

strength of his own arm. That much of this was inevitable among a race too cowardly even to fight for their own lives, we willingly admit. But inevitable or avoidable, the result to the Bengalees and the Santhals is the same. The former know that they may be harried by an enemy worse than the Marhattas before assistance can arrive. The latter believe that they can enjoy the luxury of blood and plunder for a month without a certainty of retribution. It is absolutely necessary that this impression should be removed, or obliterated, if Government is not in these districts to "sit on bayonet points." To achieve this end, the retribution must be complete, leaving no calculation of chances for future rioters; striking, that no man may fail to know and understand; and tremendous, that the people may know that their lives and happiness are not held of light account. Moreover, all these objects must be secured, if possible, without massacres. Civilized Governments cannot treat even gangs of murderers as the Papacy treated the Vaudois. We must not exterminate, even though savages have deserved extermination.

We believe all these objects, and humanity besides, may be secured, and although we have little hope of ever obtaining official sanction for so large a project, we do not hesitate to lay it before the public. There is but one portion of our dominions, where human labour is not a drug in the market. In Pegu, one of the richest soils in the world produces nothing for want of cultivators. Thousands of square miles of rice-field need only labour to render the province the rival of Arracan, and to make famine in Madras an impossibility. It is thither that we would convey the Santhals, not one or two of the ringleaders, but the entire population of the infected districts. Every precaution might be taken at once for their safety, and that of the districts along the Arracan military road. They are accustomed to move in great camps, and with plenty of rice stored on the way could not suffer from want of food. The march might occupy two months without risking the approach of an unfavourable season. Unarmed and surrounded by artillery, the Santhals could scarcely injure the unpeopled tract traversed by this road, and might travel as easily as Tartar hordes. Once in Pegu, they would be invaluable. They are excellent cultivators, and in the midst of a foreign and suspicious population, must lean upon the British Government. The expense, we are aware, would be considerable, but it would be amply repaid by the rising revenue of Pegu. We shall fritter away as much in petty efforts at immigration, and lose twice the sum should a second revolt again destroy the revenue of three zillahs. The expatriation would infallibly be regarded by their neighbours as transportation, and the sudden disappearance of an entire race, would convince them that the Government had lost none of its irresistible power, and none of its determination to protect its people. The movement, after all, is nothing more than the policy always pursued towards the Indian tribes by the United States. They are compelled to leave their own homes for the reserved territory, and the march is almost invariably longer than the one we have ventured to propose. Such a scheme would extinguish rebellion, restore the *prestige* of authority, and turn a province, now half desolate for want of population, into a cultivated garden.—*Friend of India.*

EFFORTS BY THE MADRAS AND PUNJAB GOVERNMENTS TO EXTINGUISH THE SYSTEM OF TORTURE.

A fortnight ago we published *Punch's* advertisement of instruments to enable the "Company's servants" to inflict torture more effectually on the natives of India. With much greater satisfaction have we now the pleasure to announce the measures adopted by those servants to extirpate the system. We have now before us two notifications from the Governments of Madras and the Punjab, detailing the energetic measures which they have adopted to prevent the practice. These documents will be read with pleasure or disappointment, just as the feeling of benevolence or the fondness of vituperation may be predominant in the mind. At the present crisis, when the most strenuous efforts are made to overwhelm the Government of India by means of the torture question, the papers will be read by both parties with equal interest.

The notification of the Madras Government, after complimenting the commissioners upon the very admirable manner in which they have performed the duties entrusted to them, states that the object of their appointment was primarily to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the alleged resort by public servants to the practice popularly designated torture, as a means of collecting revenue. The inquiry was subsequently extended to the police. The notification states that the evil is shewn to be of a most serious character, that it pervades the whole population, and contributes most influentially to perpetuate the moral and social degradation of the people. The commissioners remark that it

extends through the whole social framework of the people, that it is resorted to in their families, and enters into the ordinary discipline by which the children are punished at school; and from its universal prevalence in families, in schools, in the police, in the revenue department, they conclude that it cannot be overthrown in a day. The evidence adduced by the commissioners shows that it is no new thing, and it will be gratifying to every benevolent mind to find them also recording their impression that the practice has been gradually diminishing. It is equally satisfactory to find it conclusively established that these acts of cruelty are confined to native officials, and that so far from their being connived at or encouraged by the British rulers of the country, measures have constantly been adopted to prevent them.

The Governor fully agrees with the commissioners in opinion that the crisis demands instant action, and that the matter must not be allowed to slumber; that it must be vigorously met and grappled with, and that it is quite possible to adopt means which shall greatly check and diminish the evil for the present, and pave the way for its entire extinction at no distant period. The Governor then proceeds to notice the causes which have been adverted to by the commissioners as fostering the evils which they have exposed, and then the remedies they have suggested. The causes are—1. The difficulties in the way of aggrieved parties obtaining redress; the European officers, to whom alone they can appeal with confidence, being overwhelmed with multifarious duties, and burdened with the charge of extensive districts beyond their power to supervise. 2. The law is defective for the punishment of abuse of authority by those invested with it. 3. Police and revenue functions are most injudiciously united in the same native officers. 4. There is a general combination of native officials, and they are banded together to extort illicit gain by the most nefarious process. The governor fully agrees with the commissioners in regard to the first cause, which is indeed the cause of causes. The enormous extent of the charge confided to European officers, and the indefinite amount of duties imposed on them, render it impossible for them to investigate more than a very small and inadequate number of the many complaints brought before them. It was, therefore, rather matter of astonishment that so much had been effected for the protection of the people than that the protection of the ryots against their fellow-countrymen was not yet more complete. As to the remedy for this state of things, the governor states that it is not possible to make any addition to the covenanted European agency, but the Madras Government had under consideration to augment the uncovenanted agency, and to increase it in point of numbers, emoluments, and position. The accomplishment of this measure would not only strengthen the hands of the magistracy, but break up that native oligueism by which in many districts nearly all the offices, revenue and judicial, have been thrown into the hands of the same caste, if not the same family. Another remedy for this evil was to be found in investing the charge of the police in a separate office, and making it a distinct and separate post, in general subordination to the head of the district. As regards the separation of the native district police from revenue offices, the governor admitted the importance of it, but found it to be a matter of considerable difficulty and delicacy. Be that as it may, to attain the object of extinguishing these practices, the Government of Madras was convinced that no half measures would answer. The magistracy must be increased, and the police force rendered more efficient. As regards the last cause mentioned by the commissioners which impeded the due suppression of the evils of extortion and oppression,—the vague and defective state of the law,—the Governor in Council had resolved to request the Advocate-General and the Government Pleader to confer upon the subject, and to submit the draft of the act which they would propose in amendment of the present law.

At the same time a circular has been sent through the country to all the European officers, in which the Madras Government alludes to the Minutes of Consultation of the 9th and the 19th of September, from which those officers would have learnt the horror with which Government regarded the bare idea of such practices, and its earnest desire that their existence, if they did exist, should be fully exposed with a view to their utter suppression. The circular further states that that which on the appointment of the committee was only feared or surmised, had since been placed beyond doubt. The European officers are therefore directed to make known as widely as possible the illegality of such proceedings and the detestation with which they are viewed by Government, and they are required to co-operate to the utmost extent of their power towards their extinction. The Board of Revenue has been instructed to publish in every village a notice, announcing the determination of Government to protect the ryots from all illegal coercion and oppression.

Such are the arrangements made by Lord Harris to extirpate the practice of torture at the Madras presidency. We have no

doubt that these efforts have been dictated by a lofty sense of public duty and by the noblest feelings of Christian benevolence. But if he had been acting from the inferior motive of rendering his administration popular, he could not have pursued a more appropriate course. Throughout these transactions, he has manifested all the tact and talent of a thorough statesman, and added in no small degree to his political capital. Finding, on assuming his office, that there were reports in circulation in India and England, that the odious practice of torture was resorted to, not merely by the police officials, but for the collection of revenue, and that there was attached to his government the odium of screwing the last fanam out of the wretched peasant by the most flagitious oppression, he proposed to the Government of India to appoint a commission to investigate the truth of these assertions; and he may thus be said to have taken the wind out of the enemy's sails. Then, again, he places on the commission two civilians of great reputation and experience, and a barrister of eminence, known throughout the presidency as the most acrimonious—though always conscientious,—opponent of the Company's Government. The commissioners are directed to investigate the case fully and honestly, and to probe the evil to its core. Their report, instead of being locked up in the archives of state, is sent to the editors of the public journals, and placed in the booksellers' shops, and the transaction is clenched by a notification, announcing the stringent measures which the Government was about to adopt to eradicate the practice. There is a boldness and originality in these proceedings which reflects great credit on the character of the Madras Government.

The commissioner of the Punjab has acted with equal energy and promptitude. He has issued a circular letter, through the judicial commissioner, drawing the attention of the public officers to the prevention and extinction of the infamous system of torture which he is under the apprehension may be more or less inflicted in various parts of the Punjab. It states that orders have from time to time been issued for the suppression of the practice, and that the attention of the local authorities has been called to the repeated orders issued by the Governments of Bengal and Agra, or the courts subordinate to them, on the subject. But notwithstanding all this, he fears that the crime is still prevalent, as he finds that within the last six months, four persons have been punished for extorting confessions, by imprisonment, in the first case, for six months, with a fine of Rs. 200, and in the three others by imprisonment respectively for two, three and eight years. He states that Government is most resolute in its determination to put down this atrocious crime, and to punish to the utmost limit of the law not only the chief actors, but the subordinate agents, and all who were present, or in any way aided or abetted in the oppression or torture. In order the more effectually to extirpate the practice, every native police officer of every grade is required to enter into a bond that "he will religiously abstain himself, and also compel his subordinates to refrain from the infliction of torture in any case whatever."

And here, for the present, we take leave of the torture question. The reader will bear in mind the assertion made by Mr. William Theobald, who is understood to claim the merit of this crusade in Bengal, that "Torture is an ancient custom of the country, which was common alike to Hindoos and Mahomedans, and has not yet been extirpated." He will also remember that when a sufficient case was made out of the alleged existence of revenue torture at Madras, a commission was appointed by Government to investigate the matter, that the report, although derogatory to the public functionaries, has been printed, published, and sold, and that throughout the Madras and the Punjab territory the most energetic efforts have been adopted to put down the practice. May they be as successful as the most benevolent mind could wish.—*Friend of India.*

THE SUEZ CANAL.

The project for uniting the Red and Mediterranean seas by a ship-canal through the isthmus of Suez has just assumed a new form; and, with a view to exhibit it to our readers in all its bearings, we would direct their attention to a few facts, which, judging from the recent discussions in the Calcutta papers, are not generally known on this side of India. A junction of these two seas was a favourite project of Napoleon, who, during his visit to Egypt, appointed a commission of engineers to report upon the subject. Their survey was conducted under many difficulties; the work was executed in long sections; instruments of different kinds were employed in different parts; the operators were several times changed; the whole was done in great haste; and no results were verified by a second examination. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of wonder if the conclusions at which they arrived should be filled with errors, arising not from incompetence, but from haste; and that upon the details of their survey little reliance should have been placed. The most extraordinary of

these conclusions was, that the mean level of the Red Sea was no less than twenty-eight feet seven inches above that of the Mediterranean. This statement of the difference between the levels of the two seas, though now proved to be erroneous, has been most extensively promulgated, and by some is regarded as a fact even at the present day.

In 1847 a fresh survey of the isthmus was undertaken by French, German, and English engineers, among whom was Mr. R. Stephenson. The French staff was large and well provided; and their operations were conducted in the most complete and skilful manner. The results were embodied in an able report by the engineer-in-chief, which must be regarded as possessing the highest authority on all the questions with which it deals. It was printed in Paris, only for private circulation, and not only has it never, we believe, been translated into English, but we have never even seen its facts referred to. On the question of the relative levels of the two seas these engineers reported as follows:—The tide rises at Suez about six feet; and at Tineh, on the Mediterranean shore, near the mouth of the Pelusiac Nile, only fifteen inches. The low water level at Suez is higher than at Tineh by two feet seven and a half inches. With low water at Tineh and high water at Suez, the difference of level amounts to seven feet nine and a quarter inches. This is the maximum difference. The survey showed also another result of the highest importance. It proved that, so far from the Red Sea being higher than the land of Egypt, and therefore (as many had feared) in danger of flooding it, the whole of the delta which has received the Nile deposits for thousands of years is much higher than either sea: and that at the great barrage across the Nile, at the head of the delta, the soil is no less than sixty feet above the low water levels at Suez and Alexandria.

Upon the results and details of this survey the engineer-in-chief discussed at length the practicability of two lines proposed for ship canals across the isthmus; the one having a direct course between the two seas; the other, an indirect one. The former is a direct canal from Suez to the bay of Tineh in the Mediterranean: the latter is a canal from Suez to Alexandria. The direct canal to the bay of Tineh would be about sixty-five miles long: and owing to the lowness of the ground, even if placed upon a level, would never require a cutting deeper than seventy-five feet. It would however be very expensive. If made with locks, the canal would cost, according to the estimates of the engineer, three millions and a half sterling, including an improvement of the port of Suez. If made on a level, without locks from sea to sea, the cost would reach eight millions. But to such a canal the French and German engineers showed there is an insuperable objection. The Mediterranean shore in the bay of Tineh is a dead flat of soft mud: and we must go no less than five miles from shore before we find a depth of thirty feet required for the passage of sea-going steamers in all states of the sea. To keep open therefore the mouth of the canal, broad artificial bunds must be carried out to that distance from the shore, and lighthouses and forts must be erected for the protection and guidance of ships entering the canal. The cost of these works alone would reach four millions more, making twelve millions in all. Even when constructed, however, they might prove insufficient for the end desired; and, coupled with the absence of good anchorage, and of protection for shipping in unfavourable winds or bad weather, compel the abandonment of the scheme altogether. It was this very scheme, however, which lately sought public notice; for which M. Lesseps obtained a firman from the Pacha of Egypt; and which was only defeated by the refusal of the Sultan. It was only strange that both the French consul in Egypt, and M. Benedetti at Constantinople, should wish to press its adoption, in the face of such strong opinions urged against it by their own able countrymen, the French engineers who conducted the survey of 1847. The question had nothing to do with French and English nationalities: it involved simply and alone, engineering impossibilities, and the insolvency of ignorant but confiding shareholders.

But the French engineers themselves started a second and more feasible project, that of a canal from Suez to Alexandria. They suggested that, to avoid as many difficulties as possible, both commercial and physical, it should pass by Cairo, and cross the Nile near the present Barrage. They suggested that it should have its highest basin at the Barrage, and descend by two branches, from that high level, to the sea shores at Suez and Alexandria; the western branch having six locks, and the eastern five. The canal could be originally filled from the Nile at the time of its highest inundations; and the upper basin be fed, when required, from the reservoir at the Barrage. The harbours of Alexandria and Suez, in which it would begin and end, are both used, and can both be greatly improved: and thus a safe and complete transit would be secured for the ocean steamers which now connect the eastern and