pure motives. That could only be determined by a perusal of the document in question, and the passages which had been complained of in the opening speech of the learned Counsel for the prosecution.

It is perfectly true, as stated by Mr. Eglinton in his very able speech, that in an indictment for a libel the defendant cannot plead that the contents are true. In England under 6 and 7 Vict. c. 96 known as Lord Campbell's Act, the defendant may, by way of defence, allege the truth of the matters charged ; and further, that it was for the public benefit. If the learned Counsel meant to

suggest that Mr. Long is injuriously deprived of the privilege of proving the contents of the publication to be true, the question must be asked, could he under any state of circumstances, have adduced such proof. And as regards the question, how far it was for the public benefit, I shall emphatically, and I hope distinctly, state that you may take the whole matter into your consideration as to the real motive of Mr. Long, in publishing and circulating this Native drama. I think it right to make this observation, that, in my opinion, Mr. Long has difficulties to contend with in a criminal prosecution, which would not have been the case in a civil action.

His Lordship then proceeded to read *seriatim* the various passages referred to, commenting on them as bearing on the question of the absence of any other motive than the *bona fide* desire to enlighten and influence the public on a controversy in which he honestly believed the statements put forward. Adverting to that part of the pamphlet in which in the course of a dialogue in the drama, one of the parties is represented as saying of the wife of an Indigo planter, "She has no shame," &c., and to a passage in which the Magistrate of the district is suggested to be under the influence of the planter's wife in the decisions given by him in his Court. His Lordship said he approached the subject, as every man must, with sorrow and disgust. For although the defendant may not be criminally responsible for the publication of the book, the insinuation contained in this passage was one that ought not to be have been published by a clergyman. After reading and commenting on the passage, he said it was for the Jury to say whether it could bear any other interpretation than that suggested by Mr. Peterson, that the wives of the Indigo planters, of which the type was propounded in the drama, were persons who were in the habit of debasing themselves in the manner suggested for the purpose of forwarding the worldly interests of their husbands. It was urged that it only related to some exceptional instance, but the Jury would consider from the whole tenor of the pamphlet whether such were the case. Reading some of the passages in this book and the following passage in the author's preface : "I present the Indigo Planting Mirror to the Indigo planters' hands ; now let every one of them having observed his face, erase the freckle of the stain of selfishness from his forehead." It was impossible

to speak of them otherwise than as filthy insinuation against a society of helpless ladies who, under the mask of a general type, were cruelly stabbed in the dark. If it meant anything it was not merely a slander against the wives of planters, but also against the Magistrates and the planters. The Jury, the civilians, the soldiers, and merchants in this country alike had their common origin from that middle class whose daughters were here so shamefully maligned. Those ladies came to this country to share a life of toil and hardship with their husbands, far from the friendship and protection of their friends and were entitled to be respected and protected. He had been told that, that publication was an expression of the Native feeling. If so, every intelligent and respectable Native in that Court must have been ashamed to hear such a statement. He had many personal friends among both Civilians and Indigo planters, and he must say that he could not help feeling that it was most cowardly to attack the planters through their wives, and their wives through the Magistrates. Would they believe that those women were in the habit of debasing themselves in order to gain the decision of Magistrates who were bound by oath to administer the law with strict impartiality ? Would they believe that those Magistrates were in the habit of violating the solemn obligations of their duty and conscience in the manner suggested ? He wished the Jury distinctly to understand that, however much they may condemn these allusions to the wives of the planters, unless they believed Mr. Long translated, published, and circulated such expresstions he is not criminally responsible unless actuated by a malicious motive. Then, as bearing on the question of *bona fides* in making this publication for the benefit of society, it has been contended by the learned Counsel representing the Crown that such slanders could not have been published by a clergyman of the Established Church of England with a *bona fide* and conscientious belief that it would forward the interests of society ? It might have been fitting in him to raise the charge of oppression, extortion and cruelty against planters. But what public good would it subserve to publish these filthy allusions to the prostitution of the Native women to the planters ? When he (the learned Judge) read these passages he blushed to think a clergyman of the Established Church of England could have lent himself to the propagation of such obscene language

and thoughts. It might have been urged that he disavowed those sentiments, and he (the learned judge) had fully expected to hear some disavowal of them at the outset of the trial, some explanation, possibly that they had been overlooked in the hurry of publication ; but the case had gone on and had come to close without an apology, or retraction of the insinuations against English women on the part of the defendant or his Counsel. He would read another passage, and ask the Jury what was meant but an improper influence on the part of the wives of the Indigo planters over the Magistrate, who allowed himself to be influenced in his decisions by what might be the conduct of the Indigo planter's wife towards him. If any other construction could be put upon that passage, no one would rejoice more than His Lordship and it was for the jury, and the jury alone, to decide any question of fact involved in the case. That statement was sent to England without a word of explanation or caution ; and every civilian, merchant, and he hoped every clergyman, would agree that such a statement should never have been sent to England for circulation.

Then, again, as bearing on the question of *bona fides* in the publication and circulation, the jury would take into consideration the evidence as to the lists which had been produced that morning. His Lordship had asked Mr. Lushington whether the persons mentioned in the smaller list were those to whom the Government of Bengal were in the habit of sending copies of works to shew the style of Native literature and the state of Native society. (His Lordship here read out the small list printed below.) It commenced with the Secretary of the Aborigines Society, and the Peace Societies, and included the names of the Earl of Albemarle, Messrs. Bright and Cobden, the members of Council of India, Mr. Marshman, and Mr. Layard. Those names included members of Parliament, clergymen, and religious societies, and these were the parties that were to receive copies of the Nil Durpan according to the reverend defendant's own desire. A man had a perfect right to send privately any document to Government which tended to ameliorate the state of society, but not to publish to the world charges which he cannot substantiate or does not honestly and conscientiously believe. Whatever might be the decision of the Jury regarding a criminal

satisfaction of feeling that, that all-important question, the liberty of the press and freedom of discussion had been fully ventilated by him. It should never be said that, that great constitutional question had been frittered away on that bench. Not a single withdrawal had been made by Mr. Long. It was fitting for him to have disavowed his belief in the statements regarding the wives of Indigo planters before his defence had closed. The Jury had a great question to decide, and he begged them, for the sake of the great interests that were at stake, to consider well and anxiously their verdict. They had read the history of England, and could not be ignorant of the priceless value of the liberty of the press. Should they come to the conclusion that there was no criminal intention on the part of Mr. Long to degrade or bring into contempt and hatred the Indigo planters ; if they thought, moreover, that he asked honestly and and conscientiously and that he published the book solely for the benefit of society and religion, and for no other purpose, or that in the warmth of feeling he had incautiously adopted expressions without a criminal intention, they would give a verdict of 'not guilty.' If, on the other hand, they should find that with a disregard of the feelings of others, Mr. Long had become the willing instrument to express the feelings of the Native community, or was actuated by other than pure motives they would give a verdict of 'guilty.' His Lordship would now leave the case in the hands of the Jury, confident they would give such a verdict as truth and justice demanded.

His Lordship concluded, summing up the evidence at a little before 2 0'clock, and the Jury retired to consider their verdict. After an absence of about an hour and a half they returned to Court to enquire of the presiding Judge whether assuming that the defendant did not believe all the statements in the pamphlet to be true, it would be necessary to be shewn that he was actuated by malice in the publication before he could be found guilty.

His Lordship said that even supposing Mr. Long did not credit all the statements in the book, still if they believed that the defendant had published and circulated the book in question for the interest of society and that he conscientiously believed that the publication of such a book would tend to bring about a reform of the indigo system and was acting in a *bona fide* manner, he would be entitled to a verdict of acquittal. If, on the other hand, they were

satisfied from the contents of the book and the manner of publication and circulation, that the defendant had been actuated by a feeling of animosity towards the planters of Lower Bengal, with the view of degrading, injuring, and bringing this class into contempt and ridicule—for, in that case, the law would infer malice on the part of the defendant —the verdict must be 'guilty.'

The Jury thereupon retired again, and in about ten minutes brought in a verdict of 'guilty' on both counts. Mr. Eglinton requested that Judgement might not be given until the expiration of the four days, within which a new trial might be moved for, as the defendant might be desirous of moving an arrest of Judgement.

His Lordship said it was usual to assign some ground at the time in respect of which Judgement was to be arrested. What was the suggestion on which the motion was made ?

Mr. Eglinton said he was not prepared with any ground, and did not know that such motion would be made. but he merely asked for the time to consider the matter.

His Lordship said he had not intended to pass sentence at once. He saw no reason for allowing a delay of four days, but would reserve the sentence until Monday morning, when any application might be brought forward.

No. 1. *Revd. J. Long's Distribution List.*

Secretaries of Aborigines Protection Society.
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Church Mission Society.
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No. 2. *Bengal Office List.*

Secy of State. 20 copies.
Earl of Elenborough.
Earl de Grey and Ripon.
Viscount Raynham.
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Roundell Palmer.
Col. Sykes.
Sir Culling Eardly.
C. Newdegate.
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ENGLISH EDITORS

Daily News.
Economist.
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Madras Spectator.

24th July 1861

BEFORE THE FULL BENCH

The Court sat shortly after eleven o'clock, when the rule moved for on Monday last, for arrest of Judgement in the case of *The Queen V. James Long,* was proceeded with.

Mr. Eglinton, in support of the rule, argued that the indictment disclosed no legal offence on the face of it, and contended that both counts of the indictment were bad in law. He contended that the first count in the indictment, which charged the defandant with libelling Mr. Walter Brett, was not established, and read that portion of the preface to the Nil Durpan, which describes the part taken by the editors of the two daily papers. He took it that no suggestion of libel was implied against Mr. Brett in that passage, and upon that passage alone, he believed, the prosecution in the present case relied. That constituted his objection to the first count. He held that nothing was implied which, in point of law, would constitute libel. He apprehended that it would be quite unnecessary to cite any of the numerous authorities to prove what does or does not constitute libel, because he relied upon the Court being guided in their opinion by the decisions which the authorities had laid down with respect to libel, and he thought that the present case would not come within the meaning of any of those decided cases. The learned Counsel cited, in support, the case of *Digby V. Thompson,* P. 821, "Pleas of the Crown." In that

case no particular innuendo was implied and it was a case in some respects similar to the present. His friends on the other side relied upon the construction or meaning to be implied from that one sentence ; but the broad question was, would the sentence bear the meaning or construction which the prosecution contended, if read by a disinterested individual in the ordinary sense ? Would it, if read in the ordinary way of everyday life, amount in Law to a libel ? He contended that it would not. It would be necessary for him to dissect the passage, in order to shew to the Court that the sentence could not be construed in the sense implied by the prosecution. At most it only implied that Mr. Brett had written up the cause of the Indigo planters for money ; and he contended that could not be construed into bribery and corruption, and would not tend to turn him into contempt or ridicule among his fellowmen. And he thought that if he could shew to their Lordships that the passage in question was not susceptible of the construction put upon it by the prosecution, he would be entitled to have the first count on the indictment set aside as not borne out by the evidence. He would further contend that if the Court should be of opinion that the passage in the question was susceptible of double meaning or construction then the defendant was clearly entitled to any doubt. He would divide the passage into two portions ; the first commencing :—

"The editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What surprising power of attraction silver has !"

Now, if this passage were taken in its ordinary meaning, what does it prove ? What does it amount to ? Why, to this—that the editors of those two daily papers, of which Mr. Brett is allowed to be one, wrote up the cause of the Indigo planters for the purpose of reward. It says that the planters enjoy no pleasure from the praises sung by these papers ; this being meant to imply that a sort of reciprocal feeling existed, and that they were playing for the support afforded to them. He submitted that the meaning could not be stretched further. It must be read in the ordinary way—in the way that a stranger, having no previous knowledge of the circumstance, would

read it ; and he believed that any one so reading it, would put that construction upon it. He contended that it was entitled to one higher interpretation than that. With regard to the second portion of the passage, commencing :—

"The detestable Judas gave the great Preacher of Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder, then, if the proprietors of two newspapers, becoming enslaved by hope of gaining one thousand rupees, threw the poor helpless people of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths."

Now, the imputation in this portion of the passage, upon which the prosecution relies, is the comparison made between Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Saviour, and Mr. Brett, but he contended that it was not open to the construction put upon it by his learned friend. It was unfair to construe it into that meaning. Although this did not appear in the indictment, still he thought that was the interpretation made by the prosecution. He apprehended this was the libellous matter, and after the suggestion which he had offered, he thought the Court would be extremely chary in upholding the correctness of the first count if they had any doubt as to its meaning. They would rather lean in favour of the defendant than against him. He thought it was only by way of illustration, and not by comparison, that the words were made use of. Upon the question as to whether a libel in law had been proved he would refer their Lordships to the cases of *Robinson V. Jermyn,* "Price's Reports," P. 11 to a case reported in "Dowlings' Practice cases" and to "Holt on the Law of Libel" P 118. The case reported in Holt was similar to the present. No evidence was shewn which attached blame or impropriety to Mr. Brett in his private or public capacity ; he was merely charged with doing what in England and elsewhere was an everyday occurrence, namely, that he for fee or reward undertook to support, by means of his newspaper, the cause of the Indigo planters. Every man must obtain his livelihood in some way or another ; and it was an honourable and recognised way of gaining his living. Every large party or sect throughout the world had some organ to convey and espouse their particular cause. If the fact of upholding the cause of any particular party by means of newspaper writing were to constitute a libel, there would be no end to litigation. These were all the

remarks he had to make upon the first count. He might add that the sum of one thousand rupees mentioned as the bribe was in itself so utterly absurd, that no one could attach the meaning to it which the prosecution did ; but the entire wording was very obscure and doubtful. With respect to the count in the indictment he would submit this broad objection :—The count was preferred by the planters of Lower Bengal, and he contended that they could not, as a body, collectively prefer an indictment ; and he was prepared to cite several authorities in support of that view. He objected to the generality of the presentment, and held that they (Indigo planters) were not enabled, as a body, to institute an action for libel. He was nevertheless prepared to admit that some particular classes might, but that Indigo planters did not, constitute such a class.

The Chief Justice :—Do you mean to imply from your argument that the Queen has not the power of prosecuting any libel committed against any particular section or class of her subjects ?

Mr. Eglinton admitted that such a right undoubtedly existed, but he was prepared to show that the Indigo planters did not come within the meaning of a corporate body. He cited in support the case of *The King V. Osborn* 2 vol, Barnardiston, P. 166. In that case a particular section of the community was mentioned. But in the present case the Indigo planters had no corporate connection which would enable them to come in as a body. A material difference existed between the two cases. That was an old case, and it was questionable whether their Lordships would be inclined to receive it as an absolute authority. There had been only four or five authorities which bore directly on this point for many years, that is to say, bodies of individuals coming in and preferring indictments for libel. Some difference of opinion existed as to the way in which the case of *The King V. Osborn* was reported in "Swanston's Cases" but the general principle was the same. Again, in the *King V. Williams* reported in "Baker's Abridgement," the principle was clearly laid down. In that case the parties were described to the Jury as unknown, and he apprehended that, in this case, the Indigo planters, as a body, were equally unknown ; for what really constituted an Indigo planter ? It might be any man who cultivated a square inch of ground and sowed it with indigo. No number was mentioned, and he alleged there was nothing to show what or

who Indigo planters were. Another case in point was *The King v. Evans* Vol. III "Stark's *Nisi Prius* Reports."

Mr. Justice Wells asked if he (the learned Counsel) considered that if the Indigo planters were a corporate body with a seal, etc., they would be in a better position to come into Court.

Mr. Eglinton apprehended that would materially alter the case, proceeded to cite other cases, including *King v. Jenner*, *King v. Burdett*, reported in "Crown Cases." He submitted that the passage in the pamphlet which made mention of the wife of the planter could not be construed to men what the prosecution suggested. It was intended by the author to convey an idea of the Native feeling, and although not congenial to European tastes, still it showed the Native character. The Native idea of female etiquette was very different to ours ; and he contended that the innuendo raised by the prosecution would not suggest itself to the ordinary reader, or to one who was a stranger to the enmity and dislike which existed between the Indigo planters and the ryots. He submitted, generally, that the innuendoes throughout the indictment were not liable to the construction put upon them.

The Chief Justice—But, would English society adopt the same view as the learned Counsel in estimating the bearing of the contents of that pamphlet ?

Mr. Eglinton had nothing further to urge, and would ask their Lordships to consider the point which he had already raised.

Mr. Newmarch, on the same side, addressed their Lordships. Some doubt having been expressed by the Chief Justice as to whether it was usual for the Court to hear two counsels on the same side, on a motion for a rule *nisi*. Eventually, Mr. Newmarch was allowed to address the Court on the understanding that it should not form a precedent. The learned Counsel had only a few words to add to the remarks of his learned friend. He contended that if the principle were once conceded, a libel would not be too general if described as committed upon mankind at large. He also contended that the innuendoes were vague and undefined. The Indigo planters were only mentioned as a body without any reference to number. He thought that they did not exist in such a defined way as to allow of the present libel, if libel at all, being applied to them.

The Chief Justice was inclined to consider that the status of Indigo planters, as laid down in the indictment, was sufficiently distinct.

Mr. Newmarch differed from their Lordships, and thought that a libel on mankind in general would lie equally as well. Suppose it were said that the inhabitants of Lower Bengal had been libelled, he apprehended that no prosecution for a libel of so general a character could take place, because no one individual could fix the imputation upon himself. On these grounds he maintained that the class must be clearly defined to whom the libel is intended to apply. There was no allegation in the indictment which described the class that could feel themselves aggrieved by the libel.

After a short consultation,

The Chief Justice proceeded to deliver the judgement of the Court, observing that the motion before the Court was in arrest of judgment, and the Court were called on to say that no indictable offence had been committed ; but the Jury before whom the case was tried had found the defendant guilty upon both counts in the indictment, and they also found that the libel was published maliciously, which he understood to mean the law considered as inexcusable. The correctness of that verdict was not now the question before the Court. If it had been set up by the defence that the defendant had endeavoured to reform abuses, which in his belief existed, that would be ground for shewing that no criminal intention existed, but that question was not raised. The Jury found upon the two counts, and it was not for the Court to interfere with their province. The Chief Justice then went through each case cited by the Counsel from the authorities in detail, and showed that they bore no such interpretation in this case as was endeavoured to be put on them in support of the rule. He then proceeded to remark upon the indictment and Counsel's objection to it. Now, as regards the first count, it is contended that no libel was proved as against Mr. Brett. He thought it might be laid down that it was libellous to publish any matter intended to bring any individual or individuals into disrepute, and the question was whether that publication would convey such a meaning. Was it libellous to say that an editor received money for the purpose of espousing the cause or writing up any particular party, for that was the imputation contained in the preface, which he would read :—

"I present 'The Indigo Planting Mirror' to the indigo planters' hands ; now, let every one of them, having observed his face, erase the freckle of the stain of selfishness from his forehead, and, in its stead, place on it the sandal powder of beneficence ; then shall I think my labour successful, good

fortune for the helpless class of ryots, and preservation of England's honor. Oh, ye Indigo planters ! Your malevolent conduct has brought a stain upon the English nation which was so graced by the ever memorable names of Sydney, Howard, Hall, and other great men. Is your desire for money so very powerful, that through the instigation of that vain wealth, you are engaged in making holes like rust in the long-acquired and pure fame of the British people ? Abstain now from that unjust conduct through which you are raising immense sums as your profits ; and then the poor people, with their families, will be able to spend their days in ease. You are now-a-days purchasing things worth a hundred rupees by expending only ten ; and you well know what great trouble the ryots are suffering from that. Still you are not willing to make that known, being entirely given up to the acquisition of money. You say that some amongst you give donations to schools, and also medicine in time of need—but the planters' donations to schools are more odious than the application of the shoe for the destruction of a milch cow, and their grants of medicine are like unto mixing the inspissated milk in the cup of poison. If the application of a little turpentine, after being beat by *shamchand*, be forming a dispensary, then it may be said that in every factory there is a dispensary. The editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What a surprising power of attraction silver has ? The detestable Judas gave the great preacher of the Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder, then, if the proprietors of two newspapers, becoming enslaved by the hope of gaining one thousand rupees, throw the poor helpless people of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths."

Now, it certainly appeared to him that each Indigo planter would, by looking at this mirror, find his own reflection ; and although it was said to apply to a class, still each one of that class would find himself. represented He held that if it was not an imputation it would not be carrying out the sense intended to be conveyed to ordinary minds. It appeared to him to be a very grave charge, and he was unable to come to any other conclusion than that they were libellous. As regards the second count, it

was contended that no libel had been committed, because it was published against a class, and that class was not sufficiently described with respect to numbers ; but it appeared to him wholly unnecessary to describe them more fully than the indictment had done. Suppose, for instance, in the case of libel against the army, it would be only necessary to define the army which existed at a particular time, without reference to numbers. But the indictment in this case did specify the class, and could any unprejudiced person say that this class did not really mean the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal ? It appeared to him perfectly clear, and he believed it to be generally known that the two classes were in existence víz. the Indigo·planters and the ryots. His Lordship proceeded to consider the various cases cited by the Counsel for the defence, but held that none of them applied to the case then before the Court. After commenting at considerable length upon the various passages in the pamphlet, he proceeded to quote the following :-

"*Darogah* :- Did not the Magistrate say he will come here this day ?

Jamadar :- No, Sir, he has four days more to come. At Sachigunge on Saturday, they have a champagne-party and ladies' dance. Mrs. Wood can never dance with any other but our Saheb ; and I saw that when I was a bearer. Mrs. Wood is very kind : through the influence of one letter, she got me the Jamadary of the Jail."

Again :-

"The cobra-de-capello, like the Indigo Planters, with mouths full of poison, threw all happiness into the flame of fire. The father, through injustice, died in the prison ; the elder brother died in the indigo-field, and the mother, being insane through grief for her husband and son, murdered with her own hands a most honest woman. Getting her understanding again and observing my sorrow, the ocean of grief again swelled in her."

Now, we are asked to say that this passage does not bear the construction which the Jury have found that it does bear. This passage of itself had been quoted, and had been found by the Jury to have been published in the sense imputed that would have been sufficient to have supported the conviction.

The Court disallowed the rule.

Mr. Justice Wells, addressing the defendant, asked him

if he had any thing to urge in mitigation of punishment.

The defendant proceeded to read a written statement, and had proceeded to some length, when he was stopped by the Chief Justice, who expressed himself of opinion that the defendant was alluding to matters altogether irrelevant to the case. The defendant shortly after concluded.

JUDGEMENT

JAMES LONG,—After a careful and patient investigation of the charge preferred against you, the Jury returned a verdict of 'guilty' on both counts, and the Court having refused to arrest the Judgement on the motion of your learned Counsel, it is now my painful duty to award the punishment called for by the verdict of the Jury. And after an anxious consideration of all the circumstances of the case, you have been convicted of the offence of wilfully and maliciously libelling the proprietors of the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* newspapers, and under the second count, of libelling, with the same intent, a class of persons designated as the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. I most earnestly, I may say most strongly and pointedly, called upon the Jury to uphold and vindicate, if necessary, by their verdict the right of free discussion, and to be careful, lest by their verdict the right of liberty of the press might be endangered. In summing up the case, over and over again I recognised and maintained the right of every man to instruct his fellow-subjects by every sincere and conscientious communication which may promote the public happiness ; and I stated distinctly and emphatically the privilege possessed by every man, of pointing out those defects and corruptions which exist in all human institutions. The Jury pronounced a verdict which, I have the satisfaction of feeling, rests upon a constitutional basis and cannot be used hereafter against the liberty of the press. There is not a person who would have rejoiced more than myself if the Jury had returned a verdict of 'not guilty' on the ground that they believed you had acted conscientiously and for the interest of society in publishing this book. I grieve to say that verdict could not have been given without those twelve gentlemen believing that you have been actuated by a feeling of animosity towards the Indigo planters in publishing and circulating such a

gross and scandalous libel. Partly through your instrumentality nearly three hundred libels have been circulated, and according to the evidence of Mr. Jones who gave his evidence most properly, with the apparent sanction of the Bengal Secretariat, at the public expense. I am bound to say that such a proceeding is without parallel in the history of Government department in England ; and as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court it is my duty to state, and I do so most sincerely, that I trust such a transaction may never occur again in this country, as such a proceeding must necessarily undermine that feeling of respect and confidence which ought to exist on the part of the Government towards those who are placed in authority over them. I did at the trial, as I now do, scrupulously abstain from expressing any opinion directly or indirectly, as regards the personal motives or feelings which actuated the officers of Government in sanctioning the circulation of this book. It is the safest plan in life always to assume that public men act from pure and just motives until the contrary is established ; and it does not follow by any means that the officials, who allowed the paper to be circulated, acted in the slightest degree illegally. The pamphlet was sent forth unaccompanied by a single word of caution or explanation, and the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal have no means of tracing the extent of the injury inflicted upon them by the circulation of the libel ; but is there not reason for apprehending certain persons in England may have been induced to bring forward serious but groundless charges against the Indigo planters ? It is quite impossible to realize fully the irreparable mischief you have occasioned by causing this libel to be circulated in England. There is one feature in the case I cannot pass over without special notice. I mean the position you hold in society as a clergyman of the Church of England. I am certain the Bishop of Calcutta, of whom it may be said that he is respected and beloved by the entire Christian community, will deeply lament the circumstance of one of his clergy being convicted of libelling a large and influential body of gentlemen scattered over a portion of his extensive diocese ; and I am well assured that the great body of the clergy, with few exceptions, will sympathize with their Diocesan on the present occasion. The fact of your being a clergyman is an aggravation of your offence ; and when you state publicly

in Court that the advance of Christianity is impeded by the irreligious conduct of many Europeans, I think such an expression of opinion on your part, when called upon to receive the sentence of this Court for libelling many of your countrymen, is rather out of place. And perhaps the great majority of the Europeans may think that your conduct has not done much to promote real practical Christianity. You of all men ought to have inculcated and stood forth as the teacher of that inestimable precept : "Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you." My duty is a distressing one, but I must not shrink from the performance of it. The sentence of the Court is that you pay a fine of Rs. 1000 to our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and that you be imprisoned in the Common Jail for the period of one calendar month, and that you be further imprisoned until the fine is paid.

ADDRESS OF THE REVEREND J. LONG TO THE COURT (BEFORE SENTENCE WAS PASSED).

My Lord,—As the result of this trial involves consequence extending far beyond the sphere of Calcutta, or even of India, I beg to submit, for your Lordship's consideration, the following points referring mainly to the motives which actuated me in publishing the Nil Durpan :—

Tried by the mode of a criminal prosecution in Court, I had no opportunity to make a personal statement to the Jury. I can only, previous to your passing sentence, mention what is personal to myself as to the motives which actuated me to publish the Nil Durpan, on the grounds of my being a Missionary, an expounder of Native feeling as expressed in the Native press, a friend to securing peace for Europeans in the country—and a friend to the social elevation of the Natives.

My Lord, it is now more than twenty years since I came to India. During that period I have never appeared in a Court of Justice as plaintiff or defendant ; my occupations have been of a very different character, and my time has been spent chiefly among Natives, engaged in Vernacular teaching, in the charge of a body of Native Christians, and in the promotion of Christian Vernacular literature. These pursuits, along with my interest in the rural population, called my attention to the Vernacular press of India, its uses and defects, as well as its being

an exponent of the Native mind and feeling. It is in connection with the latter branch of my labors that I appear here today as publisher of the Nil Durpan, which I edited with the view of informing Europeans of influence of its contents as giving Native popular opinion on the Indigo question. This work (the English translation), was not got up at the suggestion of Natives, or even with their knowledge, and was not circulated among them. It was commenced at the request of others. Many of the remarks of Mr. Peterson, the Counsel for the prosecution, are strongly in my favour because if, as he stated, the work was so injurious in its Vernacular dress, was I not doing a public service by making such a work known in English ? Not in Calcutta, where it might only lead to more bitter controversy, and where men's interests are so concerned that all representations would have been useless, producing irritation, not conviction : I circulated it chiefly among men of influence and those connected with the British legislature which, to the oppressed of whatever color or country, has always afforded sympathy and redress. I have aimed for the last ten years in my leisure hours to be an exponent of Native opinion in its bearing on the spiritual, social, and intellectual welfare of Natives of this land ; as for instance, when applied to, on the part of the Court of Directors, seven years ago, to procure for their Library copies of all original works in Bengali, or as when, lately, I sent to Oxford by request copies of all Bengali translation from Sanskrit ; or when I have procured for missionaries, Government, Rajas &c., Vernacular books of all kinds I should have been a strange person indeed, had my opinion harmonised with all the chaos of opinion in those various publications. Why ! at the request of missionaries I have procured anti-Christian works for them, as they wished to know what was written against Christianity.

I am charged with slandering English women in the Nil Durpan. Now, waiving the point that it is only planters' wives the Native author refers to, I myself believe planters' wives are as chaste as any other females of English Society in India, and it was my impression that the author only referred to some exceptional cases, not giving them as specimens of a class of females. The view that I and others, who know Oriental life, have taken of this part relating to females is, it gives the Eastern

notion of the high indelicacy of any woman who exposes her face in public, or rides out in company with a gentleman. I have heard such remarks made of my own wife ; but I treated them as a specimen of village ignorance. Sir F. Shore in his "Notes on Indian Affairs" states instances of a similar kind, and Lieutenant Burton, who went disguised as a pilgrim to Mecca, mentions the greatest reproach the pilgrims there made against the English was, that they shook hands with their neighbours' wives ; I regret, however, I did not append a note of explanation to this part.

I hold in my hand the first drama ever translated, and that by an illustrious Jugde of this Court—Sir W. Jones—in order to give a view of Hindu society. Similar service was rendered by Horace H. Wilson, by Dr. Taylor and various other persons.

I beg to say I was far from wishing to vilify planters generally, though from sincere conviction and enquiry opposed to the system. Thus, when summoned before the Indigo Commission, my evidence there was considered even by the planters' friends as moderate and free from invective. I was elected a member of a sub-committee of the Calcutta Missionary Conference to watch the progress of the Indigo controversy, and it was never objected then that any of my actions in connection with this Conference on this subject were for the purpose of vilifying. I have never lived near planters, nor have I had any personal altercation with them that would lead me to a vindictive course.

I ask when hundreds—yea, thousands—of Bengali books were submitted by me during the last ten years to the notice of Europeans of influence, was the Nil Durpan to be the only exception ? And wherefore ? The ryot was a dumb animal who did not know his ruler's language. And at the time of this Nil Durpan appearing, matters on the Indigo controversy were assuming a threatening aspect ; so it was important that men of influence should know that the wound was not a surface one, but required deep probing. Could I as a clergyman have withheld a work of this sort which indicated some of the causes of the deep-seated aversion of ryots to Indigo cultivation ? This work, the Nil Durpan, was sent to me as hundreds of Vernacular books have been, because it is known in many quarters that I take a deep interest in Vernacular literature. Here is an illustration : these two Vernacular books were sent to me

a few days ago from Benares—one Robinson Crusoe in Hindi, the other a Choral Book in Urdu. Almost every week I receive new Vernacular books, and I make a point of bringing them to the notice of Europeans on various grounds. Sir F. Halliday honored my "Reports on the Vernacular Press" by publishing them ; so did the present Government in the case of publishing my Sketch of Vernacular Literature ; so did the Vernacular Literature, Religious Tract Society, Christian Tract and Book Society, shew their confidence in publishing various works of mine.

I will now state the grounds why as a clergyman opposed to war I published the Nil Durpan. My Lord, four years only have elapsed since Calcutta was waiting in trembling anxiety for the result of the mutiny. Few could look with calmness on the future, while watch and ward were kept all night by the citizens. Many felt then, as I had long felt before, how unsafe it was for the English to reside in India in ignorance of and indifference to the current of Native feeling. The mutiny, in common with the Afghan war, has showed that the English in India were generally unacquainted with it , so a short time previous to the mutiny the Sonthal war burst but unexpectedly to the public. For a long period Thuggee and torture were prevailing in India, without the English knowing anything of them. Had I, as a missionary, previous to the mutiny, been able to submit to men of influence a Native drama which would have thrown light on the views of sepoys and Native chiefs, how valuable might the circulation of such a drama have proved, although it might have censured severely the treatment of Natives by Europeans ; the indifference of sepoy officers generally towards their men ; and the policy of Government to Native States. Such a drama might have helped to save millions of money and torrents of human blood. In Cabul, the authorities, through a false security founded on ignorance of Native opinion, entailed a loss of fifteen millions sterling on the State and the damage of England's prestige. Has Calcutta forgot the lessons taught by the mutiny ? I ask was it very malicious to reveal to the governing race the latent current of Native thought and feeling on the subject of Indigo, which was convulsing the whole country, and threatening it with anarchy, incendiarism, and assassination ? Would I have been justified to withhold contributing my mite at such a crisis to the great object of rousing men of influence by shewing them, from a Native source, that the dissatisfaction

was deep-seated, and that the wound must be thoroughly probed before healing measures could be efficacious.

My Lord, the mutiny has passed away ; who knows what is in the future ? As a clergyman and a friend to the peaceable residence of my countrymen in India, I beg to state the following as motive for my editing such works as the Nil Durpan. I for years have not been able to shut my eyes to what many able men see looming in the distance. It may be distant, or it may be near ; but Russia and Russian influence are rapidly approaching the frontiers of India. Her influence so manifest in Cabul 20 years ago, as shewn in a recent Parliamentary Blue Book, was beginning to be felt in India during the last mutiny ; now she goes on the principle of *divide et impera* ; previous to invasion she gains over the Native population in various countries to her side. Could I, then, as a clergyman have watched with apathy measures like those in connection with the Indigo system which were furthering this Russian policy, and which might lead to war and dissensions that would retard for a long period the progress of religion, education and peaceful commerce. I now speak merely my own honest convictions on this point, and I ask if this conviction has any foundation in reality ; as also if there be any ground for another as deeply rooted in my mind that mere armies can no more secure the English in India than they established the Austrans in Italy. Was it not my duty as a clergyman to help the good cause of peace, by showing that the great work of peace in India could be best secured by the contentment of the Native population, obtainable only by listening to their complaints as made known by the Native press and by other channels. I pass over French views in the East, but I say forearmed is forewarned, and even to the expense of wounding their feelings in order to secure their safety, I wish to see the attention of my countrymen directed to this important subject.

As a missionary, I have a deep interest in seeing the faults of my countrymen corrected ; for after a residence of my 20 years in India, I must bear this testimony—that, of all the obstacles to the spread of Christianity in India, one of the greatest is the irreligious conduct of many of my own countrymen. Thousands of Natives have said to me, "We judge of the Christian religion by what your countrymen do, not by what they say ; by the life, not by the Doctrine."

For 20 years I have, as a missionary, been in close and confidential intercourse with Natives of all classes. Often and often has my spirit been harrowed and almost crushed by a close view of the condition of the ryot, his wants and his sufferings ; shut out from that ability to read, without which the pages of inspiration are locked up to him. I can see in the improvement of his social condition a means of enabling him to enjoy the light of knowledge. I have circulated many pamphlets in England on "The ryot, his teachers, and torturers," and on the evils resulting from the ryots not having a sound Vernacular education. When I have not shrunk from exposing many social evils to which the ryot is subject, I beg to submit, could I have avoided, in my position, exposing his suffering from the Indigo system.

(The Chief Justice here stopped Mr. Long, stating that the Court were willing to hear anything that he had to address to them in his defence. That it was not the length of the matter he was now reading but its substance they objected to as irrelevant. The remainder we give as from the MS. prepared by Mr. Long.)

Influential men in England have deeply sympathised with me on these points, and have said "You and others that expose those recesses of human suffering and degradation must let us know the results," and I have been, my Lord, amongst those masses for years, and hope, as long as I live, have a brain to think and a pen to write, to advocate the social elevation of the masses as incidental with the progress of mental and moral light. Should I not have been a traitor to the religion I professed, whose great founder's motto is, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them," had I not availed myself of all legitimate opportunity to bring the wants and sufferings of the ryots, and the feelings and views of Natives generally to the notice of men who had the power of remedying them ? It may be called too political a course, as some now unduly restrict that term ; but Christianity itself is political in the extended sense ; for in the early ages it assailed the slavery of the Roman Empire ; in the middle ages it afforded an asylum to the serfs against the oppressions of the feudal chiefs ; at the period of the Reformation it brought freedom to the peasants' home ; and in modern days it has abolished slavery in the West Indies. It has protested against American slavery, and is

now throwing its mantle of protection round the aboriginal tribes throughout the world. In 1856 I delivered an address in Calcutta to the friends of Missions on "Peasant degradation, an obstacle to Gospel propagation." No one then objected to that address on the ground of its being political.

My Lord, I am sustained in this course by the conviction of, I trust, an enlightened conscience, and confidently on the continued sympathy of many friends both among the European and Native community, and of all in India and Great Britain, who desire to see India governed not merely for the advantage of its fluctuating population from Europe, but for the benefit of, and with considerate regard for, the feelings and interests of the 180,000,000 Natives over whom stretches the aegis of the Queen and Parliament. I know I shall have the sympathy of good men, the friends of the Natives, in India and in England, and of all those throughout the world who believe in the indissoluble connection of spiritual and intellectual improvement.

My Lord, a Court of Law has decided that the work is a libel and it is my duty to submit to that verdict and to act accordingly. My conscience convicts me however of no moral offence or of any offence deserving the language used in the charge to the Jury. But I dread the effects of this precedent. This work being a libel, then the exposure of any social evil of caste, of polygamy, of Kulin Brahminism, of the opium trade and of any other evils which are supported by the interests of men, may be treated as libels too, and thus the great work of moral, social, and religious reformation may be checked.

My remarks are ended, my Lord. I beg to hand in an affidavit.

[The affidavit put in was the printed "statement" which had appeared, pending the trial, in the columns of the Friend of India.]

STATEMENT OF W.S. SETON-KARR. ESQ., C.S., IN REGARD TO THE NIL DURPAN

As, in the late trial of the Revd. J. Long, mention has been made, in evidence, of the Bengal Office, as some allusion to my order as Secretary has also been made in connection with the Nil Durpan, I think it now right to give some explanation of the matters referred to.

I should have broken silence on this subject at a much earlier period, had it not been for the utter uncertainty I have been in as to the exact course which the gentlemen who are aggrieved by the publication in question intended to pursue, and what kind of proceedings they were resolved to institute, and against what person or persons.

I must observe further that I was summoned as a witness both for the prosecution and for the defence, at the late trial, and expected that I should have an opportunity of stating in the witness-box some of the facts, or giving some explanation of the matter, so far as it affected myself.

But the Counsel for the prosecution did not require my evidence, though I was in attendance under my subpoena, while for the defence no witnesses were summoned at all ; I had, therefore, no opportunity of explaining anything.

This being the case, I take the earliest opportunity of putting on record the chief points of my connection with the Nil Durpan, because an explanation seems due to the Association of Landholders, (who represent the gentlemen aggrieved by the publication) and to myself.

First, as to the way in which the work in question was brought to light to the public.

About the month of October or November last the Reverend Mr. Long brought to my notice the existence of this drama in the original Bengali, and a Native hawker, who was commissioned by the Native author to sell the book, brought me a copy, which I purchased. Until that time I had never heard of the work.

The drama bore the mark of a Dacca printing press, and the date of its publication was the 2nd. of Assin, corresponding to the middle of September. From conversation with Mr. Long and with the Native hawker, I felt quite satisfied that the drama was the genuine production of a Native resident in the Mofussil. On dipping into the original I was struck with the thorough knowledge of village life which it displayed, with the pointedness of the Bengali proverbs, some of which were new, while others were familiar to me, and with its colloquial style and Vernacular idiom.

After this the drama was translated by a Native with my sanction and knowledge, as some persons were desirous of seeing it in an English form, and 500 copies were

printed and sent to the Bengal Office. I may here state what I have always avowed to personal friends, that I set no value whatever on the Nil Durpan, except as an ebullition of popular feeling on a subject which had for some time agitated the Native and English Public. I well knew that the Hindoos from time immemorial were in the habit of adopting the drama as an exponent of their feelings ; but I never for one instant contemplated the application of the matters therein represented to any two particular planters, or to any persons as representatives of the whole class. The names of men and of places were not traceable to any one district ; they were entirely fictitious ; and the whole thing in my eyes, was a popular drama—and no more. Neither did I for a moment intend to express or to imply that the view of the indigo system taken by the Native author was a correct view of the general system as carried on by Englishmen in any part of Bengal. It seemed to me, as it has done to others who have read the work, that it contained exaggerated statements of the conduct not only of two fictitious individuals (Rose and Wood) but of their servants, of the class of mookhtiars or attornies who practise in our Courts, and of the English Magistrates who administer justice.

The strictures on the imaginary members of my own service were certainly, in some respects, as sharp as any directed against any other class of men. Consequently, remembering how little is known to the authorities and to Europeans generally of the under-currents of Native society ; how constantly men of the greatest Indian experience, the widest benevolence, and the largest sympathies, had lamented their utter inability to penetrate the recesses of Native thought and feeling ; how repeatedly Government itself had been blamed during and before the mutiny, for paying no heed to cheap publication from the Native press and indicative of popular feeling ; I thought the work was one to which attention ought to be called, and to this opinion I must still adhere, however erroneous the mode of calling attention to the drama may have been. It was not that the Native auther uttered opinion which I accepted, or depicted scenes which I wished to be understood as of common occurrence ; or that his view of Indigo planting was my view ; but it was that he had his own thoughts and opinions on the system of Indigo planting, and that he had the boldness to avow these in

his own fashion and language and by his own illustrations which however one-sided and exaggerated, or satirical, seemed to me to merit some attention.

The list given in at the trial contains the number of copies issued, or 202, being not one half of those printed, and the circulation took place with my knowledge, but owing to a misconception on my part not with that of the Lieutenant Governor.

The said list is one of a class of papers not usually brought on record, and it might with ease have been torn up, without blame being imputed to any one, and without is existence being known out of the office. I have taken care that it should be preserved, not from any spirit of defiance, but because, however erroneous my judgement may have been, I felt that it would ill become me to attempt to suppress or conceal anything which shewed the real extent of what had been done.

A great deal of censure has been passed upon the secrecy with which this book was circulated. I contend that the very fact of circulation under official frank shews that no secrecy was attempted or intended beyond the unavoidable secrecy of the Post Office. Had it been intended, as has been stated, to stab reputations in the dark, it would have been comparatively easy to have circulated a number of copies by the ordinary book postage, which mode could have afforded no clue whatever as to the sender.

After all, the whole Indian circulation amounts to 14 copies, and most of those have been recalled or destroyed. No copies were sent to any newspaper or public body in Calcutta because it was considered that to make selections would be invidious, and that, on the whole, those who had taken one side or the other in the Indigo crisis, were hardly in the position to form a fair estimate of any such popular representation of Native feeling. Any large local circulation would probably have done no good. As a bare fact, the impress of the Government frank must, I contend, disprove the charge of a wish to calumniate in secret, and of any underhand proceeding. Indeed, it will hardly be contended with seriousness that any one wishing to produce irritation, or to hurt the feelings of others without detection, and in safety from any possible consequences, would choose such a mode of circulation as the sending to four papers in four

different parts of India, and the conductors of the English press remote from the scene of controversy, might take some little interest in a genuine expression, however exaggerated, of Native feeling by Native authors.

The copies sent home were addressed to gentlemen holding different political opinions, and these gentlemen had, several of them, been furnished with copies of published documents, relating to the Indigo question. But while I contend that my conduct has been straightforward and honest, I have no hesitation in expressing my most sincere regret that any such publication should at all have taken place. It has excited great irritation ; it has given rise to much misconstruction both as to the Government of Bengal and to individuals ; it has seriously offended a very respectable and influential body of men for whose difficulties I have every sympathy, and whom, officially and unofficially I have always desired to assist, even when I differed from their views and opinions ; and it has resulted in the successful prosecution of a very excellent Missionary of the Church of England. At the same time, while fully acknowledging the error committed in this instance, my earnest conviction is that, putting aside the heat which the indigo question has excited, and looking to ordinary times, it is not the transmission of such publication to editors and to official and unofficial Englishmen that is likely to do mischief, but their circulation among the Native public unnoticed by the Government and unknown to the European community. Under this conviction I acted without (as I must on reflection admit) sufficiently considering at the time, the peculiar circumstances which rendered the publication of this work unwise.

I must now offer a few remarks on some parts of the publication itself. With some of the great questions to which the late trial has given rise, I shall not attempt to deal.

I leave the question of including purely dramatic fictions or satires amongst libellous publications, exposed to the penalties of criminal laws as well as the vital question of discussion and of the liberty of the press, to be dealt with by those within whose province such question should strictly come ; I will only state, on this head, that a play representing fictitious characters, and treating the subject in the style of dramatic exaggeration put into the mouth of these characters, being looked upon as a serious attack upon

any entire class of persons never crossed my mind. But there are two points in the work, as published, which involve somewhat consideration from those under which the work, as a drama, may be looked at and these latter I must not let pass without some explanation.

In the preface by the Native author a passage occurs which apparently reflects on the conduct of two English newspapers and which, whatever may be its technical definition in the eye of the Law, and however clear it may be that no English reader will attach importance to such importation, or treat them otherwise than as contemptible, is certainly open to very grave objection and calculated to give great and just offence. Had my attention been attracted to the passage, or had I read it carefully, I certainly would not have allowed the book to go forth with that passage in it. As it is, the matter is past help. In fact, my attention had been directed to the drama rather than to the prefatory notices, and the passage escaped me. I can only express my sincere regret that it should have appeared in its place, and that I should have been instrumental in circulating it. In this avowal I adopt the course rightly followed in social intercourse whenever offence is unwillingly given ; and it would not require the influence of a powerful Association to lead me to express my regret to any one person who might deem himself offended by any act originating in any inadvertence or carelessness of mine ; nor on the other hand shall either the fear of misconstruction of its being supposed that the avowal proceeds from unworthy motives, or a dread of consequences, prevent me from making it.

But, for reasons stated at the head of this explanation, I have not, except in a short interview with Mr. Brett, the editor of the *Englishman*, on the 25th May, in which I did express my sincere regret that the passage should have appeared, had any opportunity of making any explanation of the kind.

I can only repeat that I deeply regret that this passage was ever translated and published.

The second point is the alleged imputation on the virtue of English women in portions of the drama itself. I can conscientiously say that until the point was strongly insisted on, I did not think there were any passages capable of any such construction, and a close inspection of a work consisting of 120 pages has not discovered to me more

than two or at most three passages in which English ladies are mentioned at all.

The first passage occurs in a conversation between two poor Bengali women in a village. One woman says, "The lady has no shame at all, and when the Magistrate of the Zillah rides about through the villages, the lady also rides on horseback with him." The speaker then goes on to say "the bou (or married woman) riding about on a horse !" The other woman has just before said, "The wife of the planter, in order to make her husband's case strong, has sent a letter to the Magistrate since it is said that the Magistrate hears her words most attentively." To say that these words impute want of virtues to a lady because she writes a letter about a case in Court to a judicial officer, or that to go on to argue that it ascribes unchastity to a whole class of English women, does not seem to me to be fair or reasonable. No doubt, it may be injudicious for ladies to write private letters to Magistrates and other judicial officers in order to get situations for servants, or for applicants whom they wish to befriend, and the fact of such an officer receiving and answering in Court a letter from a lady, the wife of an actual or possible litigant, on whatever subject it may be, may convey impressions to the very suspicious mind of an ignorant Native ; but it never entered into my thoughts to conceive that an allusion to this practice would warrant general charge of even indelicacy in thought or deed, against women. As regards the statement that a lady riding about the village "must have no shame," I do most emphatically contend that this expression in the mouth of either a Hindoo or Mussulman woman expresses nothing but the regular innate idea generated by Oriental seclusion. The very words, which in Hindusthani would be *iska kuch sharm neh hai,* and in Bengali *tahr kichchu lajja nahe,* are familiar expressions in the mouth of every Native speaking of any act which he thinks offensive or in bad taste, done by any one who does not please him. A Native woman brought up in seclusion, with the ideas she has received from childhood, generally speaking, can no more understand or appreciate propriety in the unrestrained, liberal, enlightened, and virtuous intercourse of men and women in our society than we can understand or appreciate the social policy which marries girls in their childhood and consigns them through

married life or through premature widowhood to the jealous seclusion of four dull walls. Any Hindoo woman, if she holds to the tenets of her fathers, is exposed to shame if she sees the face even of her husband's brother, and must then veil her own face, and it would be asking too much that she should be expected to understand that Englishmen and women should sit, walk, ride and mingle together in social intercourse, without shame or embarrassment.

The other passage is put into the mouth of a jemadar, once a bearer, who says that he has obtained his situation by the influence of a planter's wife, "who wrote one letter to the Magistrate," and "who never danced with any other person but the Magistrate." I have already explained this appears to me to be merely an allusion to the very common practice of sending letters of recommendation in favour of old servants to official personages who have places at their disposal. I believe honestly that the practice has long existed and will continue to exist. But where I have heard, as I have heard, of any lady sending letters of this kind, it has never occurred to me to see any evil design therein, and as to the asserted partiality of an Englishman for one particular partner in a dance, it surely would be a far-fetched and uncharitable construction which would attach thereto any hidden or disgraceful meaning.

These are the only two passages which I think it necessary to notice, as they have been much talked of, and misunderstood, and as they relate to points to which society, if not possessed of accurate information, or if not furnished with the actual words used in the drama, is likely to be sensitive. In a third passage a Magistrate is simply described as writing a letter to a lady in the presence of her husband. But I believe that most persons who know India and its people, will read all this as I have done. I still think my reading is the correct one. Should I be mistaken, or even though I be right, should others think differently, my sorrow for this unfortunate publication will be increased by the thought that an offensive meaning (which I should be among the first to reprehend, if applied by others to any of my countrywomen) had been attached to expressions which I believed and, still in my conscience believe, to be free from all such gross imputations. It has been stated in a paper published at Bombay that I have gone about boasting of

having misused the influence of Government from my personal hatred of planters. A more unfounded statement was never written. I have never talked about this unfortunate business, except when pressed on the subject, or to intimate friends. I have never uttered a boasting or a defiant word on the subject. It has been, ever since I became aware of the very different estimate which others were likely to form of the meaning and tendency of the publication from that which I had myself formed, a source of deep and unmixed pain to me. That pain was increased by the feeling that till now my lips were sealed regarding the publication. The imputation of animosity on my part towards planters personally, or towards their interest, I feel, needs no declaimer from me. I believe that the planters among whom I have mixed have ever felt that I have been personally friendly towards them even whilst opposed in some instance to their views ; and I believe and trust that I have still preserved friends among the planters of Jessore who will be surprised and even pained at the charge of personal hostility.

While I fully admit that my course in regard to the publication has been a mistaken one, and that I ought not to shrink from owning my mistake or my deep regret for it, I have nothing to reproach my conscience with, or to be ashmed of, as no act or word of mine has been in the remotest degree influenced by the feeling of personal hostility towards the planters which has been most erroneously imputed to me.

The above statement I have made public with a clear conscience, and at as early a date as was possible, with regard to my peculiar situation and to that of others.

Calcutta, July 27, 1861. (Sd) W.S. SETON-KARR

REVIEW OF MR. SETON-KARR'S STATEMENT.

Mr. Seton-Karr has sent us a statement of his connection with the much debated Nil Durpan case to which we very willingly give the same prominent assertion as we accord to our own comments on his conduct in the affair. Nothing can be more sincere than the tone of this statement, which is the manifest production of an originally able mind, lamentably crippled by the circumstances of its life-long position. There are sentences in it which do honour to the writer's heart and nature but as a whole it adds one more to the many sad testimonies that no nature can wholly withstand the influences of such a false position as that of a dignitary trained and developed in the last generation of the old Civil Service. We accord full honour to and accept with the fullest appreciation the assurance with which Mr. Seton-Karr closes his statement. None but a well-bred gentleman and honourable man could have written at the close such a statement :— "While I fully admit that my course as regard to the publication has been a mistaken one, and that I ought not to shrink from owning my mistake or my deep regret for it, I feel that I have nothing to reproach my conscience with or to be ashamed of, as no act or word of mine has been in the remotest degree influenced by the feeling of personal hostility towards the planters, which has been most erroneously imputed to me." But whilst giving the writer of it the fullest credit for sincerity and honourable intention, we condemn most entirely the principle on which he declares himself to have acted ; we demur to every conclusion he deduces ; and we declare that the public servant who avows his course on such grounds as he here takes, is, on his own showing, altogether unfit for the high and responsible position of a legislator or administrator in the critical hours of the formation, out of sheer chaos, of constitutional Government for the youngest and well—nigh the greatest of Empires. As this important document only reached us yesterday afternoon, we can but touch upon its more salient points. Nor indeed is much more needed, for, in most points it is more than answered ; it is demolished by the address of the Landholders' Association to those to whom Mr. Seton-Karr had circulated the Nil Durpan, which follows it. There are, however, a few points which we must

notice in the briefest manner. Mr. Seton-Karr complains that he had been kept silent by his uncertainty as to the course intended to be taken by the Association. Had a direct answer been given by the Bengal Government to the questions of responsibility when put to them by the Association, there would have been left no room for doubt. A tithe of the statement now made, had it been substituted for the miserably evasive letter of the Lieutenant Governor on the 3rd June, would have settled all such doubts in a few hours. Mr. Seton-Karr and the Bengal Government are late in the day for the expression of this sort of surprise after having allowed Mr. Long to stand alone as the publisher of the Nil Durpan, at the time of the trial of Manuel, the printer. The Association did not then leave much doubt as to their course. Mr. Long then said, "I am the publisher", but it is after Mr. Long's conviction that Mr. Seton-Karr says that the drama was translated and the libels published "with his sanction and knowledge." It was proved at the reverend victim's trial that he paid the printer's bill ; but though it is now declared that "500 copies were printed and sent to the Bengal Office,"—it is left to us to declare that the bill was sent to that Office also, but was withdrawn after the first letter from the Association was written ; and that the bill, which was intended to have been paid from the public purse, has only been paid from private resources, and those not Mr. Long's, in consequence of the public explosion of the matter. Even now, after as ample an apology as a gentleman can offer to those whom he has aggrieved, the "heaven-born" element is stronger than the mere man in Mr. Seton-Karr ; and to this moment he does not realize the gravity of his position as a high official having lent himself under party feelings to most unbecoming and unconstitutional degradation of his Official position ; or as a legislator having had recourse, under like influences, to a breach of the law. For instance, he says, "I contend that the very fact of circulation under Official frank, shows that no secrecy was attempted or intended beyond the unavoidable secrecy of the Post Office". Now that we have at last arrived at a distinct avowal of Mr. Seton-Karr's responsibility for the circulation of the libellous book in a form in which we can fairly and honourably use the admission, we purpose to take care that he shall arrive at the truth one way or other about such a use of the

Official frank. As to the laboured endeavour to prove that no one could put an evil construction on certain passages of the book, the answer is complete in the fact that the *expose* was brought about by the instant construction put on it by one of the few to whom the book was sent in India ; and that the same construction has been put on it by the Jury, and the Court before whom Mr. Long stood to receive through them the all but universal condemnation in this respect—at least of the public at large whose representatives they were. But for mere quibblings we have now neither time nor space but it is strange that one who could write so able a statement of a hopelessly bad case should commit such a blunder as the following—respecting the infamous slander on English ladies in India :—"I did not think there were any passages capable of any such construction, and a close inspection of a work consisting of 102 pages has not discovered to me more than two or at most three passages in which English ladies are mentioned at all." Not noticing the obvious deduction, that in all those passages in which they are mentioned, the hideous innuendo is the same without variation or qualification. Equally faulty is the plea urged for not sending the book to the general press, or the representatives of the planters for whose behoof the great moral lessons complained in it were intended. We are told:—"No copies were sent to any newspaper or public body in Calcutta, because it was considered that to make selections would be invidious ; and that, on the whole, those who had taken one side or the other in the indigo crisis, were hardly in the position to form a fair estimate of any such popular representation of Native feeling."

We note it as curious then, to say the least of it, that of the four papers honoured with a copy, the *Bombay Times,* the most virulent and unscrupulous assailant of the indigo interest, and the most rabid partizan journal on all collateral subjects, should have been one of the chosen few. Certainly he left no doubt about which side he took, of the "heat" with which he espoused it. Excepting in the ample apology tendered, this statement is a most obvious piece of special pleading, and a failure all through. Even in matters of fact it fails. Mr. Seton-Karr alludes to his interview with Mr. Brett on the 25th May, an interview which the latter recognised the importance of so strongly, that he made full notes of what passed

immediately at its close ; but of which, until now, he has not felt himself at liberty to make use. But now that this interview is thus cited, Mr. Brett declares that Mr. Seton-Karr's memory has played him false, for no "regret that any passage whatever had appeared" was expressed by Mr. Seton-Karr. At that interview Mr. Seton-Karr must have had his first intimation of any knowledge of the appearance of the book in India, yet at that interview he declared his full acquaintance with the author's preface and the introduction by Mr. Long. When reminded of certain passages, and that they were neither dramatic nor fictitious in their tone or intention, he expressed his regret,—not that they had been published,—but that any public man shou ld be so "thin-skinned" as to apply them ; adding that "it should be remembered that very hard words had been used on either side"—a phrase so extraordinary, coming from a Government Secretary and Member of Council, that it determined his hearer on the course to which he has adhered—namely, to such an opposition by every available legal and constitutional means as shall teach officials of that genus that the makers and administrators of the Law can no longer in the young Empire set themselves above and beyond the law, whether written in the statutes or received by common consent, as rules of conduct in civilised communities among men, free by birth, and equal in social rights and privileges with themselves. We disavow, as broadly and as sincerely as Mr. Seton-Karr, any mingling of personal feeling whatever in this question ; but we will yield no point in what we hold to be a phase of the great constitutional change which is passing over India, and in which the Government has shown to the non-official classes the imperative necessity of standing boldly and resolutely in their own defence—*Englishman*, July 29.

APPENDIX. A.

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE LANDHOLDERS' AND COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION

To E. H. Lushington, Esq.
Secy, to the Government of Bengal.

SIR,

I am directed by the General Committee of the Association to beg that you will inform them if it was with the sanction and authority of the Government of Bengal, that a publication entitled "Nil Durpan" has been circulated through means of the Post Office under the official frank and seal of the Bengal Secretariat.

I myself have seen an envelope containing that publication so franked and circulated, and, therefore, there can be no doubt of the fact.

If it has been done without the sanction or knowledge of the Government of Bengal, the committee will expect a formal and official disavowal of the proceeding, and that the names of the parties who have thus made use of the name and means of Government to circulate a foul and malicious libel on Indigo Planters, tending to excite sedition and breaches of the peace, be given to us in order that they may be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed.) W. F. Fergusson.
Secy. Landholders' & Commercial
Calcutta, the 25th May, 1861. Association of British India.

THE LANDHOLDERS' AND COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INDIA.

Calcutta, 29th May, 1861.

E. H. Lushington, Esq.
Secy, to the Govt. of Bengal.

SIR,

I annex copy of a letter, which I addressed to you on the 25th instant, to which I have not received any reply.

I am directed by the General Committee of the Association to say that unless they receive a reply in the course of to-morrow, the 30th instant, they will appeal to the Supreme Government, in order that they may be in a position to communicate with the authorities in England by the mail which leaves on the 3rd proximo.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed.) W. F. Fergusson, Secretary.

THE OFFICIAL CIRCULATION OF THE NIL DURPAN.

No. 1426 A.

From the Secy. To The Govt. of Bengal.

To. W. F. Fergusson, Esq.,
Secy. Landholders' and Commercial Association of British India. Dated Fort-William, 3rd June, 1861.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 25th * and 29th ultimo, the first of which did not reach the Lieutenant Governor until after his return to Parisnath on the 30th.

The Lieutenant Governor finds that copies of an English translation of the publication named in your letter were sent to certain individuals through the Post Office, under the official seal and frank of the

*The letter of the 25th was not received by the undersigned till after the receipt of the duplicate forwarded with the Association's letter of the 29th.
(Sd.) E. H. Lushington
Secretary.

Bengal Secretariat, as mentioned by you. This occurred during his absence from Calcutta, and was not by his order. The publication in question, however, he finds, is no libel, and does not, so far as he is aware, infringe the law. It is an English translation of a work of fiction, an original Bengalee drama of a popular order, in which, obviously, all the dramatis personae are imaginary, and the story is manifestly a fable. It has no interest, but has an indication of strong popular feeling. As such, however, it has significance. It does not appear to the Lieutenant Governor that even the original Bengalee drama, judging from the translation, is likely, as the Association supposes, to be of a tendency to excite any class of persons to sedition or breaches of the peace. In this respect, however, it is obvious that it is vernacular plays, not English translations, that may be dangerous. Nor can the knowledge of respectable official or other European gentlemen of the existence of such indication of popular feeling as this be anything but a security against actual sedition and breaches of the peace.

The Lieutenant Governor has read the translation since the copies, of which the transmission is complained of, were despatched. It will be found that Indigo planters, on whose behalf complaint is made, are by no means the only class—Native or European—criticised in this Bengalee play. Faults are as unsparingly imputed to European Magistrates, Native officials, and Native factory Omlah as to Indigo Planters.

Nevertheless, the Lieutenant Governor very much regrets that by the transmission of the translation in question under the official frank of the Secretariat, a misunderstanding has been caused and offence has been given to the respected class of gentlemen on whose behalf you complain. The circumstance would not have occurred but for some inadvertence or mistake. The position of Indigo planters in some Bengal districts at present is one with which the Government sincerely sympathises. And nothing is more earnestly desired than the speedy introduction of a sound system for the future, such as shall carry Native feeling along with it.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed) E.H. Lushington,
Secy. Govt. of Bengal.

APPENDIX. B.

THE

LANDHOLDERS' AND COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION

OF

BRITISH INDIA.

To

SIR,

The trial, in the Supreme Court, of the Reverend James Long for the libel in the publication of a pamphlet called the "Nil Durpan" or Indigo Planting Mirror, having elicited the fact that a copy of the work was sent to many influential persons in England, under the frank of the Government of Bengal, the Landholers' and Commercial Association of British India, at whose instance the prosecution was instituted, deem it right to send to you the report of the trial herewith, and a brief statement of the circumstances which led to it.

On the 25th May the Committee became aware by a communication from Lahore, that the pamphlet in question, containing foul and malicious libels on the Calcutta daily newspapers and the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal, had been circulated under the frank of the Government of Bengal.

On the 25th and 29th May they addressed the Government of Bengal on the subject, and under date 3rd June, received the reply, which with their letters, will be found in the Appendix (I).

As an answer to the request that the name of the parties who had so circulated the pamphlet should be given to them was evaded by that Government, the commitee had no alternative but to institute legal proceedings, which they did—first, against the printer ; who, when put on his trial, pleaded guilty, and gave up the name of the Rev. James Long as the person who had employed him.

Mr. James Long was accordingly indicted at the Sessions ; that form of proceeding having been adopted at the suit of a body of men such as Indigo planters ; and having been tried by a special Jury, the result was that he was found guilty, and sentenced to one month's

imprisonment, and to pay a fine of one thousand rupees.

The work itself is a Bengalee drama, purporting to depict the Indigo system as viewed by the Natives at large ; the author's preface commencing, "I present the Indigo planting mirror to the Indigo planter's hands, now let every one of them observe his face." The translation is preceded by an introduction written by the Rev. Mr. Long who superintended the printing, paid the expense, Rs. 300/- received the whole edition of 500 copies, and who adopts the whole by stating in the preface that "language is plain but true."

The dramatis personae are the well-to-do and even rich ryots of a village in Lower Bengal ; their wives and daughters ; two Indigo planters, Mr. Wood and Mr. Rose ; their dewans and factory servants ; the Magistrate of the district ; a sweetmeat maker who is also a procuress ; and other inferior characters.

The play brings into action, as facts and actual occurrences, all those exploded and disproved falsehoods against Indigo planters, which are stated in the Report of the Indigo Commission to be so. The factory Ameen is made to say in the second scene, first act, that he gave his own sister to the young saheb ; and that he will now try to get the ryot's beautiful daughter, who had just appeared, for him, in hopes of promotion. When the planters appear on the scene they recite, and glory in all the violence they have done, in the atrocities they have committed ; they use the foulest language. Wood in the third scene of the same act, orders the "bloody nigger" to be beaten ; and does it himself, with the whip, a leather strap, which is described to be always at hand and to be used by the planters also on their highest servants.

The ryots' wives and daughters are models of beauty and innocence ; though one of them does say, in the fourth scene, that the wife of the planter is a great deal too intimate with the Magistrate, "and has no shame at all." Her power over, and conduct with, the Magistrate is again referred to in scene 3, Act 4, by the Jemadar of the jail, who says that he had been a house-servant of Mrs. Wood's but, through the influence of one letter from her, had got from Magistrate the appointment he holds.

The first scene in the second Act is in the godown

of the planter, where the ryots are tortured to make them take advances and cultivate Indigo and where the planter in person flogs, and kicks them.

In the third Act, third scene, two brave ryots rescue the beautiful daughter after she had been brought to Mr Rose's chamber by the procuress who, however, had previously expressed great sorrow at the wicked part she had been compelled to act by the planter. One of the two gives the planter a good beating, though the other urges him "not to be cruel because they are so." The Magistrate in Court openly favours Wood the planter ; takes his advice ; writes private letters during the examination ; sends off a note to Mrs. Wood and a message to his steward, that Mr. Wood will dine with him whilst the trial is going on, and before any decision or order is given. The father of the family is put in the jail by the Magistrate ; will take no food, and hangs himself.

In the fifth Act, second scene, the eldest son is brought in with his skull fractured by the blow given him by the saheb, notwithstanding the brave resistance of the same neighbour who saved the maiden, and who, when wounded on the breast with a sword by the young saheb, flew at the nose of the elder one, and bit it off. "That nose," he says in triumph, "I have kept with me, and will shew to the dead Baboo when he rises up alive again." He expresses regret that he had not taken off the planter's ears also, adding that "I would not have killed him, as he is a creature of God."

One wife dies of grief ; another becomes insane, kills a beautiful girl of the family ; and the maiden whose virtue was attempted by the planter, dies also. In the words of the author "the whole family is destroyed by Indigo—the great destroyer of honour. How very terrible are the arms of indigo."

So terminates this drama—"the favorite mode with the Hindoos for describing certain states of society, manners and customs", and which, in this instance, is vouched for by Mr. Long to "be written in simple homely language, plain but true."

On the side of ryots every one is pure and virtuous ; and they express nothing but the most exalted and noble sentiments, which guide all their actions.

To the European, language, practices, and crimes only to be imagined by the Bengalee are imputed, whether he be a

former Governor of Bengal—a Magistrate of the country, a planter, or his English wife.

This is the production which Rev. Mr. Long, a clergyman of the Church of England, has vouched for .the truth of, has revised, superintended, and paid for the printing of, and has furnished a list for its distribution in England, to influential men, thus stabbing his countrymen in the dark, in such a manner that they might not know of the blow until they felt the effect in what might be, to them, irreparable injury. This is the work the whole edition of which Mr. Long sent to the head official and representative of the Government of Bengal, Mr. Seton-Karr, the President of the late Indigo Commission, and the writer of its report ; and who has stated in that report "that there are considerations which are paramount to all mercantile interests and political expediency, and to all material advantage—the simple consideration of justice and truth."

Yet Mr. Seton-Karr, as Secretary to the Government of Bengal, is found to have used his official authority, and the public means to circulate on Her Majesty's service this gross and malicious slander on his countrymen, giving it the weight and sanction of Government. Mr. Seton-Karr has been since appointed Member of the Legislative Council of India.

The Association beg a reference to the evidence given in the trial ; to the judgement of Sir Mordaunt Wells, who presided at it ; and to the judgement of Sir Barnes Peacock, the the Chief Justice, who heard the motion for arrest ; to shew that they have here stated nothing that was not proved ; and that all the Judges concurred in opinion that the libel was a gross and malicious one, aggravated by the manner of its distribution.

The Association leave it to you and to the public to judge how far such proceedings can be reconciled by Mr. Long with his mission of peace and goodwill to all men, or with the profession ; by the Government, of its desire to smooth over animosities of race and to encourage British settlers and European capital in India.

They would desire to put you and all their fellow-countrymen in England, and especially to those who are Legislators, or Members of the Government, this case. It is yet but a few years since much excitement prevailed in England on the question of the repeal of the Corn Laws. Men's minds were greatly divided on this question, and many pamphlets and tracts were written and published on both sides. Had some one

of those, opposed to the alteration of the Corn Laws written and published such a play as this *Nil Durpan*, charging on the manufacturers of England as body, and on their wives such crimes and such baseness as is here charged against Englishmen and Englishwomen in India ; had it been established by undoubted evidence that such a drama had been printed under the superintendence of a clergyman and that by his orders 500 copies of the same had been sent to Downing street and had been circulated secretly by the Queen's Government—circulated in such a way that those attacked could only hear of it by accident, and after the effect desired by its circulators had been produced,—what would have been said and done by that Parliament and people of England in such a case?

What is there supposed as occurring in England has now occurred in India, and the Association confidently believe that the same measure of justice will be meted out to them, as their countrymen in England would have received.

By order of the Landholder's and Commercial Association of British India.

W. F. FERGUSSON.
Secretary.

REVIEW.

From the whole Procedings of the *Nil Durpan* trial, we have come to the conclusion, that Sir Mordunt Wells rather acted as an advocate of the Indigo Cause, than as a judge to dispense impartial justice. The Jury in this case were nothing more than puppets, that could not move without any assistance. He took their main wire in his hands, and acted his part so expertly that the whole court was rather a grand scene of puppet dance, than as a tribunal of justice.

Never have we heard of, nor witnessed such a peculiar trial, as the trial and condemnation of the Rev. J. Long. The Puisene Judge from the very beginning of the trial shewed a strong partiality for the Indigo Planters and their two organs. A desire of gratifying them so strongly prevailed over the rational dictates of moral justice, that he pronounced *Nil Durpan* libellous, and Mr. Long guilty of libel. He condemned a man who was truly innocent of the charges which were falsely imputed to him.

Rarely have we seen or heard of a judge, when in bench, denouncing so strongly a man to prove him guilty of an offence when he stands acquitted of the charges. Embittered as Sir Mordaunt Wells was, that to prove *Nil Durpan* libellous and Mr. Long guilty, so far had he forgotten the dignity and position of the high and responsible situation he holds, that he burst forth into elocutions which were beyond the limits of his duties—elocutions which were so rancorous and partispirited, that they did not suit the occasion and the place, and entirely disqualified him for a judicial post.

Whole India stood astonished to see a Missionary of high reputation, who rendered the most eminent services to the Country, condemned through the malevolence and rancour of faction by a Judge, who to support and advocate the Indigo cause, was hurried beyond the bounds of Justice, Law, and common sense.

The Indigo Planters and their advocates, finding their cause entirely hopeless, tried with their head and heart to strike a great blow by prosecuting Mr. Long in a Court of Justice. The Indigo Planters, it seems to us, were determined to carry on business under great legal restrictions.

The Liberty of the Press, which is absolutely necessary in a civilised government, was greatly attacked. Every individual is at liberty to express his thoughts and feelings,

provided they are free from defamation. Wrongs cannot be remedied, and rights cannot be preserved without the liberty of the Press.

Well, now, if *Nil Durpan* which is nothing more than a true exponent of native thoughts and feelings, were pronounced libellous, and its publisher condemned for a false charge, were not then, the Indigo Editors, who unjustly attacked the Government, the Missionaries, the Natives and in short, every supporter of a good cause, entitled to transportation, and even to still higher penalties ?

The *Harkaru* who really acted like an *impertinent Harkaru* was surely deserving of great censure. A conference was held by the Missionaries of Calcutta, respecting Mr. Long. The *Harkaru* for the information of the British Public circulated the following misrepresentations :—

"It is said that at the Conference, there was great difference of opinion, some of the members having proposed to expel Mr. Long from their Association altogether ; but the Rev. Chairman (Dr. Duff) with characteristic vehemence declaimed that if they did not pass the resolution, he would go home and preach the Martyrdom of St. Long in every village and hamlet in England and Scotland."

A letter from the Secretary of that Conference to the Editor of the *Bengal Harkaru* fully disproved the misstatements.

The public ought to consider whether *Nil Durpan*, or the Blue Journals, were libellous. We say *libel* in its strictest sense, not libel in the Supreme Court form of interpretation.

Factious zeal did so much prejudice the Judge during the Trial, that he was at a great difficulty to distinguish right from wrong, even to construe the proper meaning of the word libel. According to Sir M. Wells' interpretation of the word libel, any exposition of social, moral, and political evils, was a libel ; the practice of these evils was to be indulged without any check, and any man attempting to check them must be brought to the trial of a Court of Justice.

When Sir Mordaunt Lawson Wells first sat on the Judicial Bench of the Supreme Court, Sir M. Wells expressed a strong antipathy towards the natives, whom he declaimed as a nation of forgers and perjurers. For trivial offences he inflicted on them the severest punishments.

For instance, we cite the trial of the well known Mutty Baboo of Santipore. That he was really guilty, everybody knows, but not so much as to deserve the severe punishment

of 7 years' transportation. Whereas the murderer Watson, for his having a white skin was "commisserated with, pleaded for, and incontinently removed from the felon's cell to the Civil part of the Jail by the same Judge."

He grossly insulted us and injured our reputation. He encroached on our rights and threw us into the contempt and ridicule of the civilised nations of the Earth. The Natives of India were not Carolina slaves that they will suffer all public indignities. Manfully did they then fight to vindicate their Just cause *—a cause which they had every right to assert. Never have we heard of, nor witnessed such a political strife since the conquest of India by the English ; a strife on which the destinies of a high functionary and the natives of Bengal were firmly at a stake.

The prosecutor was not an Indigo planter and still the 2nd count was allowed to stand. It was urged that as the prosecutor was a member of the Indigo Planters' Association, so he could sue the Reverend Mr. Long on behalf of the Planters. Admitting the truth of the 2nd count, for arguments' sake, Mr. Brett could not at all sue on behalf of the Planters, for the planters were not a corporate and definite body. The costs of the suit were paid by the Commercial and Land-holders alias the Indigo Planters' Association. The counsel for the prosecutor was a member of the Association, but he nominally withdrew his connection from the Association, and became a counsel to be the prosecutor's counsel. Such was the extent of malice shown towards Mr. Long, that the respectable natives were not allowed by the Supreme Court to wait on a deputation on Mr. Long at the common Jail, for the purpose of presenting him an address which was subsequently forwarded to him in the way of letter, just few days after his being taken in to the Jail.

*A meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta and its suburbs was held at the premises of Raja Radha Kanta Deb Bahadoor, on Monday the 26th August, 1861, at 4 P. M., with the view of submitting a memorial to the Secretary of State for India containing many attacks Sir M. Wells made on several occasions to the jurors, while in the discharge of public duty.

The memorial in question which was read before the meeting, was carried unanimously, and was sent to England on the 23rd September, 1861. Several leading English journals and the right-minded English gentlemen had each and all declared, that the natives had at last appreciated their constitutional rights, and were deserving of their best thanks for their (Natives') taking proper steps to assert their rights. —See Hindoo Patriot of the 29th August, 1861.

As for Mr. Seton-Karr, he was wrong only of doing a private affair in a public capacity. Let not any one think, that he was censured by the Government for his adopting a course which was contrary to the interests of the Blues. For, if such would have been the case, the Members of Parliament, the India and Bengal Governments, the several Newspapers of India and abroad, who maintained truth, and advocated the cause of oppressed Ryots, or in other words, spoke against the Planters, would have been censured. Even the very Mr. Seton-Karr, who as president of the Indigo Commission in conjunction with the majority of the members of the Commission, reported a great deal against the planters, would have been censured. The explanation which he forwarded to the Governor-General and which was published for general information, was so reasonable and satisfactory, that it entirely befitted a man of his position and qualifications.

As for Mr. Long, he fulfilled the duties of Christianity, —he suffered "in a good cause—the cause of his Divine Master—the cause of the poor, the needy, and the oppressed." He suffered the public indignities with a patience that expressed a truly Christian, high and magnanimous heart.

"Let us conclude." One of the most memorable events which has thrown a dark spot into the annals of British India, is the trial and condemnation of Rev. J. Long. The manner in which the trial was conducted was clearly expressive of partizanship and strong partiality. It attracted universal attention, and excited the indignation of the right-minded men. The Indigo Planters, their Judical advocate, and the Counsel, expressed so great an aversion for the Rev. Gentleman, that those eminent virtues which enabled him to draw universal notice, and by which he rendered the most eminent service to this country, seemed to them the most detestable vices. No reasonable man will deny that the trial was by far the most unjust that ever disgraced any tribunal of the nineteenth century. In the history of the civilized world there are few examples with which it can bear a true analogy ; and to speak more emphatically, it was a disgrace to Christianity, to Truth and to Justice, a disgrace to Reason, and to Conscience.

This unjust trial reminds us of the trial and execution of Nundcoomar. Sir Mordaunt may deservedly be called the Impey of the nineteenth century. In fact he was a true incarnation of that arrogant, haughty, and Bengali-hating Englishman, who at one time, on the same chair, and within

the walls of the very same Hall, unjustly condemned the unfortunate Nundcoomar. But if we take a survey of the transactions of the Supreme Court, we shall find, that excepting the trials of Nundcoomar and the Rev. James Long, which are of the blackest dye, and which will be for ever observed with detestation and abhorrence, they are truly deserving of praise. Thus by drawing a disfigured, but an exact picture of the interlopers of Christian Europe, we have set before our readers examples of the most barbarous, horrible, and detestable course of actions. I know not whether I shall have the fortune of getting a Brett to prosecute, and a Wells to condemn or not.—*Hindoo Patriot.*

EPITOME OF ENGLISH NEWS.

The prosecution of the Rev. Mr. Long at Calcutta, for translating and circulating the Bengali drama, called "The Mirror of Indigo Planting," the charge of the judge, and verdict of the jury, will awaken more sympathy in this country on behalf of the ryots, and, by consequence more prejudice against the planters, than all the appeals, petitions, pamphlets, speeches, and newspaper tirades, that could have brought to bear upon the subject during the next fifty years. The impression made on the public mind of England by the proceeding may be considered perfectly irrespective of the actual merits of the case. The question is not so much whether the Indigo Planters—by whom the prosecution was really instituted—were or were not misrepresented in that marvellously tedious spectacle, which Mr. Long thought worth translating as a characteristic illustration of native opinion. The question which strikes the intelligence of the English people is whether a prosecution for libel on such ground should have been instituted at all. What is to become of our vaunts in India of free speech, and political liberty and the rights which men acquire under our happy and liberal constitution, if this kind of general satire—granting it to be a satire—this species of discussion of public interest in popular shapes is to be dealt with as a matter of libel and scandal ? In one breath we bestow the privileges of open debate upon the natives and punish them for the exercise of it in the next. There was nothing whatever in the publication that could be tortured into a libel, to the satisfaction of the reason of an English Jury in England. It could not be shown to have injured any one ; no one suffered in purse or reputation by it ;

no person individually alluded to ; neither Mr. Brett, nor the Journal of which he is the editor was named ; the planters were touched only in their corporate character just as Mrs. Stowe assailed the planters of South America and as every public Journal in this kingdom assails every day in the week every public body to which they happened to be opposed, from the House of Lords down to the parish vestry ; and throughout the whole of the extremely lugubrious and clumsy production there was not a solitary passage from which the prosecution attempted to extract a personal application. That the planters should have adopted so odious a means of vindicating themselves from aspersions is quite astonishing, seeing that, whatever the legal result might be, the trial would infallibly attract universal attention and lay bare the system, it is their object to maintain, and which certainly cannot be maintained by actions of this description. In England no man of ordinary experience in public life would ever dream of instituting a prosecution for libel even if the provocation had been a hundred times more direct and injurious. We have long outlived the practice of seeking reparation for wounded character in courts of law ; and that case must indeed be special in which public opinion sustains the prosecutor who cannot set his reputation right with the world by other means than an action for defamation. But if censure is to fall on the planters for putting such a case in motion, what is to be thought of the judge who delivered a charge upon the merits such as might be transferred without any violation of consistency to the lips of Jeffreys ? If the exposition of the law, and the description of the alleged libel, as laid down by Sir Mordaunt Wells were to be accepted as fair exemplars of the manner in which justice is administered in the tribunals of India, the world would be justified in concluding that, while we are making gigantic strides at home in the way of law improvement, we are rapidly retrograding in the East towards that halcyon system under which suits were decided by other influences than those of equity and common sense. As to the jury in this particular case, their verdict, however, deeply to be 'regretted, does not excite half the surprise and wonder which the charge of the judge has created amongst all classes in this country.

But the story of this libel is not worked out yet. The catastrophe cannot be said to be accomplished by the fine and

imprisonment of Mr. Long. If it were necessary to the ends of truth and justice that the translator should be punished, it is surely not less so that the original author should come in for his share of the penalty ? If the libel has done any mischief, it is amongst the natives : and if the prosecution of Mr. Long were justifiable, the planters are bound, by parity of reasoning, to follow up the prosecution against the real offender. The whole force of our administrative power being now engaged in endeavouring to draw the natives into our system, by showing them how much superior it is to their own, so favourable an opportunity of exhibiting to them its justice, magnanimity, and freedom, should not be thrown away.—*Home News.*

This prosecution is a piece of childish revenge. The Indigo Planters have failed in their attempt to mislead the home public, or shake the firmness of the Home Government : as they seek and find in the passions of the non-official community of Calcutta the means of striking one of a body of men who have been mainly instrumental in enlightening the British nation respecting their relation with the ryots. It has hitherto been a common lament that the rulers of India know so little of the native mind, so little of the undercurrents of native society. But all who have sought to exercise influence of India have striven to increase knowledge of that kind. Missionaries procure at the earliest moment new Hindoo refutations of Christianity ; and Governors and Councillors, from the Marquis of Hastings to Mr. Wilson, have assiduously collectcd native criticisms from their measures. And if the incorporation of India with the empire is to be real and fruitful, if India is to profit by the enlightened judgment of the British Parliament and the humane concern of the British nation, then it is necessary that the feelings and opinions, and even the errors and prejudices of its people, should be known in England. We have not yet stated how Mr. Long's publication was disposed of. Only 202 copies were distributed, and the purpose for which they were issued may be gathered from a glance at the names of the persons to whom those sent to England were addressed. If all Calcutta were impanelled as a jury, the verdict would not persuade the English public that a gentleman, bent on slandering and vilifying a wealthy and powerful class of his countrymen, would send a "foul and filthy" libel to the Rev. Baptist Noel and the Earl of Shaftesbury ; or plan a caricature of Indian rural

life as veridical on Sir Charles Trevelyan, Lord Stanley, and the Earl of Ellenborough. The mere enumeration of the persons selected as recipients of this translated drama shows that the copies were sent in good faith to acquaint those who in this country pay most attention to Indian subjects with a particular tendency and working of the native mind. This habit of consulting in the first place and by direct means the satisfaction and tranquillity of the people of India, "the native community," as the counsel for the planters called them, should not be offensive to anybody of English settlers in the East, and the Landowners' Association know full well that they will not be allowed to interrupt the flow to England of any information which concerns the good government of that great possession. We believe they will discover before Parliament meets that in instituting this trial they have made a serious mistake.—*Daily News.*

The Planters, however, instead of attacking the Government fell upon the nearest victim at hand—the unlucky translator. The law of libel stands in India as it stood in England before Lord Campbell's Act, and, with a virulence which men in a large community could not have displayed, they availed themselves of this circumstance to place Mr. Long in the dock on a criminal charge. There was, it will be remembered, no individual libel. The journalists of Calcutta were accused of taking bribes, and the planters of all crimes under the sun except hypocrisy, but no individual was attacked.

The presiding judge, however, delivered an oration against the *Nil Durpan*, which was just enough, but which the jury and the planters took for a charge against the prisoner, and Mr. Long was found guilty.

It is scarcely necessary to point out in England how completely the planters have destroyed their own safeguard for free speech. The Press in India has constantly to assail the mischiefs and errors inflicted on the community. Civilians, Zemindars, Brahmins, soldiers, have all been assailed—and must be assailed if any good is to be done—in language which may now be twisted into a criminal offence.—*Spectator.*

Had Mr. Long been tried before a judge who could have looked at the whole circumstances, instead of confining himself to the minutes of English law, the result of trial would, we should think, have been very different.

Mr. Long appears to us to be a very worthy and very unfortunate man who has tried to do a very useful thing without perhaps being as prudent as he should

have been, and who has spent a month in prison and had to pay £100, because he was rather unlucky in his counsel and very unlucky in the judge. We cannot wonder that a press habituated to such free-speaking as that of India should fall foul of Sir Mordaunt Wells. But Indian journalists ought to know better than to dream that a judge could be, or ought to be, recalled because he has delivered a foolish charge. We heartily wish that Anglo-Indians would get rid of the pernicious notion—one of the very worst triumphant in America—that an official who displeases popular critics is to be immediately turned out of his office. The independence of judges is of more consequence than the imprisonment or release of a thousand missionaries. No impartial reader can doubt that the charge of Sir Mordaunt Wells is that of a perfectly honest man who did his best, who knows English law as second-rate English lawyers generally do know it by reference to a good stock of precedents, and who only talked nonsense because he wished to put the points that struck him as true in a strong and convincing light. It is impossible to read without a smile the passage in which he represents the reputation of all English women of the middle class at stake because a native dramatist has alleged that the wives of Planters are too intimate with magistrates. There is also an abundance of platitudes, and an attitude of apology for his boldness in having an opinion on so great a subject as freedom of writing, which shows that he is not a very wise or a very able man.—*Saturday Review.*

A sentence so utterly preposterous cannot, we should hope, be allowed to stand ; but if it lead, as we trust it will, to a thorough investigation, on appeal in this country, into the true relation subsisting between the Indigo Planters and the peasantry of India, and (if the report of the trial be correct, as we presume it to be) to a rigorous inquiry into the conduct of the presiding judge, and into the administration of justice in India, it will not have been passed in vain, and Mr. Long's condemnation will have aided the cause of truth and justice.

We may, therefore, expect to hear more of it at some future time and, unless a very different colour be given to the case, it is plain that justice will not be satisfied by a reversal of the decision, without the dismissal of the judge, whose charge to the jury and whose sentence on the defendant show a spirit of partisanship which is never witnessed on the bench in England, and cannot be tolerated in her dependencies. —*London Review.*

We must not permit ourselves to condole with you, Sir, on your persecution. You have suffered in a good cause—the cause of your Divine Master—the cause of the poor, the needy, and the oppressed. The sympathies of Christian England are with you. The natives of India have vied with each other in their expressions of regard. Your missionary brethren have bestowed upon you their cordial commendations. Lastly, you must be sustained by a consciousness that you have performed your duty, and that your prosecution will tend to open the eyes of world to the real character of the System which has incarcerated you in a gaol ; and that, by the force of a living example, you have commended Christianity itself to the acceptance of the teeming millions of India.—*Extract from the address of the Aborigines' Protection Society to the Revd. J. Long.*

The Planters had on their side the confessedly bad libel law of India ; they pressed it to the uttermost in a vindictive spirit against the missionaries, but they have overreached themselves.—*The Freeman.*

The Calcutta judges have certainly established a very dangerous precedent. The liberty of the press was defended in phrase upon the bench, but, in fact, it has been seriously wounded in the house of its professed friends.—*The Scotsman.*

It is certain that the prosecution will not improve the position of the Planters in the estimation of the public here. Everyone knows that the cultivation of Indigo has been compulsory and unremunerative, not from the fault of the present body of Planters, who took their factories over with the outstanding balances, by which the ryot was *bound* to cultivate, and under the operation of which he ceased to be free agent. In conversations on the subject in this country, I have heard it remarked that there can be no severer condemnation of the system of Indigo cultivation, than the fact that Government had successively raised the price fixed to the ryot for growing the poppy, while the price of the Indigo plant had remained for twenty, thirty, and forty years, without any improvement. As to the conduct of the Bengal Secretary in circulating the pamphlet under an official frank, as he has himself expressed his regret for this act of indiscretion, I need not advert to it. There can be no doubt that but for this inadvertent act there would have been no prosecution of Mr. Long, and but for the exasperated state of public

feeling, the circulation of the pamphlet even in so objectionable a form, would scarcely have excited observation.... —*The London Correspondent of the Friend of India.*

No defence of the judgement on its merits has ever been set up, and I venture to say that none with justice can be maintained. I have conversed on the question with lawyers and politicians. By the former the judgement is regarded as unsound and as seeming to sanction a ground of action in an individual for a general libellous attack upon a class. Whilst by politicians it is spoken of as a direct counteraction of the policy enunciated and set on foot by Mr. Wilson for obtaining a knowledge of native opinion through the medium of vernacular literature. The only two daily journals in London which have at all ventured to approach the subject are the *Times* and the *Daily News*, but the opinions expressed by both have been so guarded that I should not be surprised if the truth were that the cue had been received from an official quarter. Your correspondent is not under such influence, and he has no hesitation in declaring his conviction that a more ill-judged and impolitic decision at such a crisis as the present could not have been pronounced. Its evil influence is well calculated to fester in the native mind long after events, which now more prominently attracted attention, have passed away. The disregard of native opinion, the abuse of judicial influence, the stultification of the avowed wishes of the Government and the cruel persecution of an amiable and accomplished Christian minister, all combined to make this trial a dark spot in the annals of Indian misgovernment.—*The London Correspondent of the Times of India.*

Here many economists observe a struggle between capital and labour waged on Indian soil, not unlike to that which is now agitating our English markets ; here traders may reflect how far India offers a promising field for the investment of British Wealth ; here lawyers may witness a state trial conducted under a defective law of libel, the freedom of press curtailed, and the jury system miscarrying under popular ferment ; religious societies, and, indeed, all men may sympathise with the victimisation of an honest missionary. Indian politicians may find a striking example of the unsatisfactory relation of natives towards Europeans, and of the standing jealousy between civilians and non-civilians ; the public may deplore the stifling of weak native voice the first time that its spontaneous expression had a chance of

making itself among the dominant race, while to the statesman will be presented the phenomenon of a community agitated by a factious grievance, and of a supreme governor first letting go by the opportunity of allaying public excitement, and then when it had culminated, visiting the consequences of his own default upon the subaltern, who by a venial mistake, had in the first instance been the cause of the popular misconception—*Extract from Sir Godfrey Lushington's letter, addressed to the Times.*

No. 13

APPENDIX

[A corrceted list of lapses in the 2nd edition of NIL DARPAN.]

THIRD INDIAN EDITION	SECOND INDIAN EDITION
Act I Sc. I.	
P. 3. ..and your holdings are well nigh gone.	and your relatives are on the point of forsaking you.
P. 5. *Nobin.* I said, "Saheb as you engage all *our* men..."	*Nobin.* I said, "Saheb, as you engage all *your* men"....
Act. I Sc. II	
P. 6. *Ray* (Laying down his plough)	*Ray (Holding his plough)*
Act I. Sc. III	
P. 10. ...and to take away his holdings which were royal gifts.	...and to take away the iron crow from the Government.
P. I2. *Gopi.* ...what to speak of nine bighas !	Untranslated
Act. I. Sc. IV	
P. 15. People say two sister-in-laws never agree.	People may say whatever they choose to one whom they do not like.
Act I. Sc. IV	
P. 17. Nicely understood indeed :	Very well
P. 18. *Let alone a Paiche*	Untranslated.
... ...	
Does it fit in ?	
P. 19. *Saralata* : But her belly...bulged belly.	Untranslated.

P. 21. When our males go out to the fields.	When our males go to dinner outside.
P. 22. ...they will do it more when they are infatuated.	they cannot commit this before one's eyes.
P. 23. Lady Imprisonment has been made sterile.	the wretch has aggravated this imprisoning.
Act II Sc. I.	
P. 27. And we devoid... salt to eat.	Untranslated.
P. 27. And the feet of the fifth-eater...the ox.	And the feet of the *horse*...the ox.
P. 27. ...and work on commission...influence of the Babus.	...and keep men under me. When I heard about the plan which our master formed, I immediately refused to take any indigo business in my hand, saying I shall never work for that.
PP. 27-28...shall be able... pregnancy.	...and shall be able to attend to my friend.
P. 28. I went to Andrabad once.	I went to Andrabad once or twice.
P. 28. Ha ! just as the magistrate...Moyna.	Untranslated...
P. 28. Don't be overjoyous.	My heart overflows with joy.
P. 28. There is a saying... sleeps with her son-in-law.	Untranslated.
P. 28. I cannot understand ...Magistrate of the other Zillah !	I cannot understand whether they have found fault with the Magistrate of this or the other Zillah.
P, 29. ...the spectre of indigo.	...the great burden of Indigo.
P. 29. Why have *they* brought this *brother-in-law* here ?	Why have *you* brought this my *brother* here ?

P. 29. He does not understand a thing.	Untranslated.
P. 29. ... the following *verse*.	...the following *sentence*.
P. 29. So the Indigo Saheb ...blue devil.	So the Indigo of the Indigo factory is an instrument of punishment.
P. 29. ...Forming such *verses*.	Forming such *sentences*.
P. 30. ...hear another *verse*	...hear another *sentence*.
P. 30. What a composition! But what is really meant by "Destroyed the caste ?"	Aola Nochen has composed "Destroyed the caste" ; what is it ?
P. 30. Torapa repeating the words of the Second Ryot.	Second Ryot.
P. 30. I am a ryot of a different village How...offered me ?	I am become the inhabitant of three villages at once. I came away to Svaropur, and through the advice of Bose, I threw away the advance which was offered me.
P. 30. When my youngest child had a fever.	When my young child was sick.
P. 30. How many bighas have they thrust on you this year.	How many bighas have they given you this year ?
P. 31. Why not cultivate... help in the cultivation.	If you can cultivate the whole village ; and we do not refuse to give the village.
Act II Sc. III	
P. 37. Oh, to think of the club...proved my last.	As to that preparation which Ray made, had it not been caught by Sadhu she would have been proved with food and clothing for life.
P. 37. *Her* eyes immediately	...*his* eyes immediately

P. 38. I shall pass by your *shop*.	I shall pass by your *house*.
P. 41...they brought me *from* the field.	...they brought me *to* the field.
P. 41. Had not my brother caught hold of *me*	Had not my brother caught hold of *us*,
P. 42. To such a family···	Untranslated.

Tarkalankar (*Takes snuff*)

Act III Sc. I

P. 45···You do not care··· notice	···don't bring anything to my notice.
P. 46...his *barns* are all become empty.	...his *magazines* are all become empty.
P. 47....the four rascals...of your evidence.	the four rascals were thrown into prison only by making your evidence strong.
P. 47. Chunder Goldar... taken any advance	.. the new habitation, and the taking of advances of Chunder Goladar are not allowed here.

Act III Sc. II.

P. 52. I received your last letter and noted the contents thereof. Be it known...well being.	I received your last letter, and was much pleased with reading of your good fortune.
P. 52-53. If on account...*my father is imprisoned*	If on account...*there be a delay.*
P. 54. Having brought one who now belongs to another family.	Having brought one of a strange caste.
P. 54. *Sabitri.* What has happened ?	Untranslated.
Revoti. My Khetromoni... celebrating it.	
Sabitri. What misfortune !	

Act III. Sc. III

P. 56. Right in our presence ...shown any compassion.	Untranslated
P. 56. I like women more... drag her down to me ?	Untranslated
P. 56-59. *Podi* Khetromany my sweet... *Nobin*...Your whereabouts now.	Untranslated
P. 60. When the ryots abscond...go to ruins.	When your destiny shall decide you shall have to enter the factory of the Tomb.

Act IV Sc. I.

P. 65. Leaving their wives ...prostitutes.	They lead astray married women ; and then they themselves enjoy their houses and everything else.
P. 69...I am writing with my finger, not with my ears.	I am not writing from hearsay.
P. 70. This amount was had by selling the jewellery.	This money they will give by selling ornaments.
P. 70. They have been paid elsewhere.	Have not they got something as their own ?

Act IV. Sc. II.

P. 71. Whoever wants any sum *you* will give him that.	Whoever wants any sum *I* will give him that.
P. 77. ...and as they had... godown again ?	...and as I had taken the advance what reason is there for going to his godown. We must be sharp.
P. 78. I shall have to examine the body a little,	

Act V Sc. I.

P. 81. Even the Governor takes off his hat, while coming to meet him.	Untranslated.

P. 82. ...the news of *Goluk Bose.*	...the news of *Nobin.*
P. 82. ...It is you.. drawing the venom out of me...	Untranslated
P. 83. ...they are the black-smiths.....bathe therein for relief.	they themselves are the black-smiths and at the same time the cimetres ; where they make one to fall there they themselves also fall. If ruin come upon these Sahebs' factories, then the people of the villages save themselves by bathing.
P. 84. ...poda caste of spearmen	...poda caste of (Surki) brickpowder-makers or sellers
P. 84. ...to bring any spearman	to bring any surkiwalla.
P. 87. ...observe the tillage	observe the preparation of the rice.
Act V Sc 11	
P. 90-91. The eldest Babu ...involved.	The eldest Babu had once saved these from hands of robbers.
P. 93. Saying so much...child of five.	Untranslated
P. 98...else I would have fallen at thy feet.	else, why shall I fall at thy feet ?
Act V Sc. III	
P. 103. My waist is pricked by a tangrafish.	...a cracked tangrah Ah ! Ah !
P. 105. Had Dushasan the doctor been called...	Had the doctor been of a hard heart...
P. 105 Ditto	Ditto.

Act I Sc. II

Reboti

(i) Have you kept only the plough and this beating (*marpit*)

(ii) He (i. e Ray) had just laid down the plough, and all this beating !

ERRATA

Act. V. Sc. II.

ADURI

(i) When Nobin was taken by force...did not see that.

(ii) Only hearing that Nobin...by the peasants.

*Nos (i) & (i) occur in the Second edition of the English translation of NIL DARPAN.

Nos (ii) & (ii) are the corrected versions of the above speeches.

By mistake both versions have been printed side by side in our edition.

Act I Sc III

For	*Read*
lowest caste of *the* Bengal	lowest caste of Bengal

Act V. Sc. I. Page 68. last line.

For	*Read*
polughs	ploughs.

—Editor

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DINABANDHU MITRA

By

Bankimchandra Chattopadhaya.

A few miles north-east of Kanchrapara, a station on the East Bengal Railways, there is a village of the name of Chauberia. A small river of the name of Jamuna flows encircling this small village, and hence is the name of the village, Chauberia. This village belongs to the district of Nadia, and is the birthplace of Dinabandhu. The district of Nadia enjoys a position of special honour for her literature, philosophy and the scriptures. Dinabandhu is one of those sons of hers of whom she may of justly be proud.

Dinabandhu was born in the year 1238 B.S. (1832 A.D.-*Tr.*) and was the son of Kalachand Mitra. There is not much to be said about his boyhood. Dinabandhu came down to Calcutta, when quite young, and began studying English in Hare School. While studying in that school he set his hand to Bengali literary composition.

During that period he got introduced to Iswarchandra Gupta, Editor of 'Prabhakar'. Bengali literature was then in a very poor state, and 'Prabhakar' was its best journal. Iswar Gupta was then reigning supreme over Bengali literature. Enamoured of his poetry boys would eagerly seek his acquaintance. Iswar Gupta, too, was equally eager to give encouragement to the young writers of the day. Rightly had the 'Hindu Patriot' commented that a good many of the modern writers were once the disciples of Iswar Gupta. It is however difficult to say how lasting or even desirable have been the results of what Iswar Gupta taught them. Like Dinabandhu and such other writers of distinction the humble writer of this article, too, owes a debt to Iswar Gupta. Hence I do not wish to prove myself ungrateful by writing disparagingly about his literary work. Nor can I altogether deny that judging by modern standard the taste of Iswar Gupta would appear to have been neither very elegant nor very high. A large number of his disciples

have now taken to new paths, forgetting what Iswar Gupta taught them.

Finishing school, Dinabandhu joined the Hindu College where he studied for a few years, securing a scholarship. He enjoyed the reputation of being one of the best students of his college.

I do not know much about Dinabandhu's student life, for I was not known to him then.

Probably in the year 1855 Dinabandhu left college, and accepted the post of Postmaster, Patna Post Office, on a monthly salary of Rs 150/. During his tenure of office there for a period of six months Dinabandhu worked with reputation. A year and a half after, he was given a lift. He was made the Inspecting Postmaster of the division of Orissa, but though there was a rise in his position there was no rise in his salary. It came later.

Today it seems how better it would have been, had Dinabandhu stayed on as a lifelong Postmaster on a salary of Rs 150/- a month. His promotion to the post of Inspecting Postmaster had not been surely a blessing. Formerly the rules of service required Inspecting Postmasters to tour about ceaselessly in different areas and supervise the work of different Post Offices. Nowadays they may, if they should so desire, stay at the Headquarters for a period of six months. Formerly, however, rules were different, and they had to be on the move all the twelve months of the year, halting at some place for a day, at another for two days, and still another for three days at the most. Years of ceaseless labour break down even an iron physique much as constant running wears out an iron wheel. Dinabandhu failed to bear the strain of his work. His appointment to the post of Inspecting Postmaster had been a great misfortune to Bengal !

This however was not an unmitigated evil. A writer of satirical literature needs a special type of training, which training is provided only by a study of different types of human character. During his tours in many places Dinabandhu came in touch with such varied types of human character ! It was by virtue of this training he thus received that he was able to create a variety of humorous characters—a variety rarely to be met with in Bengali literature.

From Orissa division Dinabandhu was first sent out to Nadia division, and thence to Dacca division. Troubles centring round Indigo had already started at that time.

By travelling in various places Dinabandhu acquired an intimate knowledge of the tyranny of the Indigo planters, and then came out with his NIL DARPAN, and laid Bengal under an obligation.

Dinabandhu was perfectly aware that great harm would come to him if his authorship of Nil Darpan came to light, for, those Englishmen whom he served were great friends of Indigo planters. Further, in course of one's work at the Post office one had to come in constant touch with Indigo planters and other Englishmen. Their hostility might cause a man constant care and anxiety, if not injure his interests vitally. Dinabandhu knew all this, and yet he did not refrain from giving publicity to his Nil Darpan. True the book did not bear the name of the author, but Dinabandhu too was never anxious about keeping his authorship a secret. Immediately upon the publication of the book the people of Bengal—all of them—came to know by some means or other that the author of Nil Darpan was Dinabandhu Mitra.

Dinabandhu used to be deeply touched by the sufferings of others, and Nil Darpan was the product of this virtue of his character. It was because he could realize with full sympathy the suffering of the ryots of Bengal that Nil Darpan could have been written and published. Dinabandhu was the foremost of those who sorrowed in the sorrows of others. It was an uncommon virtue of his character that Dinabandhu used to feel more deeply the sufferings of a person then the sufferer himself. I myself had been once an eye-witness of a rare instance in this regard. Once he was staying with me in my house in Jessore. One night a friend of his developed the first symptoms of a serious illness. The person who did so woke up Dinabandhu and told him about his fears. Dinabandhu fell into a swoon at once. The person who woke up Dinabandhu for help was now engaged in nursing Dinabandhu himself. This I saw with my own eyes, and that day I came to realize that nobody, how great might be his virtues, would be as much moved as Dinabandhu would by the sufferings of others. Nil Darpan was but the product of this virtue of his character.

Nil Darpan was translated into English and was sent to England. For giving publicity to this book, Rev. Long was sent to gaol by the judgement of the Supreme Court, and Mr. Seton-Karr was put to humiliation. All this is known to us.

Whether because Rev. Long courted imprisonment for the sake of this book or because the book had a special quality of its own, Nil Darpan was translated into many of the European languages and came to be widely read.

No other work of Bengali literature could achieve this rare distinction. Yet howsoever great might be the distinction, all those who were connected with this work had to face some danger or other. It was by giving publicity to this book that Rev. Long courted imprisonment, and Seton-Karr faced insult. It was by translating this book that Michael Madhushudan Dutt was privately reprimanded and humiliated, and had to, it is learnt, give up his means of livelihood—his job in the Supreme Court. The author of the book, however, faced the greatest danger, even though he was neither imprisoned nor dismissed from his job. One night Dinabandhu was crossing the river Meghna by boat, engaged in writing the manuscript of Nil Darpan. When he had gone only a few miles away from the shore, the boat started sinking. The oarsmen, the boatmen—all started swimming, but Dinabandhu did not know how to swim. He sat quietly in the sinking boat with the manuscript of Nil Darpan in hand. Suddenly then one of the swimmers touched ground and called out to the rest : "Oh ! there's no more fear now. Water is shallow here. There must be a *char* nearby." In fact, there was one at hand, and when the boat was pulled in there Dinabandhu went to the top of the boat and sat there quietly. In his hand was the manuscript of Nil Darpan wet all over. The Meghna was at ebb then. Soon the flowtide would come, flooding the *char* and carrying the wrecked boat nobody knew where. How would they escape with their lives, then ? This was what everybody was thinking—the oarsmen, the boatmen and even Dinabandhu himself. It was the dead of night, a pitch darkness hung all around, and the roar of the river was in the ears, interrupted by the cries of night-birds. Failing to find out a means of escape, Dinabandhu was quickly coming to the end of his hopes, when suddenly the beating of oars in water was heard in the distance. Their repeated cries for help found a response from the men on that boat, and they soon came to the rescue of Dinabandhu and his companions.

From Dacca division Dinabandhu again came to Nadia. As a matter of fact it was in Nadia that Dinabandhu was

posted for the major part of his life. It was only on special missions that Dinabandhu would be sent to Dacca or other places.

On his return from Dacca division Dinabandhu wrote his 'Nabin Tapaswini' which was printed in Krishnagore. The printing machine was set up by the efforts of Dinabandhu and a few other worthy persons, but it did not work for long.

Dinabandhu was again transferred from Nadia division to Dacca division, and thence to Orissa and from there to Nadia again. In fact he spent the major part of his life in Krishnagore where he purchased a house, too. Towards the end of 1869 or the early part of 1870 he came away from Krishnagore to Calcutta, appointed to the post of Supernumerary Inspecting Postmaster and as such it was his duty to assist the Postmaster General in his work. With the able assistance of Dinabandhu the Postal Department did satisfactory work for a few years. In 1871 Dinabandhu was sent to Cachhar to make necessary arrangements for postal service during the Lusahi War. After discharging this onerous duty successfully, he came back to Calcutta in a short time.

During his stay in Calcutta he was made a 'Rai Bahadur'. I am not competent to say how much gratified a person feels to receive this honour, but no other honour fell to the lot of Dinabandhu. That was because Dinabandhu was born to the race of Bengalis.

Amongst the officers of the Postal Department two were considered the most efficient—Dinabandhu and Suryanarayan. Suryanarayanbabu stayed in Assam, entrusted with the heavy responsibility of the postal service of that place, and whenever there was a difficult work to perform Dinabandhu would be called on to help. Such work took him to Dacca, Orissa, north-west of India, Darjeeling, Cachhar and several other places. As a result he had been to nearly all the areas of Bengal and Orissa, and a good many areas of Bihar, too. In the Postal Department the labour fell to the lot of Dinabandhu, and the reward, of course, to the lot of others.

If Dinabandhu were not a Bengali, he would have long before his death become the Postmaster General, and then the Director General. Such was his efficiency in work, and so wide was his understanding of things ! But just as coal would take no other hue, so also to some people,

black skin set off against a thousand and one virtues would yet be black after all ! Charity hides a thousand faults, but black skin, a thousand virtues.

Not to speak of reward, Dinabandhu had to suffer many humiliations during the last days of his career. There was a quarrel between the Postmaster General and the Director General. Dinabandhu's fault was that he helped the Postmaster General in his work. He was packed off to some other work—for a certain period, in the Railway Department, and then, in Howrah Division. This was the last change in his service life.

For a long time past Dinabandhu had been suffering from a serious illness owing to excessive strain of work. Some people say diabetes usually turns out fatal. I do not know if it does, but of late I had an idea that Dinabandhu would come round, for ever since he had the disease Dinabandhu had been living a very cautious and temperate life. He took to eating opium in a very small measure, and said that it did him some good. But all of a sudden in the month of *Aswin* of the year 1280 B. S. (1874 A.D.-*Tr*) he became bed-ridden with a boil. Details of his death are known to all. There is no need to repeat them here, nor do I feel inclined to do so. May it not be anybody's charge to write about the death of such a friend ! This would have been my prayer today, if prayers of man ever bore fruit.

There are few places in Bengal which Dinabandhu did not visit, and wherever he went he gathered friends around him. Whosoever heard about his visit became eager to make his acquaintance, and whosoever made his acquaintance became his friend. I do not know of any person in Bengal today who can rival Dinabandhu as a humorist. Dinabandhu became the very life and soul of an assembly he would join, casting a spell on all by his sweet and humorous conversation. Those who sat listening to his talk would forget the sorrows of their hearts and rolled in laughter. His works are no doubt the best works of humour in Bengali literature but they fail to reveal even an iota of his command of humour. In fact it was his conversation which really revealed his great power of introducing humorous situations. Often he would appear as Humour personified, and we know of many who on several occasions fled from his presence crying, "Oh ! we have spent ourselves out laughing." In the field of humour Dinabandhu was indeed an enchanter.

There are a good many people around us who are foolish but very much vain. Dinabandhu was like Death unto them. He never tried to resist their vanity. What was more, he would fan the flame of their vanity as best as he could. This would infatuate the fool, and Dinabandhu would then sit quietly watching his antics. Once in the hands of Dinabandhu such people never had an escape.

For some years past his gift for humour seemed to be on the decline. About a year ago one of his intimate friends said to him, "Dinabandhu, what about your humour ? The fountain of your mirth has been drying up now, and you'll not live for long." "How d'ye know that ?" were the only words Dinabandhu said, and the very next moment he fell absent-minded. One day it so happened that we spent the night together. On that night Dinabandhu made an effort to rekindle his humour. The effort was not all vain, for he held a good many of his friends under a spell up to about 3 o'clock in the morning. Who knew then it was his last flare ! After that incident we had occasions to spend days together, but never did we see him as lively and cheerful as on that night. His uncommon capacity for satirization, though gradually waning, was never really spent up. Even when he was in his deathbed we could notice it in him. It is known to many that boils brought about his death. The first one appeared on his back, and as soon as he was a little better another appea ed on his seat, and then the third and last appeared on his left foot. At that time his friend mentioned above came down from his place to see Dinabandhu. Faintly smiling like the fading lightning of a distant cloud Dinabandhu muttered : "Boil has now fallen at my feet."

Every man has vanity in him, Dinabandhu had none. Every man has the element of anger in him, Dinabandhu had none. There was nothing about him that I did not know, but never did I find him in an angry mood. On several occasions I remind'ed him in a disapproving tone of the complete absence of anger in him with the result that he felt embarrassed that it was so. Or on being so reminded he made a great effort to feel angry and gave up, saying, "Well, I fail."

It can be said for certain that Dinabandhu never did one single dishonest act in his life. Not that his personality was particularly strong, and that was why he, at the request of his friends or under the influence of undesirable

association, was sometimes led into certain acts of a questionable character. But he never did anything which was wrongful or which might bring harm to others. Many had received the fruits of his bounty, and by his favour a good many people had secured their means of livelihood.

Dinabandhu was particularly kind to his friends, and I may say with conviction that the friendship of a man like Dinabandhu is a rare fortune in life. Those who have lost it would find their sorrow beyond description.

THE ART OF DINABANDHU MITRA

The year 1859-60 was a memorable year in the field of Bengali literature—a year which was the meeting-point of the old and the new. Iswarchandra, the last poet of the old school had then gone down the horizon, and Madhushudan, the first poet of the new school, was coming up. Iswarchandra was essentially a Bengali, and Madhushudan, English from head to foot. Dinabandhu stood bridging the two. Like the year 1859-60 Dinabandhu was the meeting-point of the old school and the new in the field of Bengali poetry.

Dinabandhu was a disciple of the poet Iswar Gupta. Amongst the disciples of Iswar Gupta none acquired the literary quality of the teacher so much as Dinabandhu did. In his command of humour Dinabandhu followed in the footsteps of his master. The intimate relation of Dinabandhu's literature with the everyday life of the Bengali people was, too, reminiscent of his master. Dinabandhu's taste which is often censured is his master's too.

But judging of art, the disciple has to be placed above the master, and this is no shame to the master, either. When I say Dinabandhu's humour imitated the humour of Iswar Gupta, what I mean is that Dinabandhu and Iswar Gupta were satirists of the same school. The technique of satire was of one kind in the past; now we are leaning towards a different kind. People in the past seemed to love broad work; now it is fine work people seem to prefer. The humorist of the past would like a *lathial*[1] take up his *lathi*[2] and hit his enemy hard on the head, crushing the skull. The humorist of today, like the surgeon, brings out his fine lancet and thrusts it in the delicate spot nobody knows when, but heart's blood gushes out through the wound. Today in the British-dominated

society it is the surgeons who are prospering ; the lathials are in a sad plight. Not that there is a dearth of lathials in the literary society today. Unfortunately there have been a little too many of them now, but their lathis are moth-eaten, and their arms weak, of course. Their lathis are but burdens to them now ; and lacking the necessary education they often miss the mark. No doubt they succeed in making people laugh even today, but they themsleves are the objects of that laughter. Iswar Gupta and Dinabandhu were not lathials of this brand. They wielded lathis which were made of stout, seasoned bamboo ; their arms were full of uncommon strength, and their education was many-sided.

Creative art is the chief virtue of an artist. Iswar Gupta lacked this art, but Dinabandhu possessed it in a large measure. Jaladhar, Jagadamba, Nimchand Dutt and such other creations of his are glowing examples of this. But Dinabandhu did not have much control over the subtle, the soft, the sweet, the naive, the pathetic and the placid. His Lilavati, Malati, Kamini, Sorindhri, Sarala and others are not much in favour with the connoiseur. His Binayak, Ramanimohan, Arabinda and Lalitmohan do not appeal to us much. But the broad, the irregular, the incoherent and the confused are at his very bidding. Like ghosts rushing at the sorcerer's call, they come up in an array the moment Dinabandhu conjures them.

One is surprised to think of the materials out of which Dinabandhu made these creations. His many-sided knowledge of the Bengali society is amazing. A writer who knows all about the daily life of a Bengali is no longer to be found. In this respect, the present-day writers of Bengal are in a very sad plight. Many of them have the right education for writing, and have no doubt the ability to write ; only they do not know that thing which, if they knew it, would have brought them success. Many of them love their country and write for the good of the country only without knowing much about her. With a good many of them, knowledge of the country means the knowledge of their own class, in the city of Calcutta. True, some of them have perhaps gone round a few villages and a few towns, but it is the roads and the gardens and the markets they have seen, and never have they been amongst the people. Whatever knowledge they may claim about the

country is what they gather from the newspapers. Generally speaking, our journalists, not to speak of the English journalists, are writers of this same class. So whatever information about the country may be had in their writings could just as well be dismissed as an error like—to use a phraseology from Philosophy—the delusion of a rope for a snake. I do not want to say that no Bengali writer has travelled through villages ; in fact, many of them have, but they have not been amongst the people, and if they have not, what worth, pray, is the knowledge they have acquired ?

In this respect Dinabandhu should be given the foremost place among the writers of Bengal. In discharge of official duty Dinabandhu had to undertake repeated journeys from Manipur to Ganjam, and from the Himalayas on the north to the seas on the south. In course of his travels he not merely saw roads and cities, but had to go from village to village for supervision of work at different Post offices. He possessed an uncommon capacity for being at home with the people, and he did so gladly with its different classes. A daughter of an illiterate rustic like Khetromany, an elderly village woman like Aduri, a ryot like Torapa, a village elder like Rajib, country boys like Nashiram and Rata ; and then again a 'cultured drunkard' of the city like Nimchand, a city-roving country gentleman like Atal, a city vampire like Kanchan, spoilt children like Naderchand and Hemchand who are partly of the town and partly of the village, a deputy like Ghatiram, the Dewan of the Nilkuthi, Amins, Oriya bearers, Dule bearers, and Kaorani, the mother of Pencho—Dinabandhu knew all about them, even their innermost secrets. He knew what they did and what they said, and his pen faithfully followed his thoughts. No writer of Bengal could do it so well as he did. I have seen many an Aduri exactly of the type he has created, I have seen many a Naderchand and many a Hemchand who are prototypes of his creations. I have seen many a Mallika, too—each one the same blooming 'Mallika' of Dinabandhu. Like a trained sculptor or painter Dinabandhu would make his characters in the image of living ideals before him. If ever he saw an ape in human shape seated on the tree of the society, he would pick up his brush and portray him from his crown to the end of his tail. So much about his Realism. On the other hand he had considerable capacity for idealization. Keeping a living model before him, he would unlock the chamber

of his memory, and lend to the model the virtues and vices of other characters he remembered. He knew what would suit the model, and knew where to set it. In this manner sprang up such human beasts as Naderchand, Ghatiram and Bholachand. When we consider the numerousness of such creations and their variety we cannot help feeling surprised at the width of his experience.

But mere experience takes the artist nowhere. There cannot be any creations without sympathy[3], the artists's capacity for feeling into a subject. Not only is Dinabandhu's social experience surprising, his sympathy, too, is exceptionally keen. There is none who realizes as much as he did the sorrows of the poor and the miserable. That was why he could create such a Torapa, such a Raicharan, such an Aduri or such a Reboti. Yet his keen sense of sympathy was not for the poor alone. It was all-pervasive. Dinabandhu was a man of faultless character, but he could realize the sorrows of the characterless. Dinabandhu made no display of his purity. For better, for worse, it was this quality of all-pervasive sympathy that took him to all places, amongst all types of people, virtuous or sinful. Like a fireproof stone unburnt by fire he could keep his purity unsullied while sitting in a hellfire of vices. Even though so pure in heart, he could, by virtue of his sympathetic capacity, realize the miseries of a sinner like the sinner himself. He could realize the sorrows of Nimchand Dutt, the despairing drunkard, whose joys of life had been dried up and whose education had proved futile. He could realize the pain of Rajib Mukhopadhya, a man who had lost all hopes of marriage. He could realize the mental agony of Gopinath for his surveillance to the Indigo Planters. I knew Dinabandhu particularly well ; all the aspects of his character were known to me. I do doubt if I have ever seen a person who felt into the sorrows of other people in the way Dinabandhu did. His works bear this out.

Dinabandhu's sympathy, was however not for sorrow alone, he had an equal degree of sympathy for all sentiments : happiness, sorrow, anger or hatred. His sympathy was for Aduri's happiness in her *bauti*[4] and *paicha*[5] ; his sympathy was for the fury of Torapa ; his symyathy was for Bholanath's joy in the glad cause that prevented him from visiting his father-in-law's house. All artists must have this keen sympathy, else none can aspire to an artistic height. But there is a distinction between Dinabandhu and the

other artists. Sympathy is essentially a product of imagination. Only if a person can place himself in the position of another, he will feel sympathy for him. If that be so, it may be contended here, then the most cruel and heartless of men may, by virtue of his imaginative power, if he has any, very well serve the ends of art by compelling within himself a feeling of sympathy for the suffering. True, but there is yet another class of people in whom the tender feeling of pity and other similar feelings are already so strong that sympathy is the innate virtue of their character, and does not call for the aid of imagination. Psychologists hold that even in such cases imagination goes on functioning, unseen, but the functioning is so much intuitive and so very quick that one fails to realize its persence. Yet there is a distinction between these two classes of people. The sympathy of persons belonging to the former class is under their control, whereas the sympathy of the people of the latter class only overpowers them instead of being under their control. To the people of the former class Sympathy serves as a handmaid, and makes her appearance only when called upon, or she is powerless to appear at all. As to the people of the latter class, Sympathy holds them in her thrall. Whether they want her or no, she will come of her own and possess them, instal herself in their hearts and reign there. With the class of people it is imagination which is dominant, with the latter class it is feelings like love and pity that are the strongest.

Dinabandhu belonged to the latter class. He did not hold Symapthy in his power, Sympathy held him in hers. He would go wherever she led him, and would do whatever she asked him to do. Now perhaps it will be easier for us to know why his works sometimes betray lapses of taste. He was himself well-educated, and bore a spotless character, yet his works often reveal such lapses. The very keen and strong sympathy of his character would perhaps explain this incongruity. Whenever he sat down to portray the character of one with whom he had sympathy, the entire character would come up in his mind and he would draw it whole. He had not the power to choose and discard, for Sympathy was his mistress, and not he, the master of Sympathy. It has been already said that he used to portray a character, keeping a living ideal before him, and just because he felt sympathy for that

living ideal he could use it as the ideal. But it held him so strongly in its power that he failed to discard any part of it. While portraying Torapa he could not describe his fury excepting in the words of Torapa himself. While portraying Aduri he could not set down the jokes she cracked excepting in her own language. While portraying Nimchand he could not help using the very words which he said in his drunken state. Any other artist would have made a compromise with Sympathy saying, "Just give me a full estimate of Torapa, Aduri, and Nimchand, but the language will be mine, not yours." But Dinabandhu could never come to such a compromise. On the contrary, it is as if Sympathy said to him: "I want you to take all that I give you, yes, even the language. Don't you see that once you leave out Torapa's language, the fury of Torapa will not be Torapa's any longer, that once you leave out Aduri's language, the jokes of Aduri will not be Aduri's any longer, and that once you leave out Nimchand's language, the drunken brawls of the tipsy Nimchand will surely not be Nimchand's any longer. So you mustn't leave out anything." Dinabandhu had not the power to say, "No, I can't do that." That is why we have before us Torapa, Nimchand and Aduri—each one complete *cap-a-pie*. If Dinabandhu had to abide by the claims of literary taste, we would have found before us the broken torsos of Torapa, Nimchand and Aduri.

I do not mean to say that we should just cry out, "Well done" to whatever Dinabandhu did. There is no doubt every author should by all means guard against lapses of taste. The few words I have said about him are meant neither to eulogise him nor to censure him. They are meant to hold up before all Dinabandhu, the man. Dinabandhu was not responsible for the lapses of taste noticed in his works ; they have been occasioned by his keen sense of sympathy. Everything good has its bad side too. This perhaps helps call up before us Dinabandhu, the man. Whatever might be the quality of his literary works, Dinabandhu was a man to be loved. In fact I haven't heard of a single Bengali who enjoyed the love of others as Dinabandhu did. His all-pervasive feeling of sympathy would perhaps explain this.

The two chief traits of Dinabandhu's character, namely, his experience of the society, and his keen and wide feeling of sympathy, were the sources from which sprang

the merits and faults of his works. It is this fact which I have sought to establish in this article of mine. Whenever there has been a lack of either of these two virtues, Dinabandhu's art has proved a failure. This tells us why his chief heroes and heroines have failed to become really attractive characters. Aduri and Torapa are living characters, but not so his Kamini, Lilavati, Vijay and Lalitmohan. In the cases of Aduri and Torapa, Sympathy, as it were, conveyed to the writer everything about them, including the language they spoke. But why does one find the characters and speeches of Kamini, Vijay, Lilavati and Lalit so much distorted ? The question may well arise why his sympathy, if natural and universal, did fail him in his portrayal of these characters. 'Want of experience in respect of such characters' is the easy answer. Let us first think of his heroines. The writer had no experience of such characters as Lilavati and Kamini. Indeed there were no such characters at all in the society of Bengal...Since there were no such living ideals before him, his sympathy failed him in these cases. For, even an all-pervasive sympathy pervades only the living and not the lifeless. It is clear to the readers, therefore, that in these cases Dinabandhu lacked both experience and sympathy...hence in these cases his art proved a failure.

The same could be said about the heroes of Dinabandhu. The heroes of Dinabandhu—Bengali youths—are the epitomes of virtues having no work to do. Some of them are engaged in philanthropic activities and some others, in courting. Living ideals of such characters are not present in the society of Bengal, so, in respect of these characters too, Dinabandhu lacked both experience and sympathy. The result was his art proved a failure in these cases too. It would have proved a success if he had, in portraying these characters, adopted the same method as he had done in portraying the characters of Jaladhar, Jagadamba and Nimchand...

Dinabandhu's first drama was the result of his uncommon experience of the society, and his keen sense of sympathy. He had undertaken extensive journeys in the areas where Indigo was produced, and acquired a first-hand and detailed knowledge of the tyranny of the Indigo planters over the ryots. Nobody knew it better than he did. His keen sense of sympathy turned the sorrows of the ryots into his own sorrows and made him take up his pen and

unlock his heart. NIL DARPAN is the UNCLE TOM'S CABIN of Bengal. 'Uncle Tom's 'Cabin' freed the negroes of Africa from their state of slavery. 'Nil Darpan' went a long way in freeing the Indigo slaves from their bondage. When Dinabandhu wrote his Nil Darpan, there was a complete fusion of his experience and sympathy, and that is why of all his dramas this seems to be the most powerful one. His other dramas might claim many other virtues, but not the power which Nil Darpan can claim. None of his dramas can so much overpower the readers or the spectators as Nil Darpan. Many a drama have been written in Bengal with the idea of remedying social ills. Most of them are pieces of bad art. The chief purpose of art is the creation of beauty. If the purpose of social reform is allowed to dominate a literary work the purpose of art itself is foiled.

But Nil Darpan, even though its chief purpose is social reform, excels even as a piece of art. That is because the enthralling sympathy of the writer has lent a tender sweetness to everything in that work.

Translated by : *Sailesh Sen Gupta*

Notes :

1. Lathial : (Bengali word) one wielding a *lathi.*

2. Lathi : a stout bamboo-stick, native weapon of defence in India.

3. *Sympathy* : the word used in this context means the artist's capacity for 'feeling into a subject.' The word used in modern art-criticism is 'Empathy' instead of 'Sympathy.'

4. Bauti : a piece of ornament worn in the past by the womenfolk of Bengal. It resembles a bangle.

5. Paicha : a piece of ornament, usually of silver, worn around the waist by the womenfolk of Bengal in the past.

INDIGO & INDIGOFERA

INDIGO is a well known and exceedingly valuable blue dyeing material. The substance has been known among Western communities from an early period, being mentioned by Pliny as *Indicum* ; when it made its appearance in England it was called *Indigo*. The names show that the material in its origin and production is closely related to India, among the commercial products of which it has always occupied a distinctive and important place.

INDIGOFERA, the plant from which the above substance is extracted, and the plant which brought untold miseries to India in general and Bengal in particular, is "a genus of LEGUMINOSAE which comprises some 300 species distributed throughout the tropical and warm temperate regions of the globe—India having 40. Western India may be described as the headquarters of the species, so far as India is concerned, 25 (thus fully half) being peculiar to that Presidency. On the other hand, on the eastern side of India (the provinces of Bengal, Assam and Burma) there is a marked decrease in the number of species but a visible increase in the prevalence of those that are met with".

But as has already been said "species of Indigofera are distributed throughout the tropical regions of the globe (both in the Old and New Worlds) with Africa as their headquarters. And in addition to the Indigoferas several widely different plants yield the self-same substance chemically. Hence, for many ages, the dye prepared from these has borne a synonymous name in most tongues, and to such an extent has this been the

case that it is impossible to say for certain whether the *nila* of the classic authors of India denoted the self-same plant which yields the dye of that name in modern commerce. The word *nila* simply means dark-blue colour, and is practically synonymous with *kala* (black). It is often used adjectivally, such as *nilgao* (the blue bull), *nilopala* (the blue stone or lapislazuli), *nilamani* (the sapppire) and *nilufar* (the blue water-lily). *Nila* carries, too, the abstarct 'darkness', and only becomes a substantive to denote the dye-yielding species at a comparatively recent date. *Anil* comes from the Arabic *al-nil* through the Portuguese, and should have written *annil*.

The woad of the early European authors (Isatic tinctoria) is grown today in Central Asia and has been so for ages past—a region where no species of Indigofera has been known to be grown (or possibly could be grown) as a source of indigo. The Sanskrit people may accordingly have first made acquaintance with the indigo of Indigofera in India itself, and it is just possible that their *nila* may have originally been the woad, which with the ancient Britons was used, like the indigo of the American Indians, to dye the skin and hair. Complex and difficult though the art of dyeing with Indigo may be, it is thus more intimately associated with the early human race than any other known dye or pigment. And in India it would appear that a far larger number of plants are regularly resorted to as sources of this dye than is the case with almost any other country in the world. In addition to Isatis met with on the north-west alpine tracts and Afghnistan, mention has, for example, to be made of the *rum* of Assam and Central China (Strobilanthes flaccidifolius) ; of the *ryom* (Marsdenia tinctoria), found in the north-eastern tracts, a plant closely allied to the original indigo plant of Java ; of an indigo plant (Tephrosia purpurea) well known in Bombay and Rajputna

and closely allied to one of the indigoes of the Niger and Egypt ; of the *Nerium* or *pala* indigoes (Wrightia tinctoria) of South India, the plant which would appear to have been used prior to the introduction of the species of *Indigofera* , of the indigoes of Burma (such as Gymnema tingens) ; Cochin-China (Spialnthes tinctoria) ; and of North China and Siberia (Polygonum tinctorium). These and many others are plants which have been, or are being, used as sources of this particular dye in some parts of India...."

"Periplus of the Erythroean Sea (80 A. D.) speaks of Indigo as exported from Barbarikon, a Skythian town on the Indus and the port for the metropolis—Minnagar. Marco Polo (1298) gives a grotesque, though accurate, account of the Native indigo industry as seen by him at Coilum (Quilon). "It is made of a certain herb which is gathered, and (after the roots have been removed) is put into great vessels upon which they pour water and then leave it till the whole of the plant is decomposed..." Afanasi Nikitin (1468), a Russian traveller, speaks of Kanbat (Cambay) where the indigo grows. Vasco da Gama (1498), Varthema (1503), and Barbosa (1516), who all visited Gujerat and the west-coast of Bombay, make no mention of indigo, from which circumstance it may be inferred to have been a comparatively unimportant industry. Garcia de Orta (1563) however gives a short account of its cultivation and manufacture in Western India....."

However Finch in his *Travels in India* in *Purchas' Pilgrimes*, 1607, "affords the first definite conception of the indigo industry of india, or rather of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, and from him perhaps dates the conception of the plant being an *Indigofera*..."

"The East India Company published in 1836 a series of reports and letters regarding the indigo industry...."

"That work will be found of the greatest possible interest, and should be consulted for historic details. Mr. Minden Wilson has written in the *India Planters' Gazette* a

series of graphic historic sketches of the introduction of indigo in Bihar. From these it would appear that Mr. Grand...was one of the founders of this industry. Wilson gives the dates of several concerns—Contai was opened out about 1778, and Singia in 1791 ;..."

"For twenty-two years (from 1780 to 1802) The East India Company directly supported the indigo industry and placed India.....in the foremost rank among the indigo-producing countries of the world. They however continued to make purchases of indigo for the purpose of remittances, and to ensure the supply they even made advances to the special factories that had contracted to sell their produce to the Company. About this time also it was recognized that the industry could not be regarded as successfully established in Bengal so long as it was exclusively held by the Anglo-Indian community. It was accordingly arranged that purchases should be made from, and advances given to, factories owned by Natives provided the security was 'sufficiently respectable and the quality fit for the European market."

To put the main facts about the history of this industry in a nutshell—"there is abundant evidence in support of the belief that when Europeans first began to purchase and export the dye from India, it was procured from the Western presidency and shipped for the most part from Surat. It was carried by the Portuguese to Lisbon and sold by them to the dyers of Holland. It was the desire to secure a more certain supply of dye-stuff that led to the formation, in 1631, of the Dutch East India Company, and shortly after to the overthrow of the Portuguese supremacy in the East. The success of the Dutch merchants aroused the jealousy of Europe. The woad growers and merchants of Germany, France and England were threatened wtth ruin, and to protect them nearly every country passed edicts rendering the importation or use of indigo a criminal offence punishable by death.

In 1608 England learned the art of indigo-dyeing, and in

the reign of Queen Elizabeth its use was permitted along with woad. Curiously enough this mixing of woad with indigo survives to the present day, and to meet this demand a small amount of the woad is grown here and there over Europe, and even in England. The opposition to indigo was however so strong that it was again on the pretext of being poisonous, prohibited, and in 1660 Charles II had to procure dyers from Belgium to once more teach the English the art of using the dye." "...The effect of the persistent export of the dye from India, conducted by the East India Company, had the effect of stimulating the Spanish, French, Portuguese and English colonists to make strenuous efforts to produce the dye in many countries outside India. And so successful were they that for a time they ruined the ancient Indian traffic. But Macpherson (*Hist. Europ. Comm. Ind.* 1812, 200) speaks of the East India Company having voluntarily given up the importation of indigo into England in order to avoid a competiton with the British colonists in the West Indies and the southern provinces of North America. About the year 1747 most of the planters in the West Indies, particularly in Jamaica, gave up the cultivation of indigo in consequence of the high duty imposed upon it" ; "the planters of Carolina and Georgia were never able to bring their indigo to a quality equal to that of Guatimala or St. Domingo." But political differences occurred with America and France, and at the same time sugar and coffee had proved even more profitable in the West Indies than indigo. The impetus was thus given for a re-establishment of the Indian traffic, and as one of the many surprises of the industry, the province of Bengal was selected for this revival. It had no sooner been organized however than troubles next arose in Bengal itself through misunderstandings between the planters, their cuitivators, and the Government which may be said to have culminated in Lord Macaulay's *Memorandum* of 1837. This led to another migration of the industry from Lower and Eastern Bengal to Tirhut and the United Provinces.

Here the troubles of the industry did not end, for just as indigo had runined 'the Waid Herrn', so the researches of the chemical laboratories of Germany threatened the very existence of any natural vegetable dye. They first killed the maddar dye of Europe, then the safflower, the lac and the *al* dyes of India, and are now advancing rapidly with synthetic indigo, intent on the complete annihilation of the natural dye..."

(From *The Commercial Products of India* by *Sir George Watt.*)