THE BANKRUPTCY OF INDIA: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA UNDER THE CROWN, INCLUDING A CHAPTER ON THE SILVER QUESTION

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BY

H. M. HYNDMAN,

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PREFACE.

THE three chapters in this little book headed respectively, "The Condition of India," "Controversy," and "Bleeding to Death," appeared as papers in the *Nineteenth Century*, between the end of the year 1878 and the beginning of 1880. The title, "The Bankruptcy of India," was suggested by the editor of that Review, Mr. James Knowles. These articles are now reprinted almost as they then stood. I have altered neither the arguments nor the figures, because to have done so would have changed the controversial position as against my opponents, Sir John Strachey, Sir Erskine Perry, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. F. Danvers. Unfortunately for India, no reform of any importance has since been made, and my contentions remain wholly unshaken with regard to the period which I then dealt with. The "Introduction," the chapter

headed "Continued Neglect," and the chapter on "The Silver Question," have been written for this volume.

It is pleasing to me to recall the fact, that after many years of study devoted to Indian matters, my first opportunity for calling attention to what has always seemed to me the most important point in connection with our rule, was given me in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then edited by my old friend, and enemy, Mr. Frederick Greenwood. A series of letters, entitled "Our Greatest Danger in India," appeared in that newspaper signed "H." In one of them I criticised the administration of the Public Works Department in India very severely. A Committee of the House of Commons was then sitting to inquire into the management of that very department. The late Mr. Henry Fawcett, a member of the Committee, who curiously enough had been my lecturer in Political Economy at Cambridge, wrote to Mr. Greenwood and asked that "H" should offer himself as a witness before the Committee, seeing that the contributor who wrote over that initial evidently knew more about the subject than most of the officials who had been examined. As I had never been in India, and

had acquired my information almost entirely from Blue Books and other official records, I, of course, declined to come forward; and I only mention this now because it enforces the view which I urge in the following pages,—that there is already plenty of evidence about India to enable any industrious man to master the facts, and to meet the arguments of the official apologists successfully. Shortly afterwards Mr. Knowles opened the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* to my articles.

I can only hope that, whatever defects of matter or style may be found in this little volume, it may have some effect in directing public attention to the irremediable mischief which must be done in India by a continuance of our present system. I am well aware that in pointing to manifest decay and hopeless misery, where writers of the highest official and literary distinction tell us to observe only improvement and prosperity, I run the risk of being accused of presumption and ignorance. But I have at least done my best to read all that they have written, and nine-tenths of my arguments are drawn from their own works and reports. To take the optimist view of the Indian problem is far more pleasant, as it is assuredly

more profitable, than to state disagreeable truths in plain language.

I am, however, firmly convinced that in India we are working up to a hideous economical catastrophe, beside which the great Irish Famine of 1847 will seem mere child's play. What is more, I believe that no unprejudiced man can read through the official evidence summarised in this volume without coming to the same conclusion. With these few words, therefore, I leave the work to the judgment of the public.

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