

The Ancient Roman Empire and
the British Empire in India

The Diffusion of Roman and
English Law throughout
the World

TWO HISTORICAL STUDIES

BY

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Commonwealth," etc

HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, NEW YORK
TORONTO, MELBOURNE, BOMBAY

1914

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PREFACE

THESE two Essays appeared, along with a number of others bearing upon cognate historical and legal topics, in two volumes entitled *Studies in History and Jurisprudence* which I published some years ago. As it is now thought that they may have an interest for some readers, and especially for students of Indian history, who may not care to procure those volumes, they are now issued separately.

Both Essays have been revised throughout and brought up to date by the insertion of the figures of the latest census of India and by references to recent legislation. They do not, however, touch upon any questions of current Indian or English politics, for a discussion of these must needs involve matter of a controversial nature and might distract the reader's attention from those broad conclusions upon which historical students and impartial observers of India as it stands to-day are pretty generally agreed.

It is a pleasure to me to acknowledge and express my gratitude for the help which I have received in the work of revision from one of my oldest and most valued friends, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, G.C.B., formerly Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council in India and now Clerk of the House of Commons.

JAMES BRYCE.

August 11, 1913.

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I

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE
BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA

THERE is nothing in history more remarkable than the way in which two small nations created and learnt how to administer two vast dominions: the Romans their world-empire, into which all the streams of the political and social life of antiquity flowed and were blent; and the English their Indian Empire, to which are now committed the fortunes of more than three hundred millions of men. A comparison of these two great dominions in their points of resemblance and difference, points in which the phenomena of each serve to explain and illustrate the parallel phenomena of the other, is a subject which has engaged the attention of many philosophic minds, and is still far from being exhausted. Exhausted indeed it can scarcely be, for every year brings some changes in the conditions of Indian government, and nearly every year gives us some fresh light upon the organization and government of the Roman Empire. The observations and reflections contained in this Essay were suggested by a journey through India, which followed upon travels through most of the regions that once owned the sway of Rome; and I have tried to test them by conversations with many persons, both natives and Europeans, who know India thoroughly.

This Essay is intended to compare Rome and Britain as conquering and ruling powers, acquiring and administering dominions outside the original dwelling-place of

their peoples, and impressing upon these dominions their own type of civilization. The following Essay compares the action of each as a power diffusing its law over the earth.

The comparison derives a special interest from a consideration of the position in which the world finds itself at the beginning of the twentieth century. The great civilized nations have spread themselves out so widely, and that with increasing rapidity during the last fifty years, as to have brought under their dominion or control nearly all the barbarous or semi-civilized races. Europe—that is to say the five or six races which we call the European branch of mankind—has annexed the rest of the earth, extinguishing some races, absorbing others, ruling others as subjects, and spreading over their native customs and beliefs a layer of European ideas which will sink deeper and deeper till the old native life dies out. Thus, while the face of the earth is being changed in a material sense by the application of European science, so it seems likely that within a measurable time European forms of thought and ways of life will come to prevail everywhere, except possibly in China, whose vast population may enable her to resist these solvent influences for several generations, and in some parts of the tropics where climate makes settlement by the white race difficult.

In this process whose agencies are migration, conquest, commerce, and finance, England has led the way and has achieved most. Russia, however, as well as France and Germany, have annexed vast areas inhabited by backward races. Even the United States has, by occupying the Hawaiian and the Philippine Islands, entered, somewhat to her own surprise, on the same path. Thus a new sort of unity is being created among mankind. This unity is seen in the bringing of every part of the globe into close relations, both commercial and

political, with every other part. It is seen in the establishment of a few 'world languages' as vehicles of communication between many peoples, vehicles which carry to them the treasures of literature and science which the four or five leading nations have gathered. It is seen in the diffusion of a civilization which is everywhere the same in its material aspects, and is tolerably uniform even on its intellectual side, since it teaches men to think on similar lines and to apply similar methods of scientific inquiry. The process has been going on for some centuries. In our own day it advances so swiftly that we can almost foresee the time when it will be complete. It is one of the great events in the history of the world.

Yet it is not altogether a new thing. A similar process went on in the ancient world from the time of Alexander the Macedonian to that of Alaric the Visigoth. The Greek type of civilization, and to some extent the Greek population also, spread out over the regions around the eastern Mediterranean and the Euxine. Presently the conquests of Rome brought all these regions, as well as the western countries as far as Caledonia, under one government. This produced a uniform type of civilization which was Greek on the side of thought, of literature, and of art, Roman on the side of law and institutions. Then came Christianity which, in giving to all these countries one religion and one standard of morality, created a still deeper sense of unity among them. Thus the ancient world, omitting the barbarous North and the semi-civilized heathen who dwelt beyond the Euphrates, became unified, the backward races having been raised, at least in the upper strata of their population, to the level of the more advanced. One government, one faith, and two languages, were making out of the mass of races and kingdoms that had existed before the Macedonian conquest, a single people who were at once a Nation and a World Nation.

The process was not quite complete when it was interrupted by the political dissolution of the Roman dominion, first through the immigrations of the Teutonic peoples from the north, and afterwards by the terrible strokes which Arab conquerors from the south-east dealt at the already weakened empire. The results that had been attained were not wholly lost, for Europe clung to the Græco-Romano-Christian civilization, though in a lowered form and with a diminished sense of intellectual as well as of political unity. But that civilization was not able to extend itself further, save by slow degrees over the north and towards the north-east. Several centuries passed. Then, at first faintly from the twelfth century onwards, afterwards more swiftly from the middle of the fifteenth century, when the intellectual impulse given by the Renaissance began to be followed by the rapid march of geographical discovery along the coasts of Africa, in America, and in the further east, the process was resumed. We have watched its later stages with our own eyes. It embraces a far vaster field than did the earlier one, the field of the whole earth. As we watch it, we are naturally led to ask what light the earlier effort of Nature to gather men together under one type of civilization throws on this later one. As Rome was the principal agent in the earlier, so has England been in the later effort. England has sent her language, her commerce, her laws and institutions forth from herself over an even wider and more populous area than that whose races were moulded into new forms by the laws and institutions of Rome. The conditions are, as we shall see, in many respects different. Yet there is in the parallel enough to make it instructive for the present, and possibly significant for the future.

The dominions of England beyond the seas are, however, not merely too locally remote from one another, but also too diverse in their character to be compared

as one whole with the dominions of Rome, which were contiguous in space, and were all governed on the same system. The Britannic Empire falls into three territorial groups,—the Dominions (as the self-governing colonies are now called), the Crown colonies, and the Indian territories ruled by or dependent on the sovereign of Britain. Of these three groups, since they cannot be treated together, being ruled on altogether different principles, it is one group only that can usefully be selected for comparison with the Roman Empire. India contains that one group. She is fitter for our purpose than either of the other two groups because the Dominions are not subject territories administered from England, but new Englands planted far away beyond the oceans, reproducing, each in its own way, the features of the constitution and government of the old country, while the Crown colonies are so scattered and so widely diverse in the character of their inhabitants that they cannot profitably be dealt with as one body. Jamaica, Cyprus, Basutoland, Singapore, and Gibraltar, have little in common except their dependence on Downing Street. Neither set of colonies is sufficiently like the dominion of Rome to make it possible for us to draw parallels between them and it. India, however, is a single subject territory, and India is compact, governed on the same principles and by the same methods over an area not indeed as wide as that of the Roman Empire but more populous than the Roman Empire was in its palmiest days. British India (including Burma) covers about 1,087,204 square miles, and the Protected States (including Kashmir, but not Nepal and Bhotan), 673,393 square miles, making a total of 1,760,597 square miles, with a population of 315 millions¹. The area of the territories included in the Roman Empire

¹ These figures were the latest available in 1912. The exact population of British India was then given as 315,132,537 of whom 244,267,542 were in British India, 70,864,995 in Protected States.

at its greatest extent (when Dacia and the southern part of what was then Caledonia and is now Scotland belonged to it) may have been nearly 2,500,000 square miles. The population of that area is now, upon a very rough estimate, about 210 millions. What it was in ancient times we have no data even for guessing, but it must evidently have been much smaller, possibly not 100 millions, for although large regions, such as parts of Asia Minor and Tunisia, now almost deserted, were then filled by a dense industrial population, the increase in the inhabitants of France and England, for instance, has far more than compensated this decline.

The Spanish Empire in America as it stood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was still vaster in area, as is the Russian Empire in Asia to-day². But the population of Spanish America was extremely small in comparison with that of the Roman Empire or that of India, and its organization much looser and less elaborate. There was never one colonial government for all the Spanish American dominions; each Viceroyalty and Captaincy General (in later days) was in direct and separate relations with the Council of the Indies in Spain. Both the Spanish and the Russian Empires, however, furnish illustrations which we shall have occasion presently to note.

Of all the dominions which the ancient world saw, it is only that of Rome that can well be compared with any modern civilized State. The monarchies of the Assyrian and Egyptian conquerors, like those of the Seleucid kings and of the Sassanid dynasty in Persia, stood on a far lower level of culture and administrative efficiency than did the Roman. Neither was there in the Middle Ages any far stretching dominion fit to be matched with that of Rome, for the great Omniad

² The total area of the Russian Empire exceeds 8,000,000 square miles, and the population is about 130,000,000.

Khalifate and the Mogul monarchy in India were both of them mere aggregates of territories, not really unified by any administrative system, while the authority or suzerainty of the Chinese sovereigns over Turkistan, Mongolia, and Tibet presents even fewer points of resemblance. So when we wish to examine the methods and the results of British rule in India by the light of any other dominion exercised under conditions even remotely similar, it is to the Roman Empire of the centuries between Augustus and Honorius that we must go.

When one speaks of conditions even remotely similar one must frankly admit the existence of an obvious and salient point of contrast. Rome stood in the middle of her dominions, Britain stands, by the Red Sea route, six thousand miles from the nearest part of hers. She can reach them only by water, and she conquered them by troops which had been sent around the Cape over some thirteen thousand miles of ocean. Here there is indeed an unlikeness of the utmost significance. Yet, without minimizing the importance of the contrast, we must remember that Britain can in our own day communicate more quickly with the most distant part of her territories than Rome could with hers. It takes only twenty days to reach any part of British India (except Kashmir and Upper Assam) from London. But it took a nimble, or as Herodotus says, a 'well girt traveller,' perhaps forty days from Rome to reach Derr on the Nile, the last fortress in Nubia where Roman masonry can be seen, or Gori, at the south foot of the Caucasus, also a Roman stronghold, or Old Kilpatrick (near Dumbarton) where the rampart of the Emperor Antoninus Pius touches the Clyde; not to add that the sea part of these journeys might be much longer if the winds were adverse. News could be carried not much faster than an official could travel, whereas Britain is, by the electric telegraph, in hourly communication with every part of India: and the differ-

ence in speed between the movement of an army and that of a traveller was, of course, greater in ancient times than it is now.

Thus, for the purposes both of war and of administration, England is better placed than was Rome as respects those outlying parts of the Roman Empire which were most exposed to attack. Dangers are more quickly known at head quarters; troops can reach the threatened frontier in a shorter time; errors in policy can be more adequately corrected, because explanations can be asked, and blundering officials can be more promptly dismissed. Nevertheless the remoteness of India has had results of the highest moment in making her relation to England far less close than was that of Rome to the provinces.

This point will be considered presently. Meantime our comparison may begin with the points in which the two Empires resemble and illustrate one another. The first of these turns upon the circumstances of their respective origins.

Empire is retained, says a famous maxim, by the same arts whereby it was won. Some Empires have been won easily. Spain acquired hers through the pertinacity and daring of a Genoese sailor, followed by expeditions of such adventurers as Cortes and Pizarro, who went forth to conquer on their own initiative, although in the name and for the benefit of their sovereign. She had comparatively little fighting to do, for the only opponents she encountered who added to valour some slight tincture of civilization were the Aztecs and their allies in Mexico. Among the wilder tribes one alone opposed a successful resistance, the Araucanians of Chile.

Russia has met with practically no opposition in occupying her vast territories in Northern Asia all the way to the Pacific; though further south she had some sharp tussles with the nomad Turkmans, and tedious conflicts both with Shamyl and with the Circassians

in the Caucasus. But both Rome and England had to fight long and fight hard for what they won. The progress of Roman and British expansion illustrates the remark of Oliver Cromwell that no one goes so far as he who does not know whither he is going. Neither power set out with a purpose of conquest, such as Alexander the Great, and perhaps Cyrus, had planned and carried out before them. Even as Polybius, writing just after the destruction of Carthage in B. C. 146, already perceived that Rome was, by the strength of her government and the character of her people, destined to be the dominant power of the civilized world, so it was prophesied immediately after the first victories of Clive that the English would come to be the masters of all India. Each nation was drawn on by finding that one conquest led almost inevitably to another because restless border tribes had to be subdued, because formidable neighbours seemed to endanger the safety of subjugated but often discontented provinces, because allies inferior in strength passed gradually into the position first of dependents and then of subjects.

The Romans however, though they did not start out with the notion of conquering even Italy, much less the Mediterranean world, came to enjoy fighting for its own sake, and were content with slight pretexts for it. For several centuries they were always more or less at war somewhere. The English went to India as traders, with no intention of fighting anybody, and were led into the acquisition of territory partly in order to recoup themselves for the expensive efforts they had made to support their first allies, partly that they might get revenue for the East India Company's shareholders, partly in order to counterwork the schemes of the French, who were at once their enemies in Europe and their rivals in the East. One may find a not too fanciful analogy to the policy of the English in the days of Clive, when they were drawn

further and further into Indian conflicts by their efforts to check the enterprises of Dupleix and Lally, in the policy of the Romans when they entered Sicily to prevent Carthage from establishing her control over it. In both cases an effort which was advocated as self-protective led to a long series of wars and annexations.

Rome did not march so swiftly from conquest to conquest as did England. Not to speak of the two centuries during which she was making herself supreme in Italy, she began to conquer outside its limits from the opening of the First Punic War in B. C. 264, and did not acquire Egypt till B. C. 30, and South Britain till A. D. 43-85¹. Her Eastern conquests were all the easier because Alexander the Great's victories, and the wars waged by his successors, had broken up and denationalized the East, much as the Mogul conquerors afterwards paved the way for the English in India. England's first territorial gains were won at Plassy in A. D. 1757²: her latest acquisition was the occupation of Mandalay in 1885. Her work was done in a century and a quarter, while that of Rome took fully three centuries. But England had two great advantages. Her antagonists were immeasurably inferior to her in arms as well as in discipline. As early as A. D. 1672 the great Leibnitz had in a letter to Lewis XIV pointed out the weakness of the Mogul Empire; and about the same time Bernier, a French physician resident at the Court of Aurungzeb, declared that 20,000 French troops under Condé or Turenne could conquer all India³. A small European force, and even a small native force drilled and led by Europeans, was as capable of routing huge Asiatic armies as the army of Alexander had proved capable

¹ Dacia was taken by Trajan in A. D. 107, and lost in A. D. 251. Mesopotamia and Arabia Petraea were annexed by Trajan about the same time, but the former was renounced so soon afterwards that its conquest can hardly be considered a part of the regular process of expansion.

² Territorial authority may be said to date from the grant of the Diwani in 1765.

³ See the admirably clear and thoughtful book of Sir A. C. Lyall, *Rise of British Dominion in India*, pp. 52 and 126.

of overthrowing the immensely more numerous hosts of Darius Codomannus. Moreover, the moment when the English appeared on the scene was opportune. The splendid Empire of Akbar was crumbling to pieces. The Mahratta confederacy had attained great military power, but at the battle of Paniput, in 1761, it received from the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Durani a terrific blow which for the time arrested its conquests. Furthermore, India, as a whole, was divided into numerous principalities, the feeblest of which lay on the coasts of the Bay of Bengal. These principalities were frequently at war with one another, and glad to obtain European aid in their strife.

And England had a third advantage in the fact that she encountered the weakest of her antagonists first. Had she, in those early days when her forces were slender, been opposed by the valour of Marathas or Sikhs, instead of the feeble Bengalis and Madrassis, her ambitions might have been nipped in the bud. When she found herself confronted by those formidable foes she had already gained experience and had formed a strong native army. But when the Romans strove against the Achaean League and Macedon they had to fight troops all but equal to themselves. When Carthage was their antagonist, they found in Hamilcar a commander equal, and in Hannibal a commander superior to any one they could send against him. These earlier struggles so trained Rome to victory that her later conquests were made more easily. The triumphs of the century before and the century after Julius Caesar were won either over Asiatics, who had discipline but seldom valour, or over Gauls, Iberians, Germans, and Caledonians, who had valour but not discipline. Occasional reverses were due to the imprudence of a general, or to an extreme disparity of forces; for the Romans, like the English, did not hesitate to meet greatly superior numbers. The defeat of Crassus by the Parthians and the catastrophe which

befell Varus in the forests of Paderborn find a parallel in the disastrous retreat of the English army from Cabul in 1843. Except on such rare occasions, the supremacy of Roman arms was never seriously challenged, nor was any great calamity suffered till the barbarian irruption into Italy in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. A still graver omen for the future was the overthrow of Valerian by the Persians in A. D. 260. The Persians were inferior in the arts of civilization and probably in discipline: but the composition of the Roman armies was no longer what it had been three centuries earlier, for the peasantry of Italy, which had formed the kernel of their strength, were no longer available. As the provincial subjects became less and less warlike, men from beyond the frontier were enrolled, latterly in bodies under their native chiefs—Germans, or Arabs, or, in still later days, Huns,—just as the native army in British India, nearly all of which has now become far more peaceful than it was a century ago, is recruited by Pathans and Ghurkas from the hills outside British territory as well as by the most warlike among the Indian subjects of the Crown. The danger of the practice is obvious. Rome was driven to it for want of Roman fighting-men¹. England guards against its risks by having a considerable force of British troops alongside her native army.

The fact that their dominions were acquired by force of arms exerted an enduring effect upon the Roman Empire and continues to exert it upon the British in imprinting upon their rule in India a permanently military character. The Roman administration began with this character, and never lost it, at least in the frontier provinces. The governors were proconsuls or praetors, or other officials, intrusted with the exercise of an authority in its origin military rather than civil.

¹And indeed the employment of these enlisted barbarians to resist the outer barbarians probably prolonged the life of the Empire.

A governor's first duty was to command the troops stationed in the province. The camps grew into towns, and that which had been a group of *canabae* or market stalls, a sort of bazaar for the service of the camp, sometimes became a municipality. One of the most efficient means of unifying the Empire was found in the bringing of soldiers born in one part of it to be quartered for many years together in another. Military distinction was open to every subject, and military distinction might lead to the imperial throne. So the English in India are primarily soldiers. True it is that they went to India three centuries ago as traders, that it was out of a trading company that their power arose, and that this trading company did not disappear till 1858. The covenanted civil service, to which Clive for instance belonged, began as a body of commercial clerks. Nothing sounds more pacific. But the men of the sword very soon began to eclipse the men of the quill and account book. Being in the majority, they do so still, although for forty years there have been none but petty frontier wars. Society is not in India, as it is in England, an ordinary civil society occupied with the works and arts of peace, with an extremely small military element. It is military society, military first and foremost, though with an infusion of civilian officials, and in some towns with a small infusion of lawyers and merchants, as well as a still smaller infusion of missionaries. Military questions occupy every one's thoughts and talk. A great deal of administrative or diplomatic work is done, and often extremely well done, by officers in civil employment. Many of the railways are primarily strategic lines, as were the Roman roads. The railway stations are often placed, for military reasons, at a distance from the towns they serve: and the cantonments where the Europeans, civilians as well as soldiers, reside, usually built some way off from the native cities, have themselves, as happened in the Roman Em-

pire, grown into regular towns. The traveller from peaceful England feels himself, except perhaps in Bombay, surrounded by an atmosphere of gunpowder all the time he stays in India.

Before we pass from the military aspects of the comparison let it be noted that both Empires have been favoured in their extension and their maintenance by the frontiers which Nature had provided. The Romans, when once they had conquered Numidia, Spain, and Gaul, had the ocean and nothing but the ocean (save for the insignificant exception of barbarous Mauretania) to the west and north-west of them, an awesome and untravelled ocean, from whose unknown further shore no enemy could appear. To the south they were defended by the equally impassable barrier of a torrid and waterless desert, stretching from the Nile to the Atlantic. It was only on the north and east that there were frontiers to be defended; and these two sides remained the quarters of danger, because no natural barrier, arresting the progress of armies or constituting a defensible frontier, could be found without pushing all the way to the Baltic in one direction or to the ranges of Southern Kurdistan, perhaps even to the deserts of Eastern Persia in the other. The north and the east ultimately destroyed Rome. The north sent in those Teutonic tribes which occupied the western provinces and at last Italy herself, and those Slavonic tribes which settled between the Danube, the Aegean, and the Adriatic, and permeated the older population of the Hellenic lands. Perhaps the Emperors would have done better for the Empire (whatever might have been the ultimate loss to mankind) if, instead of allowing themselves to be disheartened by the defeat of Varus, they had pushed their conquests all the way to the Baltic and the Vistula, and turned the peoples of North and Middle Germany into provincial Romans. The undertaking would not have been beyond the resources of the Empire

in its vigorous prime, and would have been remunerative, if not in money, at any rate in the way of providing a supply of fighting-men for the army. So too the Emperors might possibly have saved much suffering to their Romanized subjects in South Britain had they followed up the expedition of Agricola and subdued the peoples of Caledonia and Ierne, who afterwards became disagreeable as Picts and Scots. The east was the home of the Parthians, of the Persians, so formidable to the Byzantine Emperors in the days of Kobad and Chosroes Anushirwan, and of the tribes which in the seventh and eighth centuries, fired by the enthusiasm of a new faith and by the prospect of booty, overthrew the Roman armies and turned Egypt, Syria, Africa, Spain, and ultimately the greater part of Asia Minor into Muhamadan kingdoms. Had Rome been menaced on the south and west as she was generally menaced on the east and sometimes on the north, her Empire could hardly have lived so long. Had she possessed a natural barrier on the east like that which the Sahara provided on the south she might have found it easy to resist, and not so very hard even to subjugate, the fighting races of the north.

Far more fortunate has been the position of the English in India. No other of the great countries of the world is protected by such a stupendous line of natural entrenchments as India possesses in the chain of the Himalayas from Attock and Peshawur in the west to the point where, in the far east, the Tsanpo emerges from Tibet to become in Upper Assam the Brahmaputra. Not only is this mountain mass the loftiest and most impassable to be found anywhere on our earth; it is backed by a wide stretch of high and barren country, so thinly peopled as to be incapable of constituting a menace to those who live in the plains south of the Himalayas. And in point of fact the relations, commercial as well as political, of India with Tibet, and with

the Chinese who are in a somewhat shadowy way suzerains of Tibet¹, have been, at least in historical times, extremely scanty.

On the east, India is divided from the Indo-Chinese peoples, Talains, Burmese and Shans, by a belt of almost impenetrable hill and forest country: nor have these peoples ever been formidable neighbours. It is only at its north-western angle, between Peshawur and Quetta (for south of Quetta as far as the Arabian Sea there are deserts behind the mountains and the Indus) that India is vulnerable. The rest of the country is protected by a wide ocean. Accordingly the masters of India have had only two sets of foes to fear—European maritime powers who may arrive by sea after a voyage which, until our own time, was a voyage of three or four months, and land powers who, coming from the side of Turkistan or Persia, may find their way, as did Alexander the Great and Nadir Shah, through difficult passes into the plains of the Punjab and Sindh. This singular natural isolation of India, as it facilitated the English conquest by preventing the native princes from forming alliances with or obtaining help from powers beyond the mountains or the sea, so has it also enabled the English to maintain their hold with an army extraordinarily small in proportion to the population of the country. The total strength of the Roman military establishment in the days of Trajan, was for an area of some two and a half millions of square miles and a population of possibly one hundred millions, between 280,000 and 320,000 men. Probably four-fifths of this force was stationed on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates. There were so few in most of the inner

¹ In 1904 an expedition officially described as "a mission accompanied by a military escort" was sent to Tibet to endeavour to adjust some outstanding difficulties. Its approach was unsuccessfully resisted by a Tibetan force at Gyantse; Lhasa was reached and a treaty signed there September 7, 1904, and most of the troops had returned to India by November. In 1906 China signified her adhesion to the settlement effected under this treaty, but the precise nature of her relations to Tibet still remains in doubt as between her and the Government of India which refuses to admit what she tries to claim.

provinces that, as some one said, the nations wondered where were the troops that kept them in subjection.

The peace or 'established' strength of the British army in India is 237,000 men, of whom 159,000 are natives and 78,000 Englishmen. To these there may be added the so-called 'active reserve' of natives who have served with the colours, about 34,000 men, and about 30,000 European volunteers. Besides these there are of course the troops of the native princes, estimated at about 100,000 men, many of them, however, far from effective. But as these troops, though a source of strength while their masters are loyal, might under altered circumstances be conceivably a source of danger, they can hardly be reckoned as part of the total force disposable by the British Government. Recently, however, about 18,000 of them have been organized as special contingents of the British army, inspected and advised by British officers, and fit to take their place with regiments of the line¹.

It would obviously be impossible to defend such widely extended dominions by a force of only 237,000 or 267,000 men, but for the remoteness of all possibly dangerous assailants. The only strong land neighbour is Russia, the nearest point of whose territories in the Pamirs is a good long way from the present British outposts, with a very lofty and difficult country behind. The next nearest is France on the Mekong River, some 200 miles from British Burma, though a shorter distance from Native States under British influence. As for sea powers, not only is Europe a long way off, but the navy of Britain holds the sea. It was by her command of the sea that Britain won India. Were she to cease to hold it, her position there would be insecure indeed.

In another respect also the sharp severance of India from all the surrounding countries may be deemed to have proved a benefit to the English. It has relieved

¹ An account of this new Imperial Service force may be found in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV, p. 87 (edn. of 1907).

To make forces so small as those on which Rome relied and those which now defend British India adequate for the work they have to do, good means of communication are indispensable. It was one of the first tasks of the Romans to establish such means. They were the great—indeed one may say, the only—road builders of antiquity. They began this policy before they had completed the conquest of Italy; and it was one of the devices which assured their supremacy throughout that peninsula. They followed it out in Gaul, Spain, Africa, Britain, and the East, doing their work so thoroughly that in Britain some of the Roman roads continued to be the chief avenues of travel down till the eighteenth century. So the English have been in India a great engineering people, constructing lines of communication, first roads and afterwards railways, on a scale of expenditure unknown to earlier ages. The potentates of elder days, Hindu rajahs, and subsequently Pathans and Moguls, with other less famous Musulman dynasties, have left their memorials in temples and mosques, in palaces and tombs. The English are commemorating their sway by railway works, by tunnels and cuttings, by embankments and bridges. If India were to relapse into barbarism the bridges, being mostly of iron, would after a while perish, and the embankments would in time be swept away by torrential rains, but the rock-cuttings and the tunnels would remain, as the indestructible paving-stones of the Roman roads, and such majestic bridges as the Pont du Gard near Nismes, remain to witness to the skill and thoroughness with which a great race did its work.

The opening up of India by railroads suggests not a few interesting questions which, however, I can do no more than indicate here. Railroad construction has imposed upon the Indian exchequer a strain all the heavier because some lines, especially those on the north-west frontier, having been undertaken from strategic rather than com-

mercial motives, will yield no revenue at all proportionate to their cost. It has been suggested that although railroads were meant to benefit the peasantry, they may possibly have increased the risk of famine, since they induce the producer to export the grain which was formerly locally stored up in good years to meet the scarcity of bad years. The comparative quickness with which food can be carried by rail into a famine area does not—so it is argued—compensate for the loss of these domestic reserves. Railways, bringing the numerous races that inhabit India into a closer touch with one another than was possible before, are breaking down, slowly but surely, the demarcations of caste, and are tending towards an assimilation of the jarring elements, racial and linguistic, as well as religious, which have divided India into a number of distinct, and in many cases hostile, groups. Centuries may elapse before this assimilation can become a source of political danger to the rulers of the country: yet we discern the faint beginnings of the process now, especially in the more educated class. The Roman roads, being highways of commerce as well as of war, contributed powerfully to draw together the peoples whom Rome ruled into one imperial nationality. But this was a process which, as we shall presently note, was for Rome an unmixed gain, since it strengthened the cohesion of an Empire whose inhabitants had every motive for loyalty to the imperial Government, if not always to the particular sovereign. The best efforts of Britain may not succeed in obtaining a similar attachment from her Indian subjects, and their union into a body animated by one national sentiment might become an element of danger against which she has never yet been required to take precautions.

The excellence of the highways of communication provided by the wise energy of the Romans and of the English has contributed not only to the easier defence

of the frontiers of both Empires, but also to the maintenance of a wonderfully high standard of internal peace and order. Let any one think of the general state of the ancient world before the conquests of Rome, and let him then think of the condition not merely of India after the death of the Emperor Aurungzeb, but of the chief European countries as they stood in the seventeenth century, if he wishes to appreciate what Rome did for her subjects, or what England has done in India. In some parts of Europe private war still went on two hundred and fifty years ago. Almost everywhere robber bands made travelling dangerous and levied tribute upon the peasantry. Even in the eighteenth century, and even within our own islands, Rob Roy MacGregor raided the farmers of Lennox, and landlords in Connaught fought pitched battles with one another at the head of their retainers. Even a century ago the coasts of the Mediterranean were ravaged by Barbary pirates, and brigandage reigned unchecked through large districts of Italy. But in the best days of the Roman Empire piracy was unknown; the peasantry were exempt from all exactions except those of the tax-gatherer; and the great roads were practically safe for travellers. Southern and western Europe, taken as a whole, would seem to have enjoyed better order under Hadrian and the Antonines than was enjoyed again until nearly our own times. This was the more remarkable because the existence of slavery must have let loose upon society, in the form of runaway slaves, a good many dangerous characters. Moreover, there remained some mountainous regions where the tribes had been left practically to themselves under their own rude customs. These enclaves of barbarism within civilized territory, such as was Albania, in the central mountain knot of which no traces of Roman building have been found, and the Isaurian country in Asia Minor, and possibly the Cantabrian land on the borders of south-

western Gaul and northern Spain, where the Basque tongue still survives, do not appear to have seriously interfered with the peace and well-being of the settled population which dwelt around them, probably because the mountaineers knew that it was only by good behaviour that they could obtain permission to enjoy the measure of independence that had been left to them. The parts of provincial Africa which lay near the desert were less orderly, because it was not easy to get behind the wild tribes who had the Sahara at their back.

The internal peace of the Roman Empire was, however, less perfect than that which has been established within the last sixty years in India. Nothing surprises the visitor from Europe so much as the absolute confidence with which he finds himself travelling alone and unguarded across this vast country, through mountains and jungles, among half savage tribes whose languages he does not know, and that without seeing, save at rare intervals, any sign of European administration. Nor is this confined to British India. It is almost the same in Native States. Even along the lofty forest and mountain frontier that separates the native (protected) principality of Sikkim from Nepal—the only really independent Indian State—an Englishman may journey without weapons and alone, except for a couple of native attendants, for a week or more. When he asks his friends at Darjiling, before he starts, whether he ought to take a revolver with him, they smile at the question. For native travellers, especially in Native States, there is not so complete a security inasmuch as here and there bands of brigands called dacoits infest the tracks, and rob, sometimes the wayfarer, sometimes the peasant, escaping into the recesses of the jungle when the police are after them. But dacoity, though it occasionally breaks out afresh in a few districts, has become much less frequent than formerly. The practice of Thuggi, which seventy years ago still caused many mur-

ders, has been extirpated by the unceasing energy of British officers. Crimes of violence show a percentage to the population which appears small when one considers how many wild tribes remain. The native of course suffers from violence more frequently than does the European, whose prestige of race, backed by the belief that punishment will surely follow on any injury done to him, keeps him safe in the wildest districts ¹.

I have referred to the enclaves within the area of the Roman Empire where rude peoples were allowed to live after their own fashion so long as they did not disturb the peace of their more civilized neighbours. One finds the Indian parallel to these districts, not so much in the Native States, for these are often as advanced in the arts of life, and, in a very few instances, almost as well administered, as British territory, but rather in the hill tribes, which in parts of central, of north-western, and of southern India, have retained their savage or semi-savage customs, under their own chiefs, within the provinces directly subject to the Crown. These tribes, as did, and still do, the Albanians and Basques, cleave to their primitive languages, and cleave also to their primitive forms of ghost-worship or nature-worship, though Hinduism is beginning to lay upon them its tenacious grasp. Of one another's lives and property they are not very careful. But they are awed by the European and leave him unmolested.

The success of the British, like that of the Roman administration in securing peace and good order, has been due, not merely to a sense of the interest every government has in maintaining conditions which, because favourable to industry are favourable also to rev-

¹ An incident like the murder in 1891 of the Chief Commissioner of Assam at Manipur, a small Protected State in the hill country between Assam and Burma, is so rare and excites so much surprise and horror as to be the best proof of the general tranquillity. In that case there had been some provocation, though not on the part of the Chief Commissioner himself, an excellent man of conciliatory temper.

enue, but also to the high ideal of the duties of a ruler which both nations have set before themselves. Earlier Empires, like those of the Persian Achaemenids or of the successors of Alexander, had been content to tax their subjects and raise armies from them. No monarch, except perhaps some of the Ptolemies in Egypt, seems to have set himself to establish a system from which his subjects would benefit. Rome, with larger and higher views, gave to those whom she conquered some compensations in better administration for the national independence she extinguished. Her ideals rose as she acquired experience, and as she came to feel the magnificence of her position. Even under the Republic attempts were made to check abuses of power on the part of provincial governors. The proceedings against Verres, which we know so well because Cicero's speeches against that miscreant have been preserved, are an instance of steps taken in the interests of a province whose discontent was so little likely to harm Rome that no urgent political necessity prescribed them. Those proceedings showed how defective was the machinery for controlling or punishing a provincial governor; and it is clear enough that a great deal of extortion and misfeasance went on under proconsuls and propraetors in the later days of the Republic, to the enrichment, not only of those functionaries, but of the hungry swarm who followed them, including bright young men from Rome, who, like the poet Catullus, were made for better things ¹. With the establishment of a monarchy administration improved. The Emperor had a more definite responsibility for securing the welfare and contentment of the provinces than had been felt by the Senate or by the jurors who composed the courts of the Republic, swayed as they were by party interest or passion, not

¹ Poems x and xxviii. It is some comfort to know that Catullus obtained in Bithynia only themes for some of his most charming verses (see poems iv and xlvi). Gains would probably have been ill-gotten.

to speak of more sordid motives. He was, moreover, able to give effect to his wishes more promptly and more effectively. He could try an incriminated official in the way he thought best, and mete out appropriate punishment. It may indeed be said that the best proof of the incompetence of the Republican system for the task of governing the world, and of the need for the concentration of powers in a single hand, is to be found in the scandals of provincial administration, scandals which, so far as we can judge, could not have been remedied without a complete change either in the tone and temper of the ruling class at Rome, or in the ancient constitution itself.

On this point the parallel with the English in India is interesting, dissimilar as the circumstances were. The English administration began with extortions and corruptions. Officials were often rapacious, sometimes unjust, in their dealings with the native princes. But the statesmen and the public opinion of England, even in the latter half of the eighteenth century, had higher standards than those of Rome in the days of Sulla and Cicero, while the machinery which the House of Commons provided for dealing with powerful offenders was more effective than the Roman method of judicial proceedings before tribunals which could be, and frequently were, bribed. The first outbreak of greed and corruption in Bengal was dealt with by the strong hand of Clive in 1765. It made so great an impression at home as to give rise to a provision in a statute of 1773, making offences against the provisions of that Act or against the natives of India, punishable by the Court of King's Bench in England. By Pitt's Act of 1784, a Special Court, consisting of three judges, four peers, and six members of the House of Commons, was created for the trial in England of offences committed in India. This singular tribunal, which has been compared with the *quaestio perpetua*

(*de pecuniis repetundis*) of Senators created by a Roman statute of B. C. 149 to try offences committed by Roman officials against provincials, has never acted, or even been summoned¹. Soon after it came the famous trial which is more familiar to Englishmen than any other event in the earlier relations of England and India. The impeachment of Warren Hastings has often been compared with the trial of Verres, though Hastings was not only a far more capable, but a far less culpable man. Hastings, like Verres, was not punished. But the proceedings against him so fixed the attention of the nation upon the administration of India as to secure for wholesome principles of conduct a recognition which was never thereafter forgotten. The Act of 1784 in establishing a Board of Control responsible to Parliament found a means both for supervising the behaviour of officials and for taking the large political questions which arose in India out of the hands of the East India Company. This Board continued till India was placed under the direct sway of the British Crown in 1858. At the same time the appointment of Governors-General who were mostly men of wealth, and always men of rank and position at home, provided a safeguard against such misconduct as the proconsuls under the Roman Republic had been prone to commit. These latter had little to fear from prosecution when their term of office was over, and the opinion of their class was not shocked by offences which would have fatally discredited an English nobleman. The standard by which English public opinion judges the behaviour of Indian or Colonial officials has, on the whole, risen during the nineteenth century; and the idea that the government of subject-races is to be regarded as a trust to be discharged with a sense of responsibility to God and to humanity at large has become generally

¹ See Sir C. P. Ilbert's *Government of India*, p. 68. The provision creating this Court has never been repealed.

