

**OUR ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA. BEING A  
COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF THE REVENUE  
AND COLLECTORATE ADMINISTRATION IN  
ALL DEPARTMENTS, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO THE WORK AND DUTIES OF  
A DISTRICT OFFICERS IN BENGAL**

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**H. A. D. PHILLIPS**

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BY

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COLLECTORATE LAW," ETC.

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TO THE  
AMERICAN

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Dedicated,  
BY PERMISSION, TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL,  
Secretary of State for India,  
IN RECOGNITION  
OF HIS INTEREST IN INDIA AND SOLICITUDE  
FOR THE WELFARE OF  
TWO HUNDRED MILLION BRITISH INDIAN SUBJECTS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE Chief Executive Officer of a Bengal district is styled the District Officer or Magistrate-Collector. As Collector, he supervises the collection of the various branches of the revenue ; as Magistrate, he exercises original, appellate, and revisional powers in criminal and quasi-criminal matters. So far, the distinction is plain and easy to perceive. But there are certain departments of the administration, with respect to which the District Officer is styled Magistrate or Collector, as the case may be, in a more or less arbitrary manner. For instance, *quoad* the postal and telegraph administration, he is styled Magistrate, and, in the same capacity, he is the Head of the Police and Jail Departments, and Chairman of the Municipal Commissioners. Then, again, it is as Magistrate that he supervises education, the collection of vital statistics, emigration, sanitation, and vaccination. These magis-



terial and quasi-magisterial duties are not touched on in the present work, which is confined to a review of the revenue and collectorate administration <sup>(1)</sup>.

The interest in India is becoming stronger every year, and at the present moment it is a matter of vital importance that the British Parliament and the British public should have before them a correct and truthful account of our administration in India. Hitherto, they have had little else but articles cavilling at Anglo-Indian officials and their administration—articles which appear to be written in a spirit of disloyalty and hostility to the Government, as assertions are recklessly made which indicate that the writers have not even taken the trouble to look into Blue-Books and Administration Reports. It is a matter for deep regret that those who have special means of knowledge seldom or never take the trouble to write and correct the numerous erroneous statements and sensational descriptions from time to time put forward. Palpable as the errors are, and transparent the misstatements, they are so only to those who have some knowledge of the country; and it is surely no matter for surprise that these articles should gain some

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(1) Should the present volume be favourably received, it is my intention to publish another on the same lines, treating of the criminal and magisterial duties of the District Officer.

credence, so long as they remain uncontradicted. It is said that "*magna est veritas, et prævalebit;*" but history teaches us that truth is sometimes strangled and suppressed for centuries, whereas it is often very important that truth should prevail *at once*. Truth may be great and powerful; but I do not think it is likely to prevail, if hidden in Blue-Books and Administration Reports and stowed away in the pigeon-holes of the India Office and Bengal Secretariats. Such books are doubtless dry reading; but there is no reason why their results should not be placed before English readers in a light and popular form.

Having had ten years' experience of various districts in the Mofussil, I have had some opportunities of seeing the life and learning something of the wishes and feelings of the natives—and by natives I mean the great body of landowners, cultivators, shop-keepers, artizans and labourers, and not a small section of pleaders, students, schoolmasters, and newspaper editors. It may be said that natives are very prone to give such information as they think their interrogators wish to receive. But if that fact lessens the value of my assertions (which I deny), does it not damage and almost destroy the allegations of such writers as Messrs. Hyndman, Seymour Keay, W. S. Blunt, Osborne, Digby, *et hoc genus omne?*

These writers appear to be jealous of the civilian

Aristides, and would ostracise him, because they are tired of hearing him called "The Just." If it be said that, as an official, I am prejudiced in favour of the administration, I venture to think that the writings of all or most of the above writers evince the existence of prejudice and bias in the opposite direction; and it is probable that the educated English-speaking natives with whom they came in contact were fully aware of such bias. The civilian is constantly brought into contact with every class of the people, and his information is gained, not solely from English-speaking natives, but from the daily routine of his life and work, supplemented by inspections and tours throughout every part of his district. He is not compelled to employ set forms of interrogatories, and even the veriest Rhadamanthus must, from his daily revenue, judicial and miscellaneous duties, gain a considerable insight into the life of the people, their ways, thoughts, and ideas, and their opinions regarding such portions of the administration as affect themselves. But the majority of civilians, while possessing the Rhadamanthine attributes of justice and impartiality, are neither stern, inaccessible, nor unsympathetic; and there are many whose knowledge of the people and the country is far more accurate and intimate than that of a Calcutta Babu. If a Frenchman or a German were to hold important administrative posts in half the