

travelling shows, which find their harvest in the fall of the year by attending the mops and statute hirings, and the numerous fairs for the sale of farm produce of all kinds, which then come off. Many more contract engagements with publicans and the proprietors of music halls, where their performances alternate with those of the musical soloists and public singers. Numbers not so well qualified make their appearance on the stage of the "gaffs" and penny theatres in the low districts of the metropolis; while not a few get up independent exhibitions of their own in some poor neighbourhood—their stage being, perhaps, a room in the rear of a huckster's or marine-store-dealer's shop—where a dress-box ticket costs threepence, and pit and gallery are open at proportionate prices. Now and then the street performer gets a winter engagement at one of the London theatres, where he is generally taken on with the express condition that he accepts any kind of "business" it may suit the manager's convenience to assign to him. Hence it comes to pass that playgoers may see the Signor Mokoni blown into the air by the springing of a mine in a war spectacle—swinging by his legs from the sails of the mill in the "Miller and his Men," knocked about as an ancient "Charley" in a farce, or staggering about as decrepit pantaloons in a pantomime.

The most serious question of all, and the saddest to answer, comes last: What becomes of the tumbling professor in his old age? There are few prizes in this department of the lottery of life. The whole of the records of muscular greatness furnish very few Blondins and Lectards, and only one Belzoni: the million failures find no record, because no man cares about them. Old age, or what is tantamount to old age, steals upon the performing athlete much earlier than it does upon ordinary men, simply because an infirmity which would be no bar to the pursuit of ordinary avocations is often fatal to his. A touch of rheumatism, a liability to cramp, the straining of a muscle, the sprain of a sinew—any one of these may lay him on the shelf for a time, and if either should occur when he is past his prime, it is more than probable that he is laid by for ever. Men of this class are never willing to admit that their powers are failing, and often bring about the evil they fear by affecting to despise it. A man who should lie by to recruit, will go on violently exercising himself to avoid the suspicion of infirmity, which would be damaging to him; by-and-by his powers fail him of a sudden; he "misses his tip," as it is termed, that is, he trips or breaks down in performing the exploit which he is advertised for, and unless he can recover himself and perform it on the spot, it is all over with him—the beginning of the end of his career has come. Careful men take all possible pains to stave off this woeful crisis as long as they can: they drink sparingly—they diet themselves—they husband all their strength for the performance of the duties required of them, and resort to bathing, friction, poulticing their joints, and anointing themselves with "nine oils," and various other medicaments and devices for retaining the forces and elasticity of youth, which, last as long as they may, will desert them but all too soon. Many a man, after he is worn out himself, will retain a position in the company to which he is attached, on account of his child or *protégé*, whose clever performances bring money to the concern. In such a case he is seen no more in the arena, but is employed in some other way, as carter, stableman, bill-sticker, or general factotum, doing whatever is to be done for the common good. It is not an unusual thing for the street athlete, when his strength fails him, to turn peripatetic tradesman. If he have saved a little capital, and can

start a horse and cart, he does not make a bad figure as costermonger; and, as such, generally thrives. Wanting the means for such an outfit, he will push at a handcart, or carry about his stock on his head. His greatest enemies in either case are his nomadic habits and love of change, which are apt to interfere with his success, and reduce him to sad straits. Under the most disastrous circumstances, however, you never find him voluntarily resorting to "the house" as a refuge. All his habits and predilections are dead against that. If he is carried thither in his hour of distress and helplessness, it is in all probability to escape from duress by a speedy death.

That the life we have been describing must have special charms for those who follow it there can be no doubt, looking to their evident freedom from care and their customary good spirits, and to the fact that the march of science and the schoolmaster does not appear to diminish their numbers. What these charms are, however, one can hardly declare with certainty. It may be that certain temperaments find their fullest gratification in such a life; and that the admiration and popular applause that follow on success are an ever-present and agreeable stimulus, outweighing its inseparable hardships. Then we must remember there is a chance of a splendid reputation and enormous gains, which any youthful aspirant may hope to attain; and that this possibility, like a hundred-thousand-pound prize in a lottery where thousands venture, though but one can win, cannot fail of its attraction. On the moral bearings of the subject we need not here touch:

#### THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION OF INDIA.

BY REV. ROBERT HUNTER, M.A., LATE OF NAGPORE.

INDIA is in the main an agricultural country, and the great mass of its people are more or less directly engaged in the cultivation of the soil. "Happy peasants!" some one may be tempted to exclaim, "who draw from the unreluctant soil of fertile India abundance wherewith to satisfy their wants; who care not for politics, and never trouble themselves to inquire who rules in the imperial palace, or who ceases to rule, feeling that they are too obscure to be worth the notice of a tyrant, and that they may therefore pursue their tranquil course, whatever revolutions may rage in high places, much as the poetess describes:—

'O joyous birds, it hath still been so:  
' Through the halls of kings doth the tempest go,  
' But the huts of the hamlet lie still and deep,  
' And the hills o'er their quiet a vigil keep.'

Happy peasants! who find life easy, who have to work for their sustenance at the utmost but a few hours each day, and who, when evening falls, take out their pastoral pipes and play simple melodies with vocal accompaniment, each wooing and winning some village maiden, and then living a happy life with her in a cottage, which he has erected on the most picturesque spot on his fields! Happy even in faith, as living far from the din of religious controversy and yet reaching the truth by a kind of simple instinct, which tells them that gratitude and love are due to the Author of their being, and the Preserver of their lives!" Yes; if all that were true, they would be happy peasants; but nearly every element in this pleasing picture is devoid of verity. Let us sketch the real life of the Indian agricultural population.

It is quite correct that they rarely trouble themselves to ask who their sovereign may happen to be, it being the exception rather than the rule for a traveller to meet

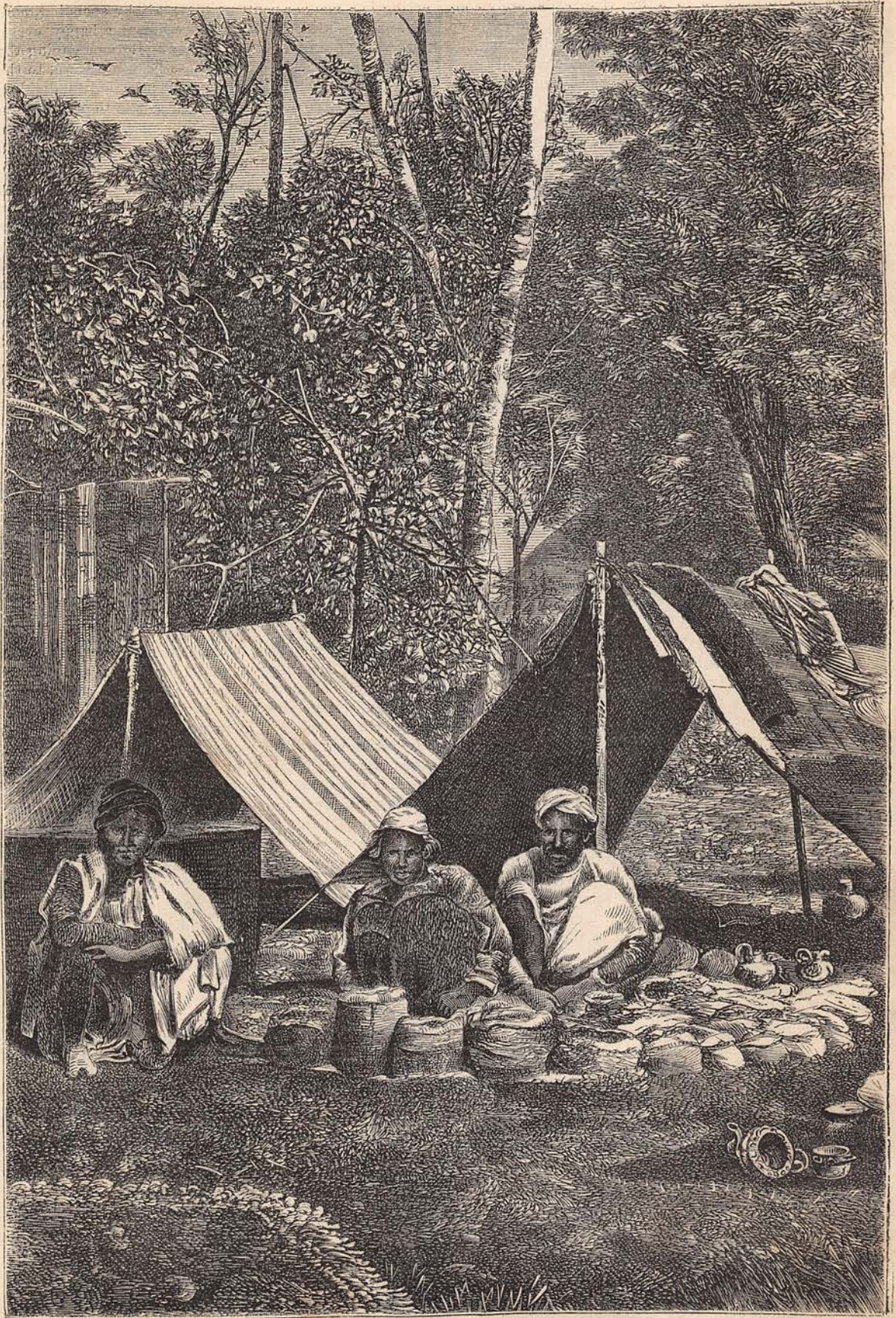
with an inquiring spirit who seeks information on such a matter; and when at any time one is encountered, it is difficult to repress a smile at the simplicity of the questions he puts. Rumour had whispered, even in somewhat remote parts, that this country and its great dependency were ruled over by a lady. It had also alleged that it was governed by a gentleman, and had even ventured to name him Koompanee, or, more fully, Koompanee Jehan—the Company John, or John Company. Here, then, was a perplexity which sorely afflicted the village student of Indian politics. If Jehan, or John, were really the ruler's name, how could it be alleged that India was governed by a lady? If, on the other hand, it was truly asserted that the sovereign was a lady, then what, pray, were the functions of the aforesaid John? Before the political changes consequent on the mutinies had displaced the East India Company from the close connection it so long had held with the administration of India, the difficulty now mentioned was stated to ourselves by an Indian peasant in his native dialect, in the hope that it might be within our power to furnish its solution, the precise question asked being, "Is Koompanee a man or a woman?"

But though the apathy of the Indian agriculturists may prevent their inquiring into the machinery of government, it is by no means correct that troubles in the upper regions of society pass by without affecting them: the very humblest peasant is really interested in the character of the sovereign power, whether he understands it or no. If the supreme ruler be too weak to inspire terror into evil doers, each of them will virtually become a monarch in the district where he happens to live, and not deem even the small peasantry beneath his dishonest attentions. Nor will it be simply property that will be brought into danger, it will be life. Before the British power was firmly established in Central India, and while the responsibility of keeping order there almost entirely devolved on native potentates more or less weak in character, and not often faithfully served, vast districts, not to say provinces, were annually overrun by troops of mounted robbers, called Pindarees, who everywhere swarmed like locusts, their numbers being estimated at from 20,000 to 25,000 horse, "of whom 6,000 or 7,000 were effective cavalry, about 3,000 or 4,000 middling, and the rest bad." When they had plundered districts under native rule, till they were not worth plundering any more, they then made some incursions into the British territory, in one of which, brief in point of duration, there were "killed by them 182; wounded, some severely, 505; and tortured (to make them give up their money), 3,633." "In many places the women, either to avoid pollution or unable to survive the disgrace, threw themselves into wells and perished." In one small town, "where the people, after a desperate defence, were overpowered by their assailants, they set fire to their own dwellings, and perished with their families in the flames."

So far, at least, as Central India is concerned—and we believe it the same throughout the vast Indian peninsula—the agriculturists have from time immemorial lived in villages, no one daring to occupy a house on his farm away from shelter. The writer of this article having travelled, generally on foot, for many hundred miles through Central and Western India, never once saw a farm-house. The arrangement adopted was this: villages were scattered over the country, generally at intervals of one or two miles apart. From these the agriculturists issued forth early in the morning, driving their flocks and herds before them to the fields. There they laboured for a great part of the day, and then

returned similarly attended in the evening. When a traveller approached a village towards sunset, he would see shepherds arriving with their sometimes numerous flocks of sheep and bullocks, trudging along to the general place of rendezvous, sometimes with bells which tinkled pleasantly suspended from their necks. When sheep and cattle were thus collected at the villages, they were safer from the attacks of tigers than if they had been left in the fields; while, if plunderers had appeared, the animals would have had the entire village community ready to rush to their assistance. While the strong arm of British power, under God, so effectively protected the Indian villages, they often forbore to bring home their flocks and herds; and such a scene as that in the vicinity of Bethlehem might easily have been witnessed—shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night under the open canopy of heaven. In most cases, if there were no one else in the fields, there was at least one person, a watcher, who, taking his station on an elevated erection, saw that no one came stealthily upon the ground to steal, or destroy the crops. Still, this in no way removed the impression produced by the want of farm-houses: the teaching conveyed by that significant fact remained unimpaired. It was unmistakably shown that no such confidence in the continuance of public tranquillity as that which encourages the British farmer to pitch his residence away from the support of his fellows had visited India when the village system was first organised; nay, that it had not fully visited it yet, else would that system have been changed. To render the more important villages defensible against such mounted robbers as the Pindarees, already described, they were in general fortified. We suspect that these arrangements also obtained in ancient Palestine. Hence, while we perpetually read of fenced cities, we do not read of farm-houses, even where we should expect them to be mentioned. Thus, while David spent a great part of his youth some distance out from Bethlehem, where his flock, not to say himself, was exposed to attacks from such animals as the lion and the bear, it is plain, from 1 Samuel xvi, that he and his father Jesse lived not in a farm-house, but within the walls of Bethlehem. Again, while the churlish Nabal sent out his flocks and herds to feed on the half-desert pastures, he sought his own safety within one of the neighbouring towns; and when the prophetic Gog wished to plunder some unprotected people, he did not bethink him of farmers living in detached houses, for such seem not to have existed; but he said: "I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land" (Ezekiel xxxviii, 11, 12.) In India the smaller villages are unwalled, as Gog was to find those of Canaan, while there is another resemblance between the two cases. Overpowering the inhabitants of the smaller villages, an invader would find a great booty in the assemblage of flocks and herds which had been driven at nightfall to seek such protection as the proximity of so small a number of human beings could afford.

All the more important Indian villages are provided with defences. Very generally they are surrounded by a wall, and have besides a small fort at one angle of the enclosure. In the Crimean war it fell upon our officers, with something of the novelty of a revelation, that earthworks, such as those that the Russians hastily



GRAIN SELLERS.

(From a Photograph.)

threw up before Sebastopol, were in many cases more, and not less formidable to a foe, than elaborately constructed stone fortifications. This secret in military science appears to have been known in India from the remotest period of antiquity, and the material used for the walls of the ordinary villages, and for their citadels, the small forts, is in general mud. In some cases brick is employed, and in others stone. We felt proud of our Government in the East, when, in the years preceding the mutinies, we saw one fort after another allowed to fall into decay. The most notable case of this kind left traces in the memory. There is a kind of fig-tree in the East, called the "peepul," which has a habit of sending its branches through small holes in walls, if it does not even make them for the purpose where they did not exist before. We have seen a flourishing branch thus present itself inside a gentleman's house, at the foot of his staircase, where he allowed it for a time to continue, on account of the interest attaching to the unwonted spectacle; but he dared not have permitted it to remain long, otherwise it would first have split his wall and then broken it down. In a town we once visited there was a brick fort, which must have cost a considerable sum of money to rear it; but a peepul tree had either found or made a hole in the wall, and poked through it a slender twig, which in due time had grown to be a great branch. Already it had cracked the wall in various directions, and, unless speedily removed, was on the same road towards flinging it over. On looking at the suggestive spectacle, we could not help reasoning in such a manner as this: The state of that wall shows the confidence the people of this town have in the ability of our Government to keep public tranquillity in the East. If the arm of British power were paralysed, it would not be long before it would be found requisite to cut down, or at least maim that destructive tree, and put the fort wall in a state to resist the attack of the new Pindarees who would soon swarm over the land.

In our fancy picture we spoke of each one wooing and winning a village maiden. In reality there is no wooing in the case. A boy and girl are betrothed to each other in early life, probably before they have ever spoken to each other, and while there is no possibility of knowing whether they will ever contract a love for each other or not. In due time betrothal is followed by marriage—marriage, which, in the whole of India, has a fatal tendency to lay the foundation for the financial ruin of at least one of the families connected with it. The reason is this: Most of the Hindoos are poor, and they are improvident. When the time for the marriage of a son or a daughter comes, it is found that no saving of money to meet the inevitable expenses has been made previously. Then fashion, which is more galling among the Hindoos than among ourselves, has prescribed that the marriage expenses shall be on a scale so disproportioned to the means possessed by either of the contracting parties, that they cannot be met without incurring debt almost hopeless in amount. If one had a salary of seven rupees a month (eighty-four rupees a year), custom prescribed that he should expend about one hundred rupees each time that a son of his was married. If a curate in this country, with a salary of £84 a year, and with six sons, were to find it impossible to give one of them in marriage unless £100 were spent on the occasion (chiefly in revelry), the absurdity would not be greater than what we daily see in India; and the agricultural population being very far behind, intellectually, never make the smallest effort to break the galling yoke. So, when some farmer's son

has to be married, the worthy father makes a point of acting in a manner befitting his rank, by spending more than a year's income in celebrating the happy event. But where does he get the money? By mortgaging the produce of his fields, ere yet these fields are sown, to the money-lender, who is not some gentlemanly individual from an Eastern Lombard Street, averse to pressing too far on a person in pecuniary distress, but a heartless screw, whose smallest demand is for 33 per cent. compound interest, and who quite as frequently makes it 66. When this is paid in farm produce, instead of in money, which, probably, is the case, the astute money-lender is found a faithful observer of that precept which teaches the propriety of buying in the cheapest market, with the view of selling in the dearest; and we would venture to allege that the grain-selling, represented in the wood-cut, will put no money into the pocket (so called) of Ramchundru Gopal, small farmer near the village of Bhooree. The proceeds of the sale will be paid over to Omichund, banker, money-lender, corn-factor, etc., etc., an enterprising individual, who first appeared in these parts from his native land, Marwar, in the north-west of India, carrying five rupees (equivalent to ten shillings sterling), tied up in the end of his scarf, and, commencing first as a money-changer, went on till he became banker, grain-merchant, and general speculator, with such funds at his command as to render him quite the Rothschild of the province in which he has taken up his abode. One great service which missionaries render to their Indian converts is to enact that expensive ceremony shall be discarded at all native Christian marriages, and that five or at most ten, instead of one hundred rupees, shall be the utmost extent of the charges incurred.

In the fancy picture, again, it was assumed that the simplicity of the villagers would lead them instinctively to the more obvious ideas underlying natural religion. Alas! experience dissipates this vain imagination. If the world by wisdom knew not God, and the highest intellect and knowledge ever possessed by the ancient sages were insufficient to enable them to reach true, however inadequate, conceptions of the Divinity; much less are the gross ignorance and the unawakened intellect of the Indian agricultural population fitted to bring them near to God. One of the commonest objects of worship among the villagers consists simply of the heaps of stones gathered from the fields, to render the latter fitter for agricultural operations. These stones are smeared with red lead, which is especially stuck on the projecting angles of the several stones. The aspect they then present is very much what would be exhibited if one were to stick pellets of red clay on the angular points of the stones heaped together at the corners of one of our own fields. They call that god Mhussoba, and, as might be expected, he is not a beneficent but a malevolent being, worshipped from fear and not from love.

Notwithstanding all, there is much to excite affection for the Indian cultivators. Though not intellectual naturally, and though what little understanding they have has been allowed to remain fallow—it being quite an exceptional case to find one of them able to read fluently—yet they are more loveable in some respects than the Brahmins, for they are more honest and trustworthy. Many of them, too, are hardworking men; and there are parts of Central India where, when the grain crops were in blade, far as the eye could reach we could see nothing but one continuous sheet of emerald green. At other parts there was a greater variety of hue. Thus, one noting the plants cultivated has to make such

entries as this in his journal—"Village of Assolee—near it were fields of wheat, pigeon pea and millet. Mahalgau—the fields onward from this village were of wheat, millet, and more rarely of pepper, sweet potatoes, etc. (By sweet potatoes is not meant a particular variety of our own potato, which belongs to the nightshade family of plants, but a kind of *convolvulus* whose tubers are eatable.) Waroda village—near this, plantations of plantains occur."

The intellectual state of the people resident in these villages may be inferred when it is stated that in the first of them, a place of about fifty houses, there was no school, and no person old or young could read; while in the second, of eighty houses, one was that of a rain-maker (!); and in the last, a small town of 300 houses, the rain-makers occupied three dwellings.

From these facts—and they might easily be multiplied a hundred fold—it is painfully apparent how much the Indian villagers require to be taught at least the rudiments of education, and, above all, how much they need to be instructed in the doctrines and precepts of our holy faith. In social matters, no reform is more urgent than one which shall reduce the crushing weight of marriage expenses, as now imposed by foolish and tyrannical custom, and emancipate the unhappy victims from the bondage in which they are held by the money-lenders: to whom they have mortgaged the produce of their lands.

The agricultural resources of India are so vast that, with proper management, it might not merely support its own population, but furnish in addition supplies of one kind of grain or other to feed a great portion of mankind. All that is needful to effect this desirable result is simply to provide some apparatus for utilising the water, which falls in torrents from the sky at certain seasons, and escapes away to the ocean without having been made to render man the service it might have been expected to furnish. Let India be properly irrigated, and we shall no longer have our feelings harrowed by reports of famines in that land. At the same time, let us not shut our eyes to the fact that the difficulties which have to be overcome are considerable. If our London Government ruled over all Europe, with the exception of Russia and Turkey, and if the vast population over which its authority extended were the reverse of public-spirited, so that, in every emergency their first thought was not of putting forth their individual exertions, but of asking the Government to lead the way in action, the position would in some respects be analogous to that we at present occupy in the East. One might be ready to say, the way to stop famines from occurring is easy. Construct upon the Thames a vast network of channels for transmitting water to the country through which the river passes, and build across it a very powerful embankment, to furnish such a fresh-water lake as may feed the channels. Do the same upon the Clyde and the Tay, and the Humber and the Severn, on the Seine, also, and on the Loire, and the Tagus and the Rhine and the Rhone. Let an identical system be pursued with the Po and the Tiber, with the Elbe also, and the Oder and the Vistula, as well as with the upper part of the Danube. Then may you laugh at famines, even if rain from heaven should in great measure be withheld. Very well, one might reply; but it is to be presumed that operations so extensive would cost a great many millions of money. A government which does not always find its ordinary expenditure met by its income, can only raise money by imposing new taxes, or by borrowing, both of which expedients it wishes if possible to avoid. Let its intentions be ever so beneficent, you must give it time to

carry them into effect. The opening of the Ganges canal some years ago was a proud triumph; while the hearty good will with which the Indian authorities have laboured for years on the lower portion of the Godavery, partly to render that river more navigable, partly to construct expensive works with the view of promoting irrigation, gives solid ground for believing that, if time be granted them, they will yet utilise to the fullest extent all the great Indian rivers, and ultimately succeed in preventing the recurrence of those famines which from time immemorial have desolated portions of the glorious Indian land.

#### M. ROUHER.

It is impossible to read the French political news in any daily or weekly journal without constantly meeting with the name of Monsieur Rouher, now one of the most prominent and influential statesmen in France.

The career of this minister of Napoleon III shows how success may often be ascribed to the unforeseen and trivial circumstances, from which no one would have anticipated any result. M. Rouher was first known, and then became celebrated, by an incautious expression which escaped his lips in the heat of debate, and to which, in cooler blood, he in vain tried to restore its real meaning. His descendants should, out of gratitude, inscribe the word "catastrophe" on their coat of arms, for it was this word which changed the unknown advocate, the most obscure member of a mediocre ministry, to his own surprise, into a great public celebrity.

Eugène Rouher, the Senator, Minister of State and of Finance, is now fifty-four years of age, and springs from a family, members of which for the last fifty years have held judicial offices. After finishing his studies at the college of his native town, Riom, he went to study law at Paris, became an advocate in 1837, and established himself as such in 1840 at Riom. The department of Puy de Dôme, or Auvergne, as that part of the country was formerly called, has always been very monarchical and conservative, although during the reign of Louis Philippe, the most violent opposition newspapers, supported by money from Paris, were published there. Consequently, actions against the press were quite the order of the day, and the Opposition, who were desirous of winning to their ranks the young and tolerably wealthy advocate, entrusted to him, directly after he had settled in the department, a large number of these cases to defend. As a barrister, he had not eloquence. He was not a ready speaker, was unacquainted with brilliant metaphors, and his variations on the word "liberty," then so much in fashion, showed the timid *dilettante*, rather than the skilled professor, in these press prosecutions.

However, he was thoroughly successful. These trials brought his real judicial knowledge to light. He earned a great deal of money; and, in the year 1843, he married the daughter of the Mayor of Clermont, the chief town of the province, and through this marriage became a considerable landowner. Then he completely broke the loose bands which tied him to the liberal party; and in 1846 boldly came forward as government candidate, at the elections for the Chamber of Deputies, under the patronage of the minister, M. Guizot. But the bitter feeling against one who was considered to be a renegade was so great, that even many conservatives voted against him, and he obtained only a few thousand votes.

Under the Republic, with universal suffrage, he was