

**MADRAS: ITS CIVIL  
ADMINISTRATION, BEING ROUGH  
NOTES FROM PERSONAL  
OBSERVATION, WRITTEN IN 1855  
& 1856, PP. 1-159**

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BY

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION;

BEING

ROUGH NOTES FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION,

WRITTEN IN 1855 & 1856.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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As the title-page of this volume sufficiently indicates, the following papers were written in India for private circulation among the author's personal acquaintances, and they are now published in the belief that their contents are calculated to draw the attention of public men to the practical working of the revenue administration of Madras, the evils attendant on which are so little known in this country. They have no immediate relation to the reconstruction of the Home Government for India, rendered necessary by the calamitous events in Bengal.

In the chapter on torture in the collection of the revenue, the aim of the writer is to shew that the system of landed tenures in Madras is the great social evil of the Presidency, and that coercion and the ill-treatment of the native cultivators are the necessary consequences of its continuance. The manner in which this detestable land system is carried out—demoralizing the revenue servants, degrading the agricultural classes, and devoting the private possessions of the native gentry of Southern India to ruin and confiscation—is illustrated and exposed in this and in the following chapters. The conclusion arrived at is, that the overthrow of the present policy, and the inauguration of another system which would really protect landed property, and would attract capital to the improvement of the soil, must emanate from a Royal Commission; for thirty years personal observation has satisfied the author that no comprehensive change is to be looked for at the hands of the Local Government.

The chapter devoted to the subject of irrigation

improvement, and the outlay of money on what are called reproductive works, is not undeserving of attention at a time when proposals are circulated, on authority, for the formation of private companies in England, with or without guarantees, to institute enterprizes similar to those undertaken by the Madras Government in Tanjore and Rajahmundry. In an official Memorandum emanating from the East India House, published a few weeks since, the Rajahmundry Annicut is specially stated, on the authority of the Public Works Commission Report of 1852, to be a work that, in the process of its construction, not only replaced all the expenditure upon the undertaking, but promised an immediate return of £300,000 sterling to the State, and £3,000,000 per annum to the cultivators. The article now published is meant to shew that the statements of magnificent returns derived from those works are idle tales, and that abundant information of this fact has been in the possession of the local authorities in Madras for some years, which they have



purposely withheld from submission to the Home Government.

Statements have frequently been made in the Imperial Parliament of profits varying from 150 to 750 per cent. per annum, alleged to have been derived from local irrigation works in the Madras Presidency. These results are obtained in this way:—It must be held in mind that the land in Madras is the property of the Government; and that, in order to secure its rents from the occupiers, it is the duty of the State, as landlord, to maintain, at the public cost, the reservoirs and channels on which the fertility of the villages depends. If a reservoir should burst, or a channel be choked with mud, the cultivation fed by these works will decay, and the rents will be lost; when the breach is filled up and the obstructions removed, the rent will be recovered. The expenses incurred under this head are part of the fixed charges incidental to the ownership of landed property, and the disbursements must be deducted from the rent-roll of the district before the real

value of the lands can be ascertained. At present, in the Madras accounts, the old revenues regained by expenditure in the Public Works Department are entered as new receipts springing from, comparatively speaking, insignificant outlays. From accounts framed on this principle, magnificent profits can readily be shewn to spring from a very trifling expenditure; while, at the same time, no real addition whatever is made to the general revenues of the Government.

It is worthy of observation that since the general introduction of the annual individual settlement system, the revenues of the Madras Presidency have declined. Colonel Sykes, in an Appendix attached to his speech delivered in the House of Commons on the 18th February last, has shewn that, taken for decennial periods in 1809-10, the revenues of Madras were £3,620,000, while, from that date up to 1849-50, the receipts were £3,478,000 only. This decrease appears notwithstanding the annexation to the Madras territories, during the second period of the comparison, of

Coorg, Kurnool, and several other independent states, and the absorption of many valuable private possessions in the manner pointed out in the following pages.

*25th March, 1858.*