

NIL DURPAN

OR
THE INDIGO PLANTING MIRROR

BY
DINABANDHU MITRA



TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI
BY A NATIVE



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By Dinabandhu Mitra

**Translated from the Bengali
by a Native**

**EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
SANKAR SEN GUPTA**



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Masterpiece of Bengali Literature : I

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to commemorate the completion of one hundred
years of bengali stage (1872—1972) this
celebrated drama of dinabandhu is reprinted.

Editor's Preface

As editor of the book I am uncomfortably aware of the recent outpouring of edited works, a number of which comprise the 'series' genre. Some people may feel that an edited work like the present one is simply redundant and can contribute little to our understanding of dramatic literature of Bengal. Yet, it has been edited in the present manner considering its utility. By reading this excellent drama, a reader will come to experience a feeling of oneness with the suffering community and he will know a lot about the condition of the peasantry of the then Bengal.

Original Book

The original Bengali book was first published on 2nd Aswin, 1782 Sakabda (or 1267 B.S.), corresponding to the middle of September, 1860. It was printed by Ramchandra Bhowmick in Bangala Machine at Dacca, where, Dinabandhu Mitra was posted then in connection with his service in the Posts and Telegraphs Department. In place of author's real name, in the first edition, we find printed a pseudonym—'A Traveller'. The following was the title: "*Nil Darpanang Natakang: Nilkara-Bishadhara-Danshan Katar-Prajanikara Kshemankarena Kenochit Pathi-kenabhipranitang*". The proof of the book was corrected at Dacca house of Dr. Durgadas Kar, a physician, who was in the employment of the Government then. The author could not conceal his real name for a long time. Immediately after the publication of English translation of the book in 1861 a libel suit was instituted against its printer and publisher and the plaintiff won the case.

English Edition

This English edition of the book was first published from Calcutta in April or May 1861 (as per statement by Mr. C. M. Manuel, the printer) for private circulation. The

book was translated with the sanction and knowledge of the then Secretary of Bengal Office, Mr. W.S. Seton-Karr C.S. Only 500 copies were printed of which 202 copies only were issued, and the rest were supposed to be destroyed following the libel suit by the two British-owned newspapers. Among the 202 circulated copies, Indian circulation amounted to not more than 14 copies. Most of these copies again, were recalled and destroyed (according to the statement of Mr. Seton-Karr in the court). Within a year of the libel suit, the second English edition of the book was brought out from London, in 1862, by Simpkin, Marshal & Co. Ltd. Simultaneously with this edition, some editions in other European languages too appeared from different centres of the world.¹ Bengali edition went on multiplying the first edition. It had also been translated into other Indian languages like Hindi. After forty years of the publication of the second English edition from London, the second Indian or the third English edition was published by Messrs. A. N. Andini & Co. from Calcutta in 1903. The third Indian or fourth English edition was published after a lapse of about fifty years. It was well edited by Mr. Sudhi Pradhan in collaboration with Sailesh Sen Gupta, and published by Eastern Trading Company, Calcutta. The present book is fourth Indian (or fifth English) edition where the editor has followed the text of immediate earlier, that is to say, third Indian edition. Of course, the editor has seen other editions too but considering certain modifications made by Mr. Pradhan taking the help of Professor Dr. S. C. Sen Gupta he has followed that. Further, inspite of their modifications palpable mistakes in the text are inherited which and other basic points as will be seen here has prompted the editor to raise the question as to who has translated the book from original Bengali to English.

1, Chattopadhyay Bankin.chandra. *Rai Dinabandhu Mitra Bahadurer Jibani-o-Grantha Samalochana*, Calcutta, 1877.

Books Consulted

In bringing this edition out all English editions so far published were consulted. Particular help was received from Mr. Pradhan's edited book. Besides, first Bengali edition, and the one that was published by Kar, Majumdar & Co. with an introduction by Hemendraprosad Ghosh, *Dinabandhu Granthabali*, edited by Brojendranath Bandyopadhyay and Sajanikanta Das, published by Bangiya Sahitya Parishat and Hindi edition translated by Dr. M. P. Saha and published from Allahabad too were consulted.

In this edition, different materials from different sources were utilised for checking and re-checking and in so doing, editor takes much pleasure in acknowledging the debt of the books mentioned above. Besides, other books like J. Ghosal's compiled work "Celebrated Trials in India", Kumud Behari Bose's "Indigo Planters and all about them." L. C. Mitra's "Indigo Disturbances in Bengal with a full report of the Nil Durpan Case", Brojendranath Bandyopadhyay's "*Bangiya Natyasalar Itihas*" and "*Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*" (Michael and Dinabandhu), 'Seton-Karr and others' "Indigo Commission Reports"—*Evidence & Appendix*, "Selections from Papers on Indigo Cultivation in Bengal" by a Ryot, Abhay Charan Das's "The Indian Ryot, Land Tax, Permanent Settlement and the famine," Howrah, 1881, "Selection from Calcutta Gazetteer" by Seton-Karr, Brojendranath and Sajanikanta's "*Madhusudan Granthabali*", Jogendranath Basu's "Jibancharit", Nagen-dranath Shome's "Madhu-Smriti", Bankimchandra's "*Rai Dinabandhu Mitra Bahadurer Jibani-o-Grantha-Samalochana*", Shibnath Shastri's "*Ramtanu Lahiri-o-Tatkalin Bangasamaj*", "War of Independence, 1857" ed. by Sankar Sen Gupta, and last but not the least B. B. Kling's scholarly work "The Blue Mutiny" were consulted.

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The co-operation afforded to the editor by supplying books by Professor Pallab Sengupta, Professor Satyajit

Chaudhury, Professor Narendranath Dasgupta, Dr. Mahadevprosad Saha, Prof. Madhusudan Mukherji and Sri Ranjan Kumar Das is acknowledged with thanks. Friends like Sri Tarapada Mukherjee, Sri Bholanath Bhattacharya and Professor Deviprosad Bandyopadhyay helped the editor in correcting proof sheets. *Monograph Association of India* is to be congratulated for publishing the book serially in its organ "Human Events." The editor also offers his gratitude to Mrs. Mira Pakrashi and Mr. Shankar Bhaduri of the *National Library*, Calcutta, the library staff of *Bangiya Sahitya Parishat* for their services in library work.

The translator

This is an opportunity, by the way, in raising the point as to who was the translator of "Nil Durpan" from Bengali to English. Although Michael Madhusudan Dutt has been accepted by many, as the translator, and some have included it in the complete works of his,* there is no sound basis for this. So we have printed here 'Translated from the Bengali by a Native' following the first Indian edition. In the following lines we will try to argue why we are sceptical in accepting Michael as the translator of the drama under study and why we have accepted 'A Native' as the translator for the time being.

First of all, we will see as to how Madhusudan came to be known as the translator of the drama : (a) It is Bankim, who, while writing Dinabandhu's biography in 1877, after a lapse of four years of his death, pronounced that—"It was by translating this book Michael Madhusudan Dutt was privately reprimanded and humiliated, and had to, it is learnt, give up his means of livelihood—his job in the Supreme Court."² (b) Not only Bankim,

* *Madhusudan Granthabali*, ed. Dr. Kshetra Gupta, Sahitya Samasad, Calcutta.

2. We quote Bankim's own words—ইহার ইংরাজী অনুবাদ করিয়া।

but no less a person than Shibnath Shastri also, in his "*Ramtanu Lahiri-o-Talkalin Bangasamaj*" has written—"So far as I remember it is Michael Madhusudan who had translated the book from the Bengali to English and Padri Long Saheb published it in his own name".³ (c) Next comes Lalitchandra Mitra, Dinabadhu's son, with the same idea and with a padding to what is said by Bankim. He, in his book "*History of Indigo Disturbances in Bengal with a full Report of Nil Darpan Case*", has written—"The Reverend James Long took up on himself the task of having the drama translated in English, to open the eyes of the Government and the English community. The actual translation was made by the immortal poet of Meghnadbadh—Michael Madhusudan Dutt in a solitary night."⁴ (d) Further next, Brojendranath Bandyopadhyaya in his "*Sahitya Sadhak Oharitamala*" has written that—"Padri Long was requested by a great many Europeans to get the book translated into English. But it was impossible for any European to get the peasant's dialect of the drama translated faithfully. So he had to depend on Michael Madhusudan. It was published in the early part of 1861 as 'Nil Durpan or Indigo Planting Mirror.' It was printed in the title page: 'Translated from the Bengali by A Native' where James Long wrote an introduction. While writing introduction James Long had written: 'The original Bengali of the Drama—the *Nil Durpan or Indigo Planting Mirror*—have excited considerable interest, a wish was expressed by various Europeans

মাইকেল মধুসূদন গোগনে তিরস্কৃত হইয়াছিলেন, এবং গুনিয়াছি শেষে তাঁহার জীবন নিকৰ্ণাহে, উপায় হস্ত্রীম কোর্টের চাকুরী পথান্ত ত্যাগ করিতে বাধ্য হইয়াছিলেন।"—বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়।

3. "নীলদর্পণ" কে লিখিল তাহা জানিতে পারা গেল না; কিন্তু বাসাতে বসিতে, "ময়রাণী লো মই" নীল গাঁজোছো কই" ইত্যাদি দৃশ্যের অভিনয় চলিল, যতদূর স্মরণ হয় মাইকেল মধুসূদন এই গ্রন্থ ইংরাজীতে অনুবাদ করেন, পাদরী লং সাহেব তাহা নিজের নামে প্রকাশ করিলেন।—শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী, "রামতনু লাহিড়ী ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ।"

4. "*History of Indigo Disturbances in Bengal with a full report of the Nil Durpan Case*", Calcutta, 1903.

to see a translation of it. This has been made by a Native; both the original and translation are *bonafide* Native productions and depict the Indigo Planting System as viewed by Natives at large'. This native is nobody but Madhusudan Dutt.⁵

Following these stalwarts, literary historians and critics of Bengal have acknowledged Madhusudan as the translator of "Nil Durpan". But none could produce convincing facts in their support or to win over those who hold different opinions. From the available facts it is hard to believe that Madhusudan translated 'Nil Durpan'. We shall try to discuss here why the scholars and critics failed to make an impression on the mind of a critical reader about Madhusudan's role in translating the work.

The translation

It is to be noted here that when we doubt Madhusudan's translation, we cannot completely ignore some native hand in it when we come to the original and translation of the conversation of the raiyats.⁶ As for example we can quote the following :

"Aduri. When the Magistrate of the Zilla (*whose name occasion great terror*) goes riding about through the village,

5. 'শাদরী লং বহ ইউরোপীয়ের দ্বারা ইংরাজী অনুবাদ প্রকাশ করিতে অসমর্থ হইল কিন্তু কৃষকের গ্রামাভিযাণে নাটকের অনুবাদ কোন ইউরোপীয়ের পক্ষে সম্ভব ছিল না। এই কারণেই লং "নীলদর্পণের" ইংরাজী অনুবাদের জন্য মধুসূদনের শরণাগত হইয়াছিলেন। ১৮৬১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের প্রথম ভাগে "নীলদর্পণের" ইংরাজী অনুবাদ Nil Durpan or Indigo Planting Mirror নামে শাদরী লং-এর একটি ভূমিকা সহ প্রকাশিত হয়.....পুস্তকের আখ্যানপত্রে কেবল Translated from the Bengali by a Native' মুদ্রিত ছিল। লং পুস্তকের "Introduction"-এ লিখিয়াছেন—"The original Bengali of this Drama—The Nil Durpan, or Indigo Planting Mirror—having excited considerable interest, a wish was expressed by various Europeans to see a translation of it. This has been made by a Native; both the original and translation are *bona fide* native productions and depict the Indigo Planting System as viewed by Natives at large. এই Native মধুসূদন বাতীত আর কেহই নহেন।'

6. It is really difficult to render the following and many other portions of the drama by any European. Even a native, if he is not thoroughly connected with the peasantry will find it difficult for him

the lady also rides on horse-back, with him—The bou riding about on a horse ! Because the aunt of Kashi once laughed before the elder brother of her husband, all people ridiculed her ; while this was the Magistrate of the Zilla (page 28...)

Third Ryot. I am only a hireling, and work on commission. It won't cut ice if I say that I refused to take indigo advance under the influence of the Babus. Why was I then confined in the godown ? I thought that serving under him at this time, I shall be able to make good collection and shall be able to invite my friends on the occasion of my wife's completing her seventh month of pregnancy.....(p. 29—30).

Cowherd. Saheb, have not insects attacked thine indigo twigs ?

Podi. Let them attack thy mother and sister, thou degenerate fool. Leave off thy mother's breast, go to house of death ; go to Colmighata, to the grave." (p.38-39).

Even though, it is difficult to accept Madhusudan as the translator of "Nil Durpan." Because,

there are many inaccuracies in the translation, it is not faithful and has deviated from original in many occasions. If the responsibility of such a translation

to get it translated :

(ক) আদ্রী। জ্যার হাকিম গাচেরটক সাহেব, কত নাজা পাকুড়ি, তেরোনাং ফিরতি থাকে,—মাগে নাম কলি প্যাটের মদি হাত পা সেঁদায়,—এই সাহেবের সজি ঘোড়া চেপে ব্যাড়াতি এয়েলো ! বই মানসি ঘোড়া চাপে।—কেশের কাকী ঘরের ভাণ্ডারি সঙ্গে হেসে কথা কয়লো, তাই নাকে কত নাজা দেলে, এ তো জ্যার হাকিম ।

(খ) তৃতীয়। মুই টিকিরি জোন পাটে খাই। মুই কজামশার সলা শুনে নীল কলার না, বলি তো খাটবে না, তবে মোরে গুলোমে পোরুলে ক্যান।—তানার সেমনতোনের দিন ঘুনিয়ে এসুতেছে, ভেবেলাম এই হিড়িকি পাটে কিরু পুঁজি করবো, করে সেমনতোনের সমে পাঁচ কুটম্বর খবর নেব...

(গ) রাখাল। সায়েব তোমার নীলির চারায় নাকি পোকা ধরেছে ?

পতী। ভোর মাখনের গি ধরক, আটকুড়ির বেটা, মার কোল ছেড়ে বাও, যমের বাড়ী যাও, কলমিখাটার বাও।—(নীলদর্পণ)।

work goes to the shoulder of Madhusudan that would be an insult for him as well as for the man of genius of Bengal. We believe, his name was included by the interested parties, to glorify the English edition of the drama.

It will not be out of place to point out here that by saying inaccurate or unfaithful translation, we do not mean a better translation but what we mean is as accurate a translation as the original. But here, in the translation, many words and sentences are translated in such a way which carry different meaning than what are stated in the original. The English is not unsmart but not faithful to the original. The errors and mistakes in the translation, have crept in, we believe, owing to translator's ignorance of local history and dialect. Even though it created a sensation for its contents.

General Argument

Now, let us examine Bankimchandra's opinion. Because it is he who first circulated the name of Michael as the translator of "Nil Durpan". He said further that by translating this book Michael Dutt was privately reprimanded and humiliated and had to give up his job in the Supreme Court.

It is here one should not forget that Madhusudan got the employment with an endeavour of K. C. Mitra, in the Police Court, on 4th August 1856, as a clerk. Soon after, in 1858, he was promoted to head-clerk-cum-interpreter there. He was not happy in his work. Thus, he began to study law for a better opening in life. Simultaneously, he was venturing for a first-class employment and was trying to go abroad. In his search for a better job, he had to apply for the post of a Magistrate in Cooch-Bihar in response to an advertisement. He applied in the following language: "My dear Raja Sahib,—I see an advertisement in the "Englishman" in which your Highness wants a Magistrate. Allow me to offer my services

to you. Your Highness knows that I have been for several years connected with Calcutta Police and understand criminal matters pretty well..... Your Highness must know that I shall have to sacrifice my prospects here if I go up to your country, and the offer must be tempting enough to induce me to do so, I shall undertake to give you such a Police-Establishment throughout your principality in one year, that your Highness will win the praise of the British Government.” 27th January, 1860.

This application was made only a year before the English translation of ‘Nil Durpan’ appeared. The book, it is obvious, was translated by the end of 1860. By April or May, 1861 the book came out and by July a legal proceeding started against the printers. In the full bench of the court, James Long declared, he is the editor and publisher of the book, and alone is responsible for any legal action. Forty days before the judgment of this case, which was first of its kind in India, Harischandra Mukhopadhyay, the editor of *Hindoo Patriot* died, on July 14, 1861. After his demise, Sambhuchandra Mukhopadhyay became the Managing Editor of *Patriot*, who left the job in November that year. Then Madhusudan was approached for editorship which offer he accepted and in January, 1862, or after five months of the judgment, he joined there. It is believed, he joined in this new assignment leaving behind his existing service of Police Court. He “loved and valued (Harish) the man” because “of all men now living he has exercised the greatest amount of influence over the educated classes of our countrymen.....”⁸ writes Michael Madhusudan. It is a mis-statement by Bankim as he says Madhu lost his service and was censured in secret for translating “Nil Durpan.” It should not be forgotten that Madhu wanted

7. Quoted from “*Madhu-Smriti*”, by Nagendranath Shome.

8. Quoted from “*Sahitya Sadhak Charitamala : “Madhusudan”*”, Brojen-dranath Bandyopadhyay, Calcutta.

a change from his service in the Police Court and by the time he got a new opening, he won the case which was continuing for years with his relatives. Being cheered with the success he was getting ready for abroad. He was busy too with his creative works. So, he could not stick to *Hindoo Patriot* particularly because he did not get his salary in time. Thus Jotindra Mohan Tagore writes to him—"I know you can much profitably employ your time by devoting it to the Muses, but I know also that with your facility of diction a contribution of two or three articles to this "Patriot" during the whole course of a week cannot much interfere with your other literary occupations...some new arrangements are being made very shortly which, it is expected will place the "Patriot" finances in a much healthier condition; and if after the expiration of another month or so you do not find the managers more regular in their dealings with you, I will not trouble you with this subject again."⁹ In connection with his going abroad Madhusudan had written to Rajnarayan Basu, at the end of 1861: "Have you heard that I have won my Kidderpur-house case. The whole claim has been decreed except in the matter of my mother's jewels...". In another letter he had written to the same friend of his, sometime in January 1862, "I suppose, my poetical career is drawing to a close. I am making arrangements to go to England to a study for the Bar and must bid adieu to the Muse!..."¹⁰. Madhusudan resigned from the *Hindoo-Patriot* in April and on June 9 that year, he sailed for England. He wrote to Rajnarayan on 4th June, 1862: "You will be pleased to hear that I have completed my arrangements, and, God willing, purpose starting, on the morning of the 9th instant, per the Steamer "Candia".

There are many ups and downs in the life of Madhusudan. He came back to India after about five years,

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

being a Bar-at-Law, in 1867. Here he practised for some time as an advocate, in the High Court and then left the Bar or independent business for joining in the service of the Judicial Department in 1870. This time he was posted as an Examiner in the Translation Department of the Privy Council of the High Court after about nine years of 'Nil Durpan' case. During this time, his service was sought for by the Supreme Court. Prior to this service he was employed in Police Court for about six years from 1856 to 1861. About this new appointment *The Englishman* wrote an editorial on June 13—"The appointment of Mr. M. S. Datta, Barrister-at-Law, to the post of Examiner of the Privy Council Records in the High Court, appears from every point of view quite unobjectionable. The duties pertaining to this office are of great importance, and can only adequately be discharged by an officer of approved ability and high professional character. A better choice therefore could hardly have been made, nor would be easy to find another Native gentleman so thoroughly intimate with English language."¹¹

From the above mentioned points one is satisfied to the fact that during the time when the translation of *Nil Durpan* was in progress, Madhusudan was an employee of the Police Court and not in the Supreme Court. Further, Bankim's remark, "by translating this book Madhusudan was privately reprimanded and humiliated, and had to, it is learnt, gave up his means of livelihood—his job in the Supreme Court" is contrary to the available facts. In all probability, he left the service of the Police Court not only to become the editor of *Hindoo-Patriot* or for getting ready for England, but also for his nationalist spirit which got tremendous momentum following Harish's death, Long's imprisonment and many other awakening movements

11, Ibid.

in the country then. Under the circumstances, we are afraid, we cannot hold the same opinion with Bankim. If Madhusudan had to lose the job for translating the book, then when again he was appointed to the post of Examiner in the Privy Council Records in the High Court, a more responsible job, *The Englishman*, which paper instituted the case, should not have written such an editorial note in his praise as well as in praising the decision of the Government but have condemned both.

Shibnath Shastri said, "so far as I remember, the book was translated by Madhusudan Dutt and Padri Long published the book in his own name". While writing from memory he too was a prey of error thus was obliged to give a wrong statement. The book was not published in the name of Padri Long.

In fact, the name of the publisher was not printed with the book. It was when the libel suit instituted against the printer, Rev. Long took up the responsibility on himself just to save some persons whom the planters and their fellow travellers wanted to punish that way. Thus with due regard to Shibnath Shastri we regret very much being unable to accept his statement also.

As we have doubt about the authenticity of Bankim and Shibnath Shastri's statement, so we doubt L. C. Mitra. We will also mention in the appropriate place as to why we discount the story of translation of the book in a solitary night by a single person.

Next, we come to Brojendranath Bandyopadhyaya. He, quoting Long's introduction,—“both the original and translation are *bona fide* Native productions”, says, “this Native is no other person than Michael Madhusudan.” He also quotes Bankimchandra in his support. We have already said why we hesitate to sail with Bankim. Now let us see why we cannot agree with Brojendranath also.

Brojendra has two supporters,—Bankim and Long. We

have said why we differ from Bankim. We will now come to Long and quoting his inconsistent statement will argue why his statement in the introduction can be accepted not as a fact but as an incidental and side remark.

Although Long claimed the translation as a *bona fide* native production, yet elsewhere, he said, "my interest in rural population, called my attention to the vernacular press of India, its uses and defects, as well as its being an exponent of the native mind and feeling. It is in connection with the latter branch of my labours that I appear here today as publisher of Nil Durpan, which I edited with the view of informing Europeans of influence of its contents as giving Native popular opinion on the indigo question. This work (the English translation) *was not got up at the suggestion of Natives, or even with their knowledge*"¹² Even though he allowed to go the printer's line 'translated from Bengali by a Native' and could claim it as 'a *bona fide* native production.' We place these two statements of James Long, it is now left with the readers to decide which portion of Long's statement they are going to accept.

Furthermore, Mr. Seton-Karr, C.S. said in the Court that "the book was translated with my sanction and knowledge, as some persons were desirous of seeing it in an English form".¹³ It suggests that the issue was public when the translation was made.

When the book was translated it was not known that such a suit will be forthcoming, particularly when the top civilians were interested in it. Dina-bandhu was habituated in remaining anonymous for his writings from the start of his literary career

12. Rev. James Long's Statement before the Full Bench of the Supreme Court on July 24, 1861.

13. Seton-Karr's statement in the Court on July 24, 1861.

and Rev. Long too had to observe certain formalities as a missionary.¹⁴ So he too was unable to divulge his name. But Madhusudan had neither any risk, nor was in the habit of using a penname. If so, why Madhusudan decline to put his name as the translator, if he had done so? It is unlikely to his character too. In fact, Dinabandhu had some risk, yet, when his name licked out as author of the drama, he did not object to that. Even when Long was punished, Dinabandhu wanted to relieve him, if that was possible, taking all the responsibility of the drama on his own shoulder. And for all these he did not suffer. His sufferings in the service was for a different reason which

14. For unavoidable reason Long observed certain formalities by not printing the real name of the translator and the publisher, Dinabandhu too choosed to remain anonymous because of his traditional habit. He might also thought that great harm would come to him if his authorship came to light, particularly the Englishmen, whom he served, were great friends of Indigo planters, and he too, in his official work, had to come in constant touch with the planters. So James Long remain in disguise with the skin of 'a Native' and Dinabandhu in the gurb of 'a Traveller'. Even though James Long was not saved. Till Bankim came forward with the news of Madhusudan's association with "Nil Durpan" everybody knew that it was translated by James Long. After eleven years of "Nil Durpan" trial, on December 20, 1872, *The Englishman* wrote an editorial in connection with the play "Nil Durpan" held in Calcutta on December 21st. "A Native paper tells us that the play of *Nil Durpan* is shortly to be acted at the National Theatre in Jorasanko. Considering the Revd. Mr. Long was sentenced to one month's imprisonment for *translating the play*, which was pronounced by the High Court a libel on Europeans, it seems strange that Government should allow its representation in Calcutta, unless it has gone through the hand of some competent censor." The Theatre authorities wrote a letter in reply to *The Englishman* which appeared there on 23rd December, where it was said that the libellous part of the drama are omitted, from the play. When *The Englishman* could write an editorial against the drama after eleven years, how could it write another editorial one and a half years ago of this editorial, in praise of one who, it is alleged, was the translator?

we have discussed while saying about Dinabandhu in the introductory article of this book.

The story about the secrecy in respect of the English translation of "Nil Durpan" has been contradicted by no less a person than Mr. Seton-Karr.¹⁵ He says in the court, "I contend that the very fact of circulation under official frank shews that no secrecy was attempted or intended beyond the unavoidable secrecy of the Post Office. Had it been intended, as has been stated, to stab reputations in the dark, it would have been comparatively easy to have circulated a number of copies by the ordinary postage, which mode could have afforded no clue whatever as to the sender... As a bare fact, the impress of the Government frank must, I contend, disprove the charge of a wish to culminate in secret, and of any underhand proceeding". If this was the intention of the Government, may we ask a supplementary question, as to what was the reason of Madhusudan's going to exile if he was the translator? Or what was the reason of his maintaining secrecy in respect of his translation? As far as we know Madhusudan had no secret thing in his life. He was vocal in everything even on his private affairs. Thus he could write to his friend that Henriata was not his married wife, he lived with her as husband and wife. He was also vocal on Ramnarayan Tarkalankar's recasting his 'Sermistha'. He wrote to Gourdas—"I did not wish Ram Narayan to recast my sentences—most assuredly not. I only requested him to correct, gramitical blunders, if any. You know that a man's style is the reflection of his mind, and I am afraid there is but little congeniality between my friend and my poor-self... In matters literary, old boy, I am too proud to stand before the world, in borrowed clothes. I may borrow a neck-tie or even a waist-coat, but not the whole suit." He was also vocal about his drinking habit. He wrote to Rajnarayan—"...Talking about wine and all

15. Seton-Karr's statement in the court, compiled by J. Ghosal as "Celebrated Trials in Indigo," 1902.

vicious indulgences, though by no means a saint and teetotal prude, I never drink when engaged in writing poetry ; for if I do, I can never manage to put two ideas together !”¹⁶ A person of this nature cannot observe silence or maintain secrecy about his translation work—which is, undoubtedly, a part of his literary activities.

Further points may also be brought forward. As long as Madhusudan was alive nobody said that the translation was made by him. After his death many obituary notices appeared from different parts of India and abroad but not a single paper mentioned that Madhusudan translated “*Nil Durpan*”. Neither any of his intimate friends like G.D. Basak, Rajnarayan Basu, Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya ever said anywhere about this. One Mr. Manmathanath Ghosh raised this point in a short note in “*Prabasi*”, a Bengali monthly, in Magh, 1363 B.S. But nobody could satisfactorily reply to his queries and hence his points stand good even today.

Then again, the most authentic biography of Madhusudan, “*Jiban-Charit*”, was written by Jogendranath Basu. Jogendranath collected materials for his book from Rajnarayan, Gour Das Basak, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Jotindramohan Tagore, Bholanath Chandra, Rajendralal Mitra, Keshab Chandra Gangopadhyay and from all available sources. But, he is silent about this important translation work. This is strange and a strong point in favour of those who hold the view contrary to the existing one.

But Nagendranath Shome in his “*Madhu-Smriti*” has written that ‘he got the report from the house of Taraknath Ghosh of Sukea Street, Calcutta that Madhusudan had translated the drama in a solitary night’s sitting over there. Somebody was reading the original and he was

16. Quoted from *Madhusudan Granthabali* ed. by Brojendranath Bandyopadhyay and Sajanikanto Das, *Bangiya Sahitya Parishat*, Calcutta. 1347 B.S.

translating the book forthwith'. This has no proof. Yet, he has mentioned it in his book which point he too avoided first when serially writing the biography in *Bharatbarsha*. Anybody who knows the job of translating from one language to another will immediately say that it is physically impossible to get such a book, as under study, translated faithfully by a person in a solitary night's effort.

Moreover in the libel suit great many details were discovered and discussed but not even for a time Madhusudan's name came there. Why?

Then again, the English style* of the translation differs from the style and diction of Madhusudan. It is another great point. The people who said Madhusudan translated "*Nil Durpan*", are well aware of this. Hence they have circulated the story that the translation work was done in a solitary night which is the reason why many inaccuracies have crept into the work. It is an unintelligent statement and silly too. For hurried work such a distinguished person as Madhusudan will undertake inaccurate and inadequate translation is an ill-conceived idea.

This was created in order to save the reputation of Madhusudan. It is not a convincing story, particularly when for printing the manuscript of 120 pages, from a well reputed press, it took more than five months time, yet the publisher could not allow the translator more than a night for translation work—is a weak point of the story. Everybody knows that Madhusudan always wanted to improve his writings. For the improvement of his writings he sought opinions and constructive criticism from his friends. Thus he writes to Rajnarayan—"I am not a man to put out by any amount of adverse criticism—" and he honoured criticisms. He writes to Rajnarayan again—"you will find your criticism has not fallen on barren

* Madhusudan's English style is too well-known and hence no example from his writings is necessary here.

ground. In the present work you will see nothing in the shape of 'Erotic-Similies'¹⁷. A person having this aptitude of mind cannot be satisfied with a translation once for all and should not like that's print without checking and re-checking.

How the translator allowed it to print that way but of checking his translation or correcting proof-sheet for a second time, is something which cannot be explained with reason at a time, when, we know that, the manuscript was sent to the press from time to time. That means, even if the translation work was hurriedly done, the publisher and the translator had sufficient time at their disposal to check, revise and improve the translation of that part which were sent to press later.

Internal Evidences

We quote below certain modification as well as inaccuracies from first English edition to the third Indian edition. Here we have followed the text of third Indian Edition. Because the book is designed for a wide reader.

The Present and third Indian Edition

Act I Sc. I

P. 9.....and your holdings
are well nigh gone.

P. 11.....Nobin. I said,
"Saheb as you engage
all our men....."

Act I Sc. II

P. 12. Ray (Laying down
his plough)

P. 14. (i) Reboti...Have you
kept only the plough
and this beating (*marpit*) ?

Second Indian Edition

and your relatives are on
the point of forsaking you.

Nobin. I said, "Saheb as
you engage all your men"...

Ray (Holding his plough)

Untranslated

17. Ibid.

Present and third Indian Edition

- (ii) He (i. e. Ray) had
just laid down the
plough, and all
this beating !

Act I Sc. III

- P. 16.....and to take away
his holdings which were
royal gifts.
P. 18.....what to speak of
nine bighas.

Act I Sc. IV

- P. 21. People say two
sister-in-laws never
agree.
P. 22. Nicely understood
indeed.
P. 23. Let alone a Paiche
...Does it fit in ?
P. 24. Sarolata. But her
belly.....bulged.
P. 26. Reboti...When our
males go out to the
fields.
P. 26they will do it
more when they are
infatuated.
P. 27.Lady imprison-
ment has been made
sterile.

Act II, Sc. I

- P. 29. Are we devoid.....
salt to eat.
P. 29. And the feet of the
filth-eater.....the ox.
P. 29. ...and work on com-
mission.....influence of
the Babus.

Second Indian Edition

.....and to take away the
iron crow from the Govern-
ment.

Untranslated.

People may say whatever
they choose to one whom
they do not like.

Very well.

Untranslated.

Untranslated.

When our males go to
dinner outside.

they cannot commit this
before one's eyes.

the wretch has aggravated
this imprisoning.

Untranslated.

And the feet of the horse
.....the ox.

.....and keep men under
me. When I heard about
the plan which our master

*Present and Third Indian
Edition*

- P. 29-30.....shall be able...
pregnancy.
- P. 30. I went to that
Andrabad once.
- P. 30. Ha ! Just as the
Magistrate.....Moyana.
- P. 30. Don't be overjoyous.
- P. 30. There is a saying
“...slips with her son-in-
law.”
- P. 30. I cannot understand
.....the Magistrate of
the other Zillah.
- P. 31.the spectre of
Indigo
- P. 31. Why have they bro-
ught this brother-in-law
here ?
- P. 31. He does not under-
stand a thing.
- P. 31.the following
verse :
- P. 31. So the Indigo Saheb
.....blue devil.
- P. 31.Forming such
verses.
- P. 31.hear another
verse.

Second Indian Edition

formed, I immediately
refused to take any indigo
business in my hand, say-
ing I shall never work for
that.

.....and shall be able to
attend to my friend.

I went to Andrabad once
or twice.

Untranslated...

My heart overflows with
joy.

Untranslated.

I cannot understand whe-
ther they have found fault
with the Magistrate of this
or the other Zillah.

.....the great burden of
Indigo.

Why have you brought
this my brother here ?

Untranslated.

.....the following sentence.

So the Indigo of the Indigo
factory is an instrument of
punishment.

Forming such sentences.

.....hear another sentence.

*Present and Third Indian
Edition*

P. 31. What a composition!
But what is really
meant by "Destroyed
the caste?"

P. 31. Torapa repeating
the words of the Second
Ryot.

P. 32. I am a ryot of a
different village. How...
offered me?

P. 32. When my youngest
child had a fever.

P. 32. How many bighas
have they thrust on you
this year?

P. 32. Why not cultivate...
help in the cultivation.

Act II. Sc. III

P. 38. Oh, to think of the
club...proved my last.

P. 38. Her eyes immediately

P. 39. I shall pass by your
shop.

P. 41.they brought me
from the field ;

Second Indian Edition

Aola Nochen has composed
"Destroyed the cast ;" what
is it?

Second Ryot.

I am become the inhabitant
of three villages at once.
I came away to Svaropur,
and through the advice of
Bose, I threw away the
advance which was offered
me.

When my young child was
sick.

How many bighas have
they given you this year?

If you can cultivate the
whole village ; and we do
not refuse to give the
village.

As to that preparation
which Ray made, had it
not been caught by Sadhu
she would have been
proved with food and clothing
for life.

His eyes immediately,
I shall pass by your house

.....they brought me to the
field.

*Present and Third Indian
Edition*

- P. 42. Had not my brother
caught hold of me.
P. 43. To such a family...
Tarkalankar ? (Takes
snuff)

Act III. Sc. I

- P. 43.you do not care
.....notice.
P. 44.his barns are all
become empty.
P. 45.the four rascals
...or your evidence.
P. 46. Chunder Goldar.....
taken any advance.

Act. III. Sc. II

- P. 50. I received your last
letter and noted the
contents thereof. Be it
known.....well being.
P. 51. If on account...my
father is imprisoned.
P. 52. Having brought one
who now belongs to
another family.
P. 52. Sabitri. What has
happened ?
Reboti. My Khetro-
moni.....celebrating it.
Sabitri. What misfor-
tune ?

Second Indian Edition

Had not my brother caught
hold of us.

Untranslated.

.....don't bring anything
to my notice.

.....his magazines are all
become empty.

.....the four rascals were
thrown into prison only by
making your evidence
strong.

.....the new habitation,
and the taking of advances
of Chunder Goladar are
not allowed here.

I received your last letter
and was much pleased
with reading of your good
fortune.

If on account...there be a
delay.

Having brought one of a
strange caste.

Untranslated.

Untranslated

*Present and Third Indian
Edition*

Act III. Sc. III

P. 54. Right in our pre-
sence our.....shown
any compassion ?

P. 54. I like women more
..... drag her down to
me ?

P. 54-57. Podi. Khetro-
many, my sweet.....
Nobin.....Your where-
abouts now.

P. 57-58. When the ryots
abscond.....go to ruins.

Act IV. Sc. I

P. 61. Leaving their wives,
.....prostitutes.

P. 64.I am writing
with my finger, not
with my ears.

P. 66. This amount was
had by selling the jew-
ellery.

P. 66. They have seen paid
elsewhere.

Act IV. Sc. II

P. 66. Whoever wants any
sum you will give him
that.

Act IV Sc. III

P. 72.and as they had
.....godown again ?

Second Indian Edition

Untranslated.

Untranslated.

Untranslated.

When your destiny shall
decide you shall have to
enter the factory of the
Tomb.

They lead astray married
women ; and then they
themselves enjoy their
houses and everything else.
I am not writing from
hearsay.

This money they will give
by selling ornaments.

Have not they got some-
thing as their own ?

Whoever wants any sum
I will give him that.

.....and as I had taken the
advance what reason is

*Present and Third Indian
Edition*

Second Indian Edition

- there for going to his
godown.
We must be sharp.
- P. 72. I shall have to examine the dead body a little.
Act V. Sc. I
- P. 73. Even the Governor takes off his hat, while coming to meet him. Untranslated.
- P. 74.the news of Goluk Bose. the news of Nobin.
- P. 74.It is you who are drawing the venom out of me Untranslated.
- P. 74.they are the blacksmiths.....bathe therein for relief
.....they themselves are the blacksmiths and at the same time the cimetres; where they make one to fall there they themselves also fall. If ruin come upon these Sahebs' factories, then the people of the village save themselves by bathing.
- P. 75.Poda caste of spearmen.Poda caste of (Surki) brickpowder-makers or seller to bring any surki-walla.
- P. 75.to bring any spearman.to bring any surki-walla
- P.observe the tillageobserve the preparation of the rice.
- Act V. Sc. II
- P. 82. The eldest Babuinvolved. The Eldest Babu had once saved these from hands of robbers.

<i>Present and Third Indian Edition</i>	<i>Second Indian Edition</i>
P. 84. Saying so much... .. child of five.	Untranslated.
P. 88.else I would have fallen at thy feet. Act V. Sc. III	else, why shall I fall at thy feet ?
P. 92. My waist is pricked by a tangrafish.	...a cracked trangrah, Ah Ah
P. 95. Had Dushasan the doctor been called .	Had the doctor been of a hard heart...

It has already been pointed out that the above modifications were done by the editor of the third Indian edition and we have followed him in *to-to* here. Yet it has to be mentioned that while doing modification the above quoted editor could not do justice in all cases. As for example, *na mora Barabur nun khai ni* (2nd Act. 1st Sc.) was not translated in the first edition, and in the third edition it is translated as "And has not our eldest Babu gave us salt to eat". It should have been : Are we not indebted to our eldest Babu, can we be untrue to his salt ? Likewise the original translator could not translate the word *surkiwalla* in page No. 15 but in page No. 75 he had translated the word as (i) brick-powder makers as well as (ii) *surkiwalla* (Spearman). It suggests that the translator was familiar with both the native meaning of the word. This point was also raised in the Court, yet the editor of the third Indian edition has corrected the word in its proper meaning. So, for *tamakporar kota* the original translator had used the words (i) *huka* and (ii) *ashes of tobacco*. In spite of his attempt of modification it is possible to trace out more than hundred inaccuracies and slipshods which betray Bengali original and some convey their opposite meanings. This may be multiplied by a more minute reader. For reason of space we have not been able to incorporate all those inaccuracies here but a limited few (23 in number) are given under, as example

of altogether unrepresentative translation of brilliant colloquialism of Bengali original. The purpose for this is to point out how far it has diviated from the original and not to suggest any improvement upon the translation as that is beyond our intention.

*Translated as**Should have been*

1. পূর্ব মাঠেব ধানি আমি কয়খানায় নীল না বুনি, (১ম অঙ্ক, ১ম দৃশ্য)
If we do not cultivate our rice fields with indigo (p. 10) If we do not cultivate eastern plots of rice fields with indigo
2. হাম দেখেগা শালা কেস্তারে রুপেয়া লেয় (১ম অঙ্ক, তৃতীয় দৃশ্য)
I shall see, how that braggart takes the advances from me (p. 16) I shall see how that braggart realised money from me
3. দাদনের টাকা নিবি হুই, চাষ দিতি হবে মুই (ঐ)
You must take money in advance, you must cultivate the land (p. 18) You will take money in advance but I will cultivate the land, how it can be ?
4. যা ন্যাকে নিতি চাচ্ছে ন্যাকে দে (ঐ)
Let them take what they can (p. 19) Let them have in writing what they want you to write
5. আহা উহার পরিবারের মনে কি ক্লেশ হইতেছে (ঐ)
Oh ! what pains his family is suffering (p. 20) Oh ! what anguish his wife is suffering
6. আমি কি তামাক পোড়ার কটোটা আনি নি (১ম অঙ্ক, ৪র্থ দৃশ্য)
Have I not brought with me my huka (p. 22) Have I not brought with me my tobacco-dust box ?
7. ঠাকরণ গেল হাটে মহাশয়কে আনতে বলছিলেন, তা তিনি পান নি (ঐ)
At the last market day, my mother-in-law sent for it, but that was not got (p. 21) At the last market day, my mother-in-law asked my father-in-law to buy it, but that was not available
8. মোরে বাউ দিতি চেয়েলো (ঐ)
He even wanted to give me a daughter-in-law (p. 23) He wanted to give me such an ornament as *Bauti*

*Translated as**Should have been*

9. ছোট বয়ের মত পাগল আর দুটি নাই (ঐ)

I have never saw a greater
fool than this our youngest
Bou (p. 23)

I have not seen a seconp
one who is as innocent as
our yongest Bou

10. আবার কলুবাড়ী দিয়ে তেল নিয়ে যাব তবে সঁজু জ্বলবে (ঐ)

I shall buy some oil from
the shop ; then there will be
light in the house (p. 28)

Now I shall have to procure
oil from oil-mill, then the
evening lamp will be light-
ed in my dwelling house

11. পোদারের বাড়ীতে রেখে টাকা জোগার কর (৩য় অঙ্ক, ২য় দৃষ্ট)

Try to procure money from
a banker (p. 47)

Try to procure money from
the Poddar (Note: Poddar =
pawn broker) by pawing
ornaments

12. তোমাকে কাতর দেখিলে আমার প্রাণ কাঁদিতে থাকে (ঐ)

My dear when I see you
weep, my life itself weeps
(p. 49)

When I see you in suffering
my heart bleeds

13. আমি বুনোপাড়া ছাড়ুয়ে গ্যালাে তবে ছেড়ে তুই দৌড় দিবি (ঐ, ৩য় দৃষ্ট)

When I go past the area of
pig raisers, you let the
Saheb go and run to your
safety (p. 57)

When I get past the dwell-
ing places of the Bunos (Note:
Bunos are a tribal group),
you will run to your safety
letting off the Saheb

14. এমন বসগার ও বেছান্নর কস্তি চাস (ঐ)

Do you want to show such
ill-usage and bad conduct
(to these Boses) (p. 57)

Do you want to ruin even
such people as the Boses

15. এ দেহে অন্নজল দেব না (ঐ)

I shall not give rice and
water to my body (p. 59)

I shall not take food or
drink for myself

16. একজন টিকিরি (৪র্থ অঙ্ক, ১ম দৃষ্ট)

One is of Tikiri caste (p. 64)

One has come from a class
of day labourers (Note :
there is no caste as Tikiri)

- | <i>Translated as</i> | <i>Should have been</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17. তোমাকে আর বলবো কি (৪র্থ অঙ্ক, ২য় দৃশ্য) | |
| What more shall I do now
for you (p. 66) | What more can I say be-
sides this |
| 18. সোনারটান ছেলে উপার্জন করিতেছে (ঐ) | |
| His good son is making
some acquisition of pro-
perty (p. 68) | His jewel of a son is earn-
ing now |
| 19. বুঝকাঠ গলায় বন্ধন করে কালেজ যাওয়া আমা ভাল দেখায় না (ঐ) | |
| It does not seem good for
him now to go and come
from the college looking,
with his books under his
arms, like a bull yoked to
the plough (p. 68) | It does not look nice for him
to come college when it is
about time to erect for him
the stake to which the bull
of the <i>Sradh</i> ceremony is
tied |
| 20. মগের মুলুক আর কি (১ম অঙ্ক, ১ম দৃশ্য) | |
| What more is the Burmese
(Mug) power (p. 26) | It is as if we are under the
Mugs. (Note : <i>Mugermulluk</i> ;
state of anarchy) |
| 21. ছ মাস ফাঁসি যেতাম (২য় অঙ্ক, ৩য় দৃশ্য) | |
| Hanged for six months
(p. 42) | Prepared to suffer impri-
sonment for six months |
| 22. বাড়া ভাতে ছাই | |
| Ashes in the Readymade
rice (P-20) | Ashes on the rice ready for
distribution |
| 23. আমি পাগল ছাগল আছি (৫ম অঙ্ক, ১ম দৃশ্য) | |
| I am as a mad goat (p. 74) | I am a half-wit |

We will no more tax the brain of a reader by quoting more slipshods. But in order to draw the attention of our readers to another point we quote a portion from the Court proceedings. It is claimed in the court that "Possibly the defendant would say that he was only the translator, and not responsible for the opinion expressed in the pamphlet, but he would be prepared to shew that no Native translated the pamphlet ; the errors and misinterpretation were too gross and serious to

admit of any doubt on that point. One word he would particularly call their attention to ; Soorki was interpreted to mean brick-dust-makers, whereas it must have been known to any Native to mean spearmen. This was only one of the many similar errors. It shewed that no Native could have been the translator" (p. 106).

Concluding Remarks

With all these there is every reason to believe that the translation of the book was not done by a single person. Different persons have translated the book and in their so doing the same word is translated in different ways. If not, we cannot give credit to same person for both the correct and inaccurate translation for the same piece. If we accept this as a translation of a group rather than an individual work, it might not be difficult to accept the story that the book was translated in a solitary night. In hurried translation, they have left out many portions, as for example, উসকী হিসাবে দোরস্ত করে রাখ or মাদ্রির ভার নেয়েত্তের হেই বড় মিষ্টি লেগেছে, তাই চোসছেন, তাই চোসছেন and so on. The present Editor has not been able to solve the riddle as to who is the real translator of the book. If any reader comes forward to trace the person he would be rewarded. As long as the points raised here are not properly answered, we are afraid being unable to agree with those who say that the book was translated by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Because :

- (a) the style of Madhusudan's English writing and English translation is very much wanting here ;
- (b) such misinterpretation, errors and altogether unrepresentation of brilliant colloquialism of the better parts of Bengali original cannot be done by Madhusudan ;
- (c) and other points we have already touched in our humble way where we cannot be guided by sentimentalism in our attempt to reach at the truth.

Introduction by the Editor

Nil Durpan hardly needs any words of introduction. It is "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of Bengal. The first drama saved the Bengalees from Indigo planter's sucking the blood of the peasantry while the second saved American Negroes from the slavery.* Apart from its dramatic quality, *Nil Durpan* is a rare socio-historical document. Both the original and its English translation appeared within five years after India's First War of Independence of 1857. People's thirst for liberty grew when the drama came out reflecting upon the social consciousness and socio-political upheaval in Bengal. It also portrays the rift and the division that occurred between the different classes of our class and caste-ridden society.

Indigo plantation not only caused active discontent amongst natives, but also it moved the more sympathetic section of the British in the then India and met with serious opposition from the thinking section of the administrations.¹ From the very beginning, the planters were opposed by the missionaries, and later on, by a section of the civilians. With the coming of the English edition of *Nil Durpan*, the planters got an opportunity to go to the court to teach their opponents a good lesson. In other words, Dinabandhu Mitra, who choose to remain anonymous, but soon was known as the author of the drama, and James

* With this drama the Negroes got the consciousness for a movement of complete Socio-political change, a total reversal of the old and stagnant for something new and better. The only way out for them is to destroy the white Establishment, the white culture, through an activist revolt, that will eliminate all whites, no matter whether they are racially biased or not; and all Uncle Toms, the compromising Negroes, no matter if they happen to be one's father, or brother, mother or sister. It is not a drama that speaks of a wholesale destruction, a complete blood-bath, that the radicals dream of bringing in the revolution, the "New World", the Black soul's glory and ecstasy.

1. Sinha, N. K. Economic History of Bengal: From Plassey to the Permanent Settlement, Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1956

Long who was, of late, known as the editor and publisher of the English edition of *Nil Durpan* supplied arms to the planters for satisfying their revenge. It is here, before we proceed to say anything about the drama, a few words about Dinabandhu and Rev. James Long are necessary.

II

Dinabandhu Mitra: Dinabandhu was born in the village of Chauberia of Nadia district in the month of *Chaitra* (April) in 1238 B.S. (according to Lalit Chandra Mitra in 1236 B.S.). Here the Jamuna, a small river, flows encircling this village, and hence is the name of the village, Chauberia².

Dinabandhu came of a respectable Kulin Kayastha family. His father's name was Kalachand Mitra. In his boyhood Dinabandhu was a naughty chap as any other Bengalee child. He had a pet name. It was Gandharba. Some called him, by shortening the name, *Gandha* (scent), others called *Durgandha* (bad smell) or *Thugandha* (Fie ! odour) by way of joke. By such callings, he sometimes got struck in heart, which he expressed to his mother. His mother replied to him, let those people say what they like, days will come when they will envy your fragrance. In course of time this prediction of his mother came to be truth. This Gandharvanarayan, when got admitted in the Calcutta school, changed his name to Dinabandhu³.

At a very young age Dinabandhu came down to Calcutta. He began to study in Hare school. From this school he moved to Hindu college in 1850. When he was a student there he began to write poems. In other words, his literary career starts then. His first poem was "Manab Charitra", it appeared in "Sadhu Ranjan" when he was a student.

2. Chattopadhyay, Bankimchandra—*Rai Dinabandhu Mitra Bahadurer Jibani-O-Granthabali* *Samalochana*, included in *Dinabandhu Granthabali* pub. by Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Calcutta, 1350-51 B.S.

3. Bandyopadhyay, Brojendranath, *Dinabandhu Mitra (Sahitya Sadhak-Charitamala, No. 19)*, Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, 1377 B.S.

He also wrote a legendary verse named 'Bijay-Kamini'. Bijay was the hero and Kamini, the heroine. After ten years he wrote the drama—*Nobin Tapaswini*' (1863). Here too the hero and the heroine bore the same names. In the poem the name of the poet was not given, instead, it was printed there that it is written by A Mitra (*Kashyachit Mitrashya*⁴). Soon he came in contact with Iswarchandra Gupta, the then guardian of Bengali literature, and Editor of *Prabhakar*. His next poem was a conversation between *Sumati* (A good turn of mind) and *Kumati* (A perverted mind). Next poem of his was 'Chandra' (Moon) where he used the pen-name of Di. ba. Mitra⁵. Then his poem, *Jamai Sasthi* or Son-in-law's Day (Sixth Day of the bright, half of the Bengali month Jaistha or June), appeared in *Sambad Prabhakar* on June 5, 1851 and May 25, 1852 respectively. This poem received high admiration from a wide section of readers. Again, on February 22, and 25, 1856, in prose and verse, he wrote on widow marriage that was aimed at Iswarchandra Vidyasagar as he was then struggling hard for imposing widow marriage among the Hindus. Necessary to bear in mind that, Bengali literature was then in a very poor state: *Prabhakar* was its best newspapers, and Iswarchandra Gupta was the best editor. He was, then, virtually reigning over Bengali literature⁶.

By getting encouragement and support of Iswarchandra Gupta, a good many writers and poets like Dinabandhu, Bankimchandra got a name in course of time. A large number of his disciples have, in his life time, taken to new paths, forgetting what Iswarchandra Gupta taught them. Dinabandhu was one among them. He, in later period, was devoted to dramas than poems.

Finishing school studies Dinbandhu got admitted in the Hindu College where he secured a scholarship. He got

4. *ibid*

5. *ibid*

6. Chattopadhyay, Bankim. *op. cit.*

scholarships time and again in his student life. He also appeared for teachership examination in 1853 for an employment in the Education Service and was passed there in 3rd grade. The next year (or 1854), he appeared for senior scholarship examination and was awarded a sum of Rs. 30.00 as his scholarship⁷. Yet in the next year, in 1855, when he was 25th years old, he had to left the college for domestic reason and accepted the service of the Post Master, Patna Post Office. Prior to this appointment in the Posts & Telegraphs Department, he, for a short period, worked as a teacher in the Hindu College, Calcutta and enjoyed reputation there not only as a teacher but also as one of the best students of the college.

As the Post Master, he used to get a monthly salary of Rs. 150. During this time great tortures of the planters were going on. In order to inform public about the tyranny of the planters, Harishchandra Mukhopadhyay came forward with his *Hindoo Patriot*. Simultaneously with Harish came Dinabandhu with his drama *Nil Durpan* and many others with open arms in the intellectual field. *Nil Durpan* was written at a time when the dramatist had only stepped to his 30s. In this drama he visualised fictitious names of the place and characters of the play in lieu of their real names. This was his old habit of utilizing pen-name as we have seen in his early poems⁸.

Dinabandhu was in Patna for a period of six months, and he worked there with reputation. A year and a half after he was given a lift. He was made the Inspecting Post Master of the Division of Orissa, but though there was a rise in his position, there was no rise in his salary⁹. It came later. This promotion had not been a blessing either for Dinabandhu or for the people and literature of Bengal. Formerly, the P. & T. Rules of Service required Inspecting Post Masters to tour about ceaselessly

7. Bandyopadhyay, Brojendranath, op. cit.

8. ibid

9. Chattopadhyay, Bankimchandra, op. cit.

in different areas and supervise the work of different Post Offices. Nowadays, they may, if so desire, stay at the Head Quarter for a period of six months¹⁰. From Orissa Division he was transferred to Nadia Division, and thence to Dacca Division. In this way, Dinabandhu, as a loyal employee, had to move all the twelve months of the year, halting at some place for a day, at another for two days, and still another for three days at the most. The works of such cyclic order for years, and the ceaseless labour he rendered, caused for the breakdown his health.

During his tours in many places, which in a way was a boon to him for his knowledge and experience, Dinabandhu came in touch with a stock of a great variety of human characters. It was by virtue of this experience he thus gained, he was able to create a variety of living characters in his dramas. It is for this, he was able to present *Nil Durpan* where partial life of the Indian peasantry is depicted. And it is for this experience he was further able to write different satirical and social dramas like *Biye Pagla Buro*, *Sadhabar Ekadashi*, *Lilabati*, *Jamai Barik* and others. It is written in the title of the latter drama that "Of all the blessings on the earth the best is a good wife; a bad one is the bitterest curse of human life."¹¹ With the publication of *Nil Durpan* Dinabandhu was placed among the dramatists of the rebellion group of the world, and as soon as his *Sadhabar Ekadashi* was out, he had established his permanent seat, according to the critics, in the domain of Bengali literature. The characters like Nimchand, Ghatiram, Naderchand, Hemchand, Lilabati, Jaladhar, Jagadamba, Mallika etc. are very much alive not only in his different dramas but also in the Bengalee society. His Torap, Kshetramany, Sadhu Churn, Boses, Sabitri, Ryots Amin, Podi etc. found in *Nil Durpan* are living characters and represent the rural people in their true perspective.

10. P. & T. Service Rules, Ministry of Communications, Govt. of India.

11. Dinabandhu Mitra. *Jamai Barik (Prahasan)*, Calcutta, Samvat 1929 (1872)

Troubles centering Indigo started long before Dinabandhu began to write, and it reached its peak during 1859-62. Prior to this, there were troubles with the peasants and planters for about eighteen years from 1830-48¹². As has already been pointed out, that, by travelling various places Dinabandhu acquired an intimate knowledge of the tyranny of the sons of the soil and about Indigo planters. With his field knowledge and petty-bourgeois consciousness he produced *Nil Durpan*.

Dinabandhu was perhaps aware that great harm may come to him if his authorship of *Nil Durpan* come to light, for those Englishmen whom he served were great friends of Indigo planters. Further, in course of his work at the Post Office he had to come in constant touch with Indigo planters. Their hostility might, therefore, cause him constant care and anxiety, if not injured his interests vitally. Dinabandhu knew all this, but he used to be deeply touched by the sufferings of others, and he did not refrain from giving publicity all about sufferers and others who cause them to suffer, in his *Nil Durpan*. Thus by this single book, which got a remarkable place in the history of Bengal, Dinabandhu has laid the Bengalees under great obligations. But unfortunately Dinabandhu could not continue this tradition in his future creations. He could not write a second drama of the *Nil Durpan* type, in future, although he could write other dramas on social protests. This is an adjustment in his life perhaps for leading a better life in the company of those who were powerful enough to do harm to the independent spirited people. This adjustment is also found in planning characters of his play which we will see latter. Presumably for this adjustment he was rewarded with the title Rai Bahadur.

However, within seven months of its publication *Nil Durpan* was translated into English and was sent to Eng-

12. Chakravarti, Sunil. *Unish Sataker Srenidvandva : Nil Darpaner Natya-dvandva* (off Print). "Natya Prasanga", Calcutta.

land. It was Rev. James Long who took the responsibility for its rendering into English from Bengali. The book was also translated into many of the European languages¹³ and came to be widely read. A very few work of Bengali literature could achieve this distinction. Yet, however great might be the distinction, all those who were connected with this work had to face some danger or other. It was for this translation, Rev. James Long courted imprisonment, Mr. Seton-Karr was punished departmentally and had to make lengthy apologies, and also Sir J. P. Grant, the then Lieutenant-Governor, was prosecuted and fined rupee one. The author was neither imprisoned nor punished from his job, yet, as said by Bankim, he suffered. This sufferings were for a different reason which we will see latter.

It is here one should remember that production of Indigo or Indicum Indigo in India was in vogue since ancient period. The East India Company started its plant in 1600¹⁴. The Company gained much in Indigo business. In 1779 huge sum was given to Indigo planters for further development of Indigo and Company left from the direct business. As soon as Indigo planters took over Indigo planting they started inhuman torture with the raiyats. In order to subdue them the then Government of Bengal issued a circular in 1810 (July 22) so that planters are stopped for forceful plantation. But this could not check the planters¹⁵. They were virulent.

13. Chattopadhyay, Bankimchandra. op. cit.

14. It is reported by Lalit Chandra Mitra, in *Purbakatha*, which is included in Dinabandhu Mitra's "Nil Durpan", published by Kar, Majumder & Company, Calcutta, that the English East India Company made an enormous profit from indigo in 1600-01. This profit was not made from indigo of Bengal. Indigo plantation starts in Bengal in between 1770-1780. It is claimed that Louis Bonnard, a Frenchman, was the first Indigo planter in India. Carol Blume asserted that he was the first person in that field. (For details see N. K. Sinha, op. cit. and Sankar Sen Gupta, 'A Survey of Folklore Study in Bengal' Calcutta 1967.)

15. Bose, Kumud Behari (Ed.). Indigo Planters and all about them.

Bearing great sufferings and brutal treatments of the planters, the peasants became furious. With the refusal of Government's protection, they wanted to guard themselves by taking the law in their own hands. They were violent. They began to hurt the planters with weapons and others and also burnt a factory. The Sahebs were confined, they couldn't go out of the factory to face the rebels. Even the Government officials were bad-handled. The planters were bewildered at the uprising of the peasantry for the time being. The then Governor gave due notice to this resistance movement of the raiyats. Lord Canning, the then Governor-General, too was deeply concerned.¹⁶ In order to know the reason of this peasant movement Government formed Indigo Commission on April 4, 1860. Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr was its Chairman. The report of the Commission appeared in the month of August that year.

The tortures of the planters, as appeared in the drama *Nil Durpan*, are no exaggeration than what was reported by the Commission.¹⁷ The only difference, the dramatist had given fictitious names of the planters, characters of the

16. Kling, B. B. *The Blue Mutiny*, Illinois (U.S.A.), 1964.

17. It is available from the Patna Judges Court Records that "Acts of violence...occasioned the death of natives, there were also illegal detention of the natives in confinement, specially in stocks"... "the illicit infliction of punishment by means of ration or otherwise on the cultivators or other natives" (Letter from Mr. G. Dowdeswell to Mr. H. Douglas). It is also gathered from Papers Relating to Indigo Cultivation that, "An advance of two rupees a *beegha* cannot justify the assertion of every sort of right, nor is it in any fair sense, a measure of ryots duty to labour or of the remuneration of his labour and of his expenses additional to his labour." It is written in the Records of the Civil and Session Judge of Nadia in 1853. Government's action against the planters may be known from the General Appendix to Report from Select Committee, 1832. It is written there—"In Dacca—Jelalpore 406 criminal cases were decided against the planters, and 232 in their favour, in Pabna 182 against them and 114 in their favour, in Nadia 312 against them and 193 in their favour and in Jessore 309 against them and only 37 in

drama and places of occurrence, but reality of atrocities of the planters were vividly reported in the play. And in the Report of the Commission, real name of the places, real characters etc. were documented. These were gathered from the peasantry by way of direct evidence. For example, the character of Kshetramani was true, but her name in the drama was imaginative. Indeed, Kshetramani of the drama was nobody but Huramani, a peasant girl, who, in flesh and blood, was known as one of the beauties of Nadia. The girl was kept in the bed chamber of Archibald Hills. The kind Magistrate of *Amranagar* was no other person than Mr. W. J. Herschel. It is written by L. C. Mitra in his "History of Indigo Disturbance in Bengal", that, it was believed all over India that one Huramani, a peasant girl, who was looked upon as one of the beauties of Krishnagar, was carried off one day while she was going to fetch water, by a planter's servant to the Kulchikatta factory. One Mr. Archibald Hills was then the Manager or *Chhota Saheb* of the factory under the general superintendence of Mr. J. Farlong. It was reported that he was present at the scene of occurrence and rode after the party. It was also alleged that Mr. Hills had kept her in his room till about 11-30 a.m. and had then sent her back in a *palki* (or palanquin) with closed doors. The story was told by the Rev. Bomwetsch before the Indigo Commission.¹⁸

This report was also published in *Hindoo Patriot*. Archibald Hills was charged for committing abduction on Huramani. Mr. Hills denied this and instituted a suit against Harish Mukhopadhyay, the editor of *Hindoo Patriot*. It is

their favour." Considering all these Lord Canning formed the Indigo Commission on April 1860 with Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, C. S. as Chairman. More details are available in "Selections from the Papers on Indigo Cultivation" by a Ryot, 2 Vols., Calcutta, 1860, "Indigo and its enemies" by Delta, Calcutta, 1860, "Report of the Proceedings of the East India Company in regard to the culture and manufacture of indigo in Reports and Documents connected with the Proceedings of EIC etc. London, 1836.

18. Indigo Commission Report, *Evidence*.

very difficult to porve such allegations, even if they are true. Yet Harish accepted the challenge, but unfortunately, when the case was in progress, he breathed his last, all of a sudden. The case was continued. Since Harish died a pauper for the cause of the country, his widow was compelled to compromise the case with Mr. Hill. Akshay Kumar Dutta too published such stories of inhuman activities of the planters in his *Tattobodhini Patrika*.

With his generous mind, Dinabandhu, the playwright, exhibited in graphic colours the horrors of the planters' oppression over the helpless raiyats of Bengal, how the poor peasantry was being cruelly ground everyday under the heartless system. His drama was, in fact, the mirror as its name 'Durpan' signifies. It is a full reflection of the oppressions and tortures practiced by the law breaking planters with the majority of the Establishment.

Indigo planters did not like the Indigo Commission which according to Mr. Wood of the drama is 'deadly'. When Act. XI of 1836 enacted renewing the special privileges of the Indigo planters and making them equally amenable with Indian to the jurisdiction of *muffasal* Civil Courts, the European Community rallied to protest the so-called 'Black Act.'¹⁹ In their opposition they also have secured the support of a few natives. Thus, we see, Raja Rammuhan, in his memorandum to the British Parliament had written that I have travelled in different districts of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and have also observed the living condition of the people. I am of the opinion that the standard of life of the people who reside near indigo factories are better than the people who stay away. Thus, as per Rammuhan, the planters have done many good things than doing bad.²⁰ And at a mass meeting of the Europeans, another native like Dwarakanath Tagore, the grand-father of the great poet Rabindranath, supported Europeans and said as to "how indebted the Indian

19. Kling, B. B. op. cit.

20. Parliamentary Papers to his Majesty's Service.

community was to non-official Europeans for its prosperity and progressive views."²¹ Here one should not forget, that, for reasons of Indigo and other business, different factory areas were developed as are developing these days with the development of industries and industrial estates, as a matter of course. This development was made because that was much needed for the Europeans' own interest. Therefore, it is useless to highlight the point that the Europeans developed some undeveloped areas by constructing roads and opening up avenues for jobs for natives and thereby prosperity. Jobs were created by them for smooth going of factory works and roads were constructed for availing of better and quick transport services to facilitate their business.

The turning point came in 1849, when, the Legal Member of the Governor-General's Legislative Council introduced measure designed to place European-muffasal residents under the jurisdiction of *muffasal Criminal Courts*. The earlier "Black Act" had made them subject only to civil jurisdiction of these courts. The European community, particularly the indigo planters, protested it vehemently.²² These are also touched in the play. Dinabandhu had the vision for sketching such reality as actually he saw and observed in different places where he moved round in connection with his service.

From Dacca division Dinabandhu again came to Nadia. Here, as a matter of fact, he was posted for the major part of his life. In Dacca, he printed *Nil Durpan* in 1860.* On his return from Dacca, he wrote *Nabin Tapaswini Natak*, which was printed in Krishnagore and

21. Mitra, Kishorrry Chand, "Memoirs of Dwarakanath Tagore". Calcutta, 1870.

22. Kling, B. B. op. cit, also see Mitra, Lalit Chandra, "History of Indigo Disturbances in Bengal with a full report of Nil Durpan Case". Calcutta, 1903.

* For point of information it may be said that there are a few regional writers who claim that the play 'Nil Durpan' originated at Serampore (Hooghly) in 1858 when he was a Post Master there. From

published in the year 1270 B. S. (1863). Toward the end of 1869 or the early part of 1870, he came away from Krishnagore to Calcutta, being appointed to a higher post, where his duty was to assist the Post Master General in his work. Meantime, he published the dramas like *Biye Pagla Buro*, a satire, in 1866, *Sadhabar Ekadashi*, a tragedy, in 1866, and *Lilabati*, a social drama, in 1274 B.S.

In 1871 Dinabandhu was sent to Cachar (mod. Assam) to make necessary arrangements for Postal Services during the Lushai War.²³ After discharging his duties successfully, he came back to Calcutta in a short time. By the time he was awarded the title 'Rai Bahadur', in May 1871, as we know from the Education Gazetteer 1278 B.S. After he received the title 'Rai Bahadur', he wrote "*Suradhuni Kavya*" in 1793 Sakabda (August, 1871), "*Jamai Barik*" in 1872, "*Kavita Dwadash*" in 1872 and "*Kamale Kamini Natak*" in 1873. Wherever he was posted, or whatever he wrote, he was successful. But, unfortunately, he did not receive rewards that a successful man ought to receive in appreciation of his work as well as of his ability.

Serampore Dinabandhu was transferred to Dacca and from Dacca, it is well-known, the book appeared in 1860. May be, the drama was visualized at Serampore, so this playwright could show his sympathy with the Christian Missionaries since he frequently visited Christian Mission during his service as Post Master there. But soon after he was transferred to Dacca and it is from this place the play came out. Even if we take it for granted that the structure or the plan of *Nil Durpan* came into author's mind at Serampore, it was fully bloomed with flesh and blood at Dacca and thereby the place of publication should, by all means, go to Dacca and not to Serampore. Although the Centenary Volume of Serampore Municipality claims that "দীনবন্ধু মিত্র মহাশয় ১৮৫৮ সালে নীলদর্পণ প্রকাশ করেন এবং এর রচনা স্থান হুগলী জেলার ঈরামপুর" (শতবর্ষ স্মারক-গ্রন্থ, ঈরামপুর পৌরসভা) It is an inaccurate statement. The book appeared in 1860 and not in 1858. The author of *Hooghly Zelar Itihas* too claims likewise, but, it is a book where one finds innumerable mistakes and errors in the garb of coloured nationalism. One can easily ignore the unsound opinion of this and similar other books and their authors in the cases where such a discrepancy arise, because, they are purblind for pungent regionalism and parochialism.

23. Chattopadhyay, Bankimchandra, op. cit.

Not to speak of reward, Dinabāndhu had to suffer many humiliations during the last days of his career. There was a quarrel between the Post Master-General and the Director-General of Postal Services. Dinabandhu's fault was that he helped the Post Master-General in his work²⁴. How he, a third party, suffered in the quarrel between the two European bosses is described in the editorial note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, on 6th November, 1873, after the death of Dinabandhu. *Amrita Bazar* wrote : "A few days before his death Babu Dinabandhu while in a bad state of health, told us that he was sure to die and its real cause was the party spirit which was rampant between Mr. Tweedie and Mr. Hogg. Will Government enquire into this matter ? Will it call upon Mr. Hogg to explain why was the Babu removed from the Supernumery Inspectorship of the Calcutta Post Office when he found some rest after 14 years hard life of a Postal Inspector and which he so well deserved, and compell to revert to his former post ? Why was it that the post thus vacated by Babu was filled up by two European Supernumerary Inspectors who were in every way inferior to him, but who draw double the pay that he used to get ? Why was not the privilege leave for which the Babu earnestly sought a few weeks before he become seriously ill granted him, although during his nineteen years' of meritorious service he had never availed himself for a single day's leave ? We distinctly remember to have heard him to say that he was denied the privilege of even common ettiquette, because he had the misfortune of once being a favourite of Mr. Tweedie,"²⁵ who was the Post Master-General while Mr. Hogg was the Director-General of Postal Services, a Superior to Mr. Tweedie. As a result of their quarrel, Dinabandhu was packed off to some other work, for a certain period, in the Railway Department,

24. Chattopadhyaya, Bankimchandra, op. cit.

25. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, Nov. 6, 1873.

and then, in Howrah Division. This was the last change in his long service life.

Anyway, it is for a long time that Dinabandhu had been suffering from a serious illness owing to excessive strain of work. He took to eating opium in a very small measure, and he said that it did him some good. But all of a sudden, in the month of Aswin of the year 1280 B.S. (1874 A. D.), he became bed-ridden with a boil. He had diabetes too. With all his diseases he breathed his last on 17 Kartick (1st November, 1873) 1280 B. S. when he was only 44 years of age.

It may be noted from Bankimchandra that Dinabandhu had no vanity. Neither had he any anger. "There was nothing about him that I did not know, but never did I find him in an angry mood. On several occasions I reminded him in a disapproving tone of the complete absence of anger in him with the result that he felt embarrassed that it was so. On being so reminded he made a great effort to feel angry and gave up, saying, 'Well, I fail', writes Bankimchandra about Dinabandhu. Bankim also writes that, "Dinabandhu never did one single dishonest act in his life. Not that his personality was particularly strong, and that was why he, at the request of his friends under the influence of undesirable association, was sometimes led into certain acts of a questionable character. But he never did anything which was wrongful or which might bring harm to others. Many had received the fruits of his bounty, and by his favour a good many people had secured their means of livelihoodand I may say with conviction that the friendship of man like Dinabandhu is a rare fortune in life. Those who have lost it would find their sorrow beyond description."²⁶ A friendly comment indeed !

With so much about Dinabandhu and the social condition of the then Bengal that enthused Dinabandhu to write such a drama as *Nil Durpan*, we should remember,

26. Chattopadhyaya, Bankimchandra. op. cit.

for a while, that, Dinabandhu had close relation with the Theatre Movement. The dramas he wrote were staged in different parts of the country time and again. It is with his *Nil Durpan* that the Public Stage of Bengal made its appearance in 1872. Natya Guru Girishchandra Ghosh, in order to pay his glowing tribute to him, called him the Architect of Public Stage²⁷. We will treat this point with a greater detail in the appropriate place.

It is necessary now to come to the study of the drama *Nil Durpan* which brought a great national awakening in India. Its performance was a memorable event in the history and development of Bengali stage. Although with *Nil Durpan* public stage came into existence in Calcutta (West Bengal) the honour of frequently staging the drama and thereby exposing to the public high-handedness of the oppressive Indigo-planters belonged, however, to the East Bengal stage or '*Purba Rangabhumi*' of Dacca. This organisation greatly helped the cause of national agitation that went all over Bengal from one end to the other. Prior to our further discussion on the drama proper that was instrumental for the development of the Bengalee stage and that had a distinct place in the field of the freedom struggle and uprising of the peasantry at large, we will say a few words about Rev. James Long. He deserves our attention for his service and sufferings in the hands of his own community for the cause of Indian peasantry, for the development of vernacular literature as

27. Ghosh, Girish Chandra in *Shasti Ki Shanti* (Punishment or Peace) writes by dedicating the book to Dinabandhu :

"নাট্যগুরু স্বর্গীয় দীনবন্ধু মিত্র মহাশয় চিহ্নরণে—

বঙ্গে রঙ্গালয় স্থাপনের জন্ম মহাশয় কর্মক্ষেত্রে আনিয়াছিলেন। ...যে সময় সম্বার একাদশী অভিনয় হয় সেই সময় ধনাঢ্য ব্যক্তির সাহায্য ব্যতীত নাট্যকর্তাদের একপ্রকার অন্তর্ভুক্ত হইত; কারণ পরিচ্ছদ প্রভৃতির যেরূপ বিপুল ব্যয় হইত তাহা নিব্বাহ করা সাধারণের সাধ্যাতীত ছিল। ... মহাশয়ের নাটক যদি না থাকিত, এই সকল যুবক মিলিয়া 'ছাসানাল থিয়েটার' স্থাপন করিতে সাহস করিত না। সেই নিমিত্ত আপনাকে রঙ্গালয়ের অষ্টা বলিয়া নমস্কার করি "(শান্তি কি শাস্তি)।

well as for the introduction of the study of sociology in this country.

III

James Long : Reverend James Long was born in Ireland in 1814 and came to India in 1840 when he was 26 years old. Prior to his coming to India, he was ordained a deacon in the Church Missionary Society of London. In India, he took the charge of Society's school at Calcutta situated in vicinity of Mirzapur. Later he was stationed at Thakurpukur, then a village, now a part of greater Calcutta situated within the area of Behala municipality.

Long said, "As a Missionary, I have deep interest in seeing the faults of my countrymen corrected ; for after a residence of 20-years in India, I must bear this testimony—that, of all obstacles to the spread of Christianity in India, one of the greatest is the irreligious conduct of many of my own countrymen. Thousands of Native have said to me, 'we judge the Christian religion by what your countrymen do, not by what they say ; often and often has my spirit been harrowed and almost crushed by a close view of the conditions of the raiyats, his wants and his sufferings ; shut out from that ability to read, without which the pages of inspiration are locked up to him'".²⁸

He began to learn native language, coming to India, in order to have first-hand knowledge about the people with whom he would live. He had already mastered several European languages. He was eager to know the life pattern of the sons of the soil. In his missionary work, he not only felt the necessity of learning the language of the natives, but also felt the necessity of a handbook containing the accounts of the activities of different Christian missions in India. To satisfy this thirst of his, he published, "Handbook of Bengal Mission", after a strenuous work of about five years. It appeared in 1848.

28. Long's Address in the Supreme Court on July 24, 1861.

During his stay in India, Long spent his time mainly among the natives as he was engaged in vernacular teaching. He was also in charge of a body of native Christian and in the promotion of Christian vernacular literature. Long's knowledge of vernacular literature was such that he could publish "Satyarnava", an illustrated Bengali monthly, which was also edited by him. This monthly was devoted to Christian religion, thoughts and ideas. In about 1852 the monthly was converted to a bi-monthly (6 times a year) and by 1855 it has stopped to exist.²⁹ Raja Radhakanta Deb, once, led a wealthy orthodox Hindu community, in presenting Long with an address, its gratitude for his work in advancing the cause of vernacular literature and the service he rendered by publishing the English edition of *Nil Durpan*, shew patriotism and regard to him on his own behalf as well as on behalf of the group, he represented.

Long strongly pleaded against the introduction of English in India. He often said, English is superior to Bengali or any other oriental language, yet English could never be made the language of the masses in India.³⁰ This attitude of his caused him love by the natives among whom he was popularly known as Padri Long. Wherever he went, he was liked and surrounded by hundreds of native men, women and children out of their love for him.

Long devoted more and more time in knowing the natives and in doing so, he, first published "Bengali Proverbs" in 1851. He collected these proverbs from the 'mouth of folk-women'. The collection and publication of Bengali proverbs continued for many years as can be seen from his other books, viz., "Oriental Proverbs in their relation to folklore, history and sociology", "Eastern

29. Bandyopadhyaya, Brojendranath, *Banglar Samayik Patrer Itihas*.

30. Sen Gupta, Sankar, Introduction to the book "500 questions on the subjects requiring investigation in the social condition of the people of India," by Rev. James Long, ed. by Dr. Mahadeva P. Saha, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1966.

Proverbs and emblems illustrated old truth" *Prabadmala* or the Wit of Bengali Ryots", "Popular Bengali Proverbs", "On the Importance and Best Mode of Making a Collection of Oriental Proverbs"³¹ and others. He had ready access to Hindu homes even at a time when they suspected them because of the irregular activities of such people as foreigners and Padris.

It is for his wide knowledge in native literature and dialects, and for his magnanimity of character, he was entrusted with by the British Government and missionaries as well, to render into English from native literature such items which he thinks were necessary for them. Realizing how important it was for the government to know its subjects, Long advocated, times without number, for the appointment of permanent official to review Indian publications—books, journals etc.—and keep the Government and other interested concerns informed of the socio-political views of the sons of the soil as revealed from native publications. In the absence of such an official, James Long took this responsibility upon himself, which we know from his statement in the court.³² He says, in 1861, to the Calcutta Supreme Court, "I have aimed for the last ten years in my leisure hours to be an exponent of native opinion in its bearing on the spiritual, social and intellectual welfare of natives of this land; as for instance, when applied to, on the part of the Board of Directors, seven years ago (1855), to procure for their library copies of all original works in Bengali, or as when, lately, I sent to Oxford by request, copies of all Bengali translation from Sanskrit; or when I have procured for Missionaries, Government, Rajas &c. vernacular books of all kinds; I should have been a strange person indeed, had

31. (i) Sen Gupta, Sankar & Shyam Parmar. "A Bibliography of Indian Folklore and related Subjects", Calcutta, 1968, (ii) Edwin C. Kirkland's "A Bibliography of South Asian Folklore", Folklore Institute Monograph Series, 21, Indiana Univ., (iii) Kling, B. B., op. cit. 1966.

32. Long's Address, op. cit.

my opinion harmonised with all the chaos of opinion in those various publications. Why at the request of Missionaries I have procured anti-Christian works for them, as they wished to know what was written against Christianity...I have been, my Lord, amongst those masses for years, and hope, as long as I live, have a brain to think and a pen to write, to advocate the social elevation of the masses as incidental with the progress of mental or moral light. Should I not have been a traitor to the religion I professed, whose great founder's motto is 'The poor have the Gospel preached to them', had I not availed myself of all legitimate opportunity to bring the wants and sufferings of the raiyats, and the feelings and views of the natives generally to the notice of men who had the power of remedying them? It may be called too political a course, as some now unduly restrict that term, but Christianity itself is political in the extended sense; for in the early ages it assailed the slavery of the Roman Empire; in the Middle Ages it afforded an asylum to the serfs against the oppressions of the feudal chiefs; at the period of the Reformation it brought freedom to the peasants' home; and in the modern days it has abolished slavery in the West Indies. It has protested against American slavery, and is now throwing its mantle of protection round the aboriginal tribes throughout the world."³³ Of course, Long directed those words to the bench, his defence was, in fact, 'aimed at his superiors, the officials of the Church Missionary Society.'³⁴

In Long's opinion masses could be won to Christianity only if they were better educated and economically independent. So along with some of his fellow missionaries, Long worked for establishing vernacular schools in the villages. He took great interest for vernacular literature and tried his best for its development. He also considered it no less his duty to criticize the urban intelligentsia of Bengal for their not taking an interest in the rural people

33. *ibid.*

K ling, B. B. *op. cit.*

—their culture, literature, education and development. At every opportunity Long warned the Calcutta intelligentsia on their social responsibilities, and criticized their being callous for the cause of humanity. They were, according to him, 'intensely selfish' and 'indifferent if not hostile to the welfare of the common people.' This criticism of Long was accepted by the intellegentsia of Calcutta with good humour.³⁵

He was a missionary with a great love for the Indian masses and was a man of courage and free thinking. So he got translated *Nil Durpan* which earned him an imprisonment for a month and a fine of rupees one thousand. The author of *Nil Durpan*, it is reported, wanted to exchange places with Rev. Long but that was not allowed. Then the amount of fine was paid by Kaliprasanna Sinha on the spot. Many other people were also ready with the money for payment.³⁶

The imprisonment of Long shocked public in Calcutta and England. During his one month jail, Long saw and spoke to more people than he had any previous month in life. A contemporary writer mentions that Long had more visitors in jail everyday than the then Governor-General of India. The visitors included civilians, missionaries, officials or the people of all walks of life.³⁷ The leaders of Hindu community wanted to submit a petition to the Government for a remission of Long's imprisonment and an address signed by 30,000 Indians was ready. But Long discouraged them on the ground that it would embarrass the Government.³⁸

Before the trial, Church Missionary Society in Calcutta had considered expelling him which prompted him to address the court explaining the motives actuated him to publish the book. He was concerned with the opinions

35. *ibid.*

36. Chakladar, H. C. Appendix Two of this book.

37. Kling, B. B. *op. cit.*

38. *ibid.*

of his colleagues and superiors in the missionary societies of Calcutta and London. When he heard of the threat to expel Long, Lord Canning himself came forward to stop it. He wrote to Dr. George Cotton, the then Bishop of Calcutta, not to take such a hasty decision. Ultimately, Long received Cotton's full support and approval. From jail Long wrote to the Church Missionary Society, London that he had acted throughout on the advice of Rev. Duff and Wylie and with the sanction of the Bengal Government.³⁹

In February 1862 he left for a 3-years stay in England. Rev. Frere gave him a letter of introduction to Mr. Wood and informed to the Secretary of State, London, that Long was the foremost living authority on Bengali vernacular literature. He also wrote, "Though sincere and honest, Long was a rather narrow-minded partisan who had seen little of the world and that entirely from an ultra-Irish Protestant point of view. He could do much harm if 'he dropped into the midst of May meetings with strong feelings' and much information on a class of Indian grievances which are stock subject for Exeter House Platform." Rev. Frere advised Mr. Wood to forestall Long's exploitation as 'a stalking house for partisan purposes' by encouraging the missionary to expound his views on vernacular education and by cautioning him to leave politics to secular people. Long would be included to conform "if he knew the hint came from the author of the Education Despatch of 1854."

Long wrote a pamphlet in his own defence called "Strike, But Hear" Calcutta 1861 containing selection from the pearl papers on indigo system. He decided that rather than speak continuously in his own defence, he would distribute this pamphlet⁴⁰ which will serve his purpose better.

39. *ibid.*

40. Long, Rev. James, "Strike But Hear," Calcutta, 1861.

Immediately after Long's trial Mr. Seton-Karr had offered his resignation but that was not accepted. Details about Seton-Karr's stand may be had in his statement printed in Pp 177-186 of this edition. He was very much criticised by the planters. In fact they wanted to punish him and a few other civilians instead of Rev. Long. He was the eye-sore of the planters since when he submitted his Indigo Commission Report to the Government where he sided with reality and facts and not with his European brethren. But all their efforts went in vain when Long appeared in the prosecution box. It is not only Mr. Seton-Karr but also Mr. Eden and Sir J. P. Grant suffered for their supporting the right cause. Some details about indigo troubles may be had in the paper of Prof. H. C. Chakladar, included in the book as Appendix Two.

In India, Long was actively connected with several literary and educational organisations. He was a member of the executive committee of the Calcutta Book Society for several years. There he compiled several text books on various subjects for the students. In 1843, or the third year of his coming to India, he was elected a member to the Asiatic Society by the effort of William Jones with whom he had friendly relations. James Long was also one of the early members of the Bethune Society, where in 1859, he was entrusted to the work of Sociology section. In his capacity of Society's in-charge of Sociology section, he submitted a "Report of the Sociological Section" which was entitled as "Sociology—recently elevated to the rank of a Science and replete with practical benefit to man", on April 26, 1861. It was published in the Proceedings of the Bethune Society for Sessions 1859-60, 1860-61 which appeared in 1862. His "Selections from unpublished Records of Government from 1747-1767 relating mainly to social conditions of Bengal" was published in 1869. He also established, as President, Bengal Social Science Association, where top ranking scholars and men of thought and culture of the then Bengal took part.

Undoubtedly, Long was a man of powerful mind and great facility of speech and pen.⁴¹ He stood for knowledge and civilization. He stood for his religion and for the suffering peoples. He was in favour of refinement of beneficial legislation and political reform in India, the place of his missionary work for greater part of his life.

From time to time Long endeavoured to interest the public in socio-cultural and literary problems in India. His Social Science Association was affiliated to the Bethune Society. Very interesting social problems of the period were discussed in this platform. For effective sociological study he framed 500 questions. These questions were designed to map out the field of action on subjects relating to native social life in India. As the President of this Association and as the author of the questionnaire Long writes—"Now is the time to 'note the passing manners as they fly'. Hindu society in various parts of India is in a transition state, and it is desirable to treasure up in writing the records of the past and the passing; an educated class of natives is rapidly rising, qualified not only to investigate but also to write in English the results of their investigations; literary societies, and periodical literature, are increasing among them. Natives alone can penetrate into native society. Europeans must remain on the surface; but the two classes can work in harmony. The natives are able and willing to supply data and facts, while The Europeans can classify and arrange them on the plan laid down by Statistical and Sociological Societies, and publish them hereafter for the information of persons both in Europe and the East.

"There is a wide field opened out, as the five hundred questions and desiderata in this paper shew, and the co-operation of the following classes of Europeans in India is earnestly solicited :—

"(i) Collectors, Magistrates, and Commissioners in

41. Saha, M. P. Foreword of the book Rev. J. Long's "500 questions etc." published by Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1966.

Districts, who associating much among the people, might through their native employees secure a large amount of valuable information on various points, and would find inquiry profitable to themselves in promoting good feeling between them and the natives, deepening their interest in the country and occasionally relieving the tedium of a solitary hour.

“(ii) European Settlers would find these questions of use in gaining a better acquaintance with the social conditions of the natives with whom they are thrown so much in contact ; it would shew them that natives can talk and think of other subjects besides rupees, while on the other hand the natives would see, that the Sahibs are not mere indigo, tea and coffee producing machines, but take an interest in the welfare and condition of their dependents, —thus the asperities arising from antagonism of race would be softened.

“(iii) Principals and Teachers in Schools and Colleges, would find many of these questions suitable as subjects for essay to be given to natives, testing and calling out not only their powers of composition, but also their faculties observation and knowledge of common things,—checking the tendency of education to make mere bookworms, separated from having few sympathies with the masses.

“(iv) Missionaries, in their itineraries and mixing with the natives have excellent opportunities of filling up these gaps in our ignorance of social life, and by conversation on social questions of smoothing down any rancour that may arise from theological discussion.

“(v) Students of the vernacular, and travellers, would find an ample supply of materials for conversation with natives and teachers, which would in an agreeable manner facilitate the study of vernacular.”⁴²

A cursory glance at the general subject will show that

42. Long. James' own Introduction in his "500 questions etc.", Calcutta, 1966.

almost every subject embracing the social life of the people has been taken up, and one may add that the questions on all these are searching and exhaustive. This insight of Long was responsible for getting '*Nil Durpan*' translated into English. He got support not only from Natives or newspaper like "*Hindoo Patriot*" but also of no less the persons than Sir J. P. Grant, Sir W. S. Seton-Karr and others. They could not save him from the clique of the exploiters. Not only they failed to save him, but also they themselves were punished in this or that way for their bold stand on the other side of injustice. After his release from the jail Long went in 1862 to England to clarify his position and stand on *Nil Durpan* case and other affairs of the natives to the superior authority of Church Mission there, because, a strong campaign was still going on against him.

He worked very hard for all the time. He passed many days with tension. For hard labour, anxiety and tension his health was failing which rushed Long to leave India for England once again for all. On the eve of his departure on March 21, 1872 Calcuttans expressed grave concern and hoped that with his stay in England he would fully recover his health and would return to Calcutta, the place of his fearless activities, in due time, with a good health and mind. During this time "*Amrita Bazar Patrika*" paying its tribute to Long wrote—"For long thirty years, Rev. Long had not a moment at his disposal when he did not think of our welfare. He loved us just like a brother, he took interest in our progress in the way our parents do, and he sympathised with our cause in the manner a friends do. We do not know how to adequately acknowledge our debts to him." However, Long went again in England and started his treatment there but of no avail. The news reached to Calcutta that he was on his way to retire for good. When this news reached, *Patrika* wrote a touchy editorial on March 21, 1872. It was profoundly emotional and full of significance. "How

we wished we had an opportunity to organise a mass demonstration to show our respect and gratefulness to him and bid him good-bye ! But this opportunity is not available for his decision to leave the soil of the country is sudden. Rev. Long has taught us a lesson to sustain faith in Englishman.

“Whenever we shall have occasions to see our ricefields overflowing with crops, our cultivators with their family members enjoying hearty meals, happy and contented, we will greatly remember this Englishman—Rev. James Long”,* who has breathed his last about a century ago in England. With so much about Rev. Long and what we have already said about Dinabandhu we will come straight to the drama *Nil Durpan*.

IV

It should not be forgotten that in the first-half of the nineteenth century there were mainly two classes of people in Bengal. Of the two classes—one was rich—the zaminders and their fellow brothers—officials, traders, banians etc.; while the other was poor—the peasants and labourers. The rich class, in course of time, created a new class to mediate in between the two. They are the people of middle class. The zaminders and their associates along with the neo-middle class stood in favour of powers, when the poor who were majority in number stood for the suffering class—peasants, day-labourers and others of the lower strata. They were against the Establishment, because of their inhuman outrage. The torture of the powers, as a result, reached to peak. To check unbearable irregularities and excess of the rulers, the ruled were united to stand as one against those who suck and torture them.

Although there were occasional clashes with zaminders and planters with a view to gain one on the other, yet, zaminder as a class always supported planters and others of the Establishment. So Titu Mir, a peasant rebel, had

* Amrita Bazar Patrika, March 21, 1872.

to fight simultaneously against the zaminder of Gobardanga, Mr. Kaliprasanna Mukhopadhyay, and the Manager of Mollahati Factory, Mr. Davis.⁴³ He lost his life in 1839 while fighting at Narkelbaria. Likewise Dudu Mia of Faridpur (modern Bangladesh) suffered in the hands of the government officials, planters and zaminders alike. In such fights and clashes the intermediate or the middle-class sided with the powers at least up to the first half of the nineteenth century. They, in fact, had love-knot with zaminders and others of the upper strata. A section among this middle class lived in the villages or the rural areas while another section lived in the cities or in the urban areas. Those who lived in the rural areas were completely dependent on land and land-produce ; while those who lived in the urban areas, relied on both the land and other sources of income. Raja Ram Muhan Ray, Rishi Bankim and others were dependent on land in spite of their other sources of income, while persons like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dinabandhu Mitra, Michael M. S. Dutt and others had little or no dependence on land. They had to earn their income from other sources and for this non-dependence of theirs on land, they could shew progressive or such an outlook that was basically different from those people who were dependent on land.

The middle-class of both the urban and rural areas, unfortunately, were against the first Indian War of Independence of 1857, although, no doubt, the first spark of it was initiated in Barrackpore and Berhampore.⁴⁴ It was non-Bengali sepoys who were instrumental in starting it, not Bengalees. The Bengalees having realised the gravity of the revolt held a meeting at the residence of Gopal Mallick where they faithfully explained to the Sahibs that even after 100 years of servitude, they are, as of

43. Chakravarti, Sunil op. cit.

44. Sen Gupta, Sankar (ed.) War of Independence 1857 (an anthology) Calcutta, Indian Publications, 1957

yore, miserable coward Bengalees. Quite a large number of aristocrats amongst them do not ride on a boat for the fear of drowning. Escorted by their wives and maid-servants they go out to call of nature in the night. Their only weapons are table or pen-knife and they are afraid of their own shadow. It is impossible for such men to fight", writes Hytun in his *Hutum Pancher Naksha*. As there was little or no support from Bengal for the Sepoys, it should not be taken that the people of Bengal was happy under the British rule or that the Bengalees as a race were cowards. The reasons lie elsewhere. Before one wishes to clarify the stand of the then Bengalees as to why they did not show desired response to the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58 one should not forget that shortly after this Mutiny, in autumn 1859, the humble cultivators began to defy the planters and refused to sow indigo. Each day, disturbances spread. This brought the rulers to face with a fundamental policy decision. With the Indigo disturbance the Bengalee community awakened to a string of national sentiment and shortly they emerged with a heightened political awareness that prepared them in the succeeding decades; to lead the rest of India in the national agitation and reply to those who criticised the Bengalees as cowards owing to their not taking part in the First War of Independence.

Everybody knows that since the formation of British Indian Association, Hindu Mela or Jatiya Mela, Indian National Congress, and the revolutionary parties, of all the provinces in India, opposition to British rule was strongest in Bengal. The leadership of these opposition rested entirely on the shoulder of common men or the people who belong to the poor-class. No Rajas, zaminders or leading citizens stood in the forefront of the struggle in initial stage. As the people had nothing to lose they could act according to their conscience and according to the demand of justice. 'If we take into account of Titu's revolt of short duration, of Ganganarain's riot, Sherpur

rebellion of Pagalpanthies and Santhal rebellion, we would notice that these brave and virulent people died a slow death at the hand of a powerful imperialist power in their courageous attempt at rebellion.⁴⁵ They did so at a time when the new class of zaminders of Bengal were content with their allowed status. They owe their power, position and wealth due to the advent of British rule. It was impossible for any other classes, according to the historians, any uprising without the help of these zaminders and other rich people like the trading class. There was a fashion then of joint venture of British-Bengali capital, thus established Car-Tagore Co.⁴⁶ etc. where the main business remained under the control of the English and the Bengalees had to remain content with becoming *mutsuddees* or banyans. The number of Bengalees, who acted as banyans to many English business-houses gradually shrunk. At about this time another class made its appearance—a class whose profession was service. They held petty or big jobs, ranging from clerks to magistrates. The higher graded people among them joined their hands with the middle class people created by the then zaminders. Gradually, thus, they were getting increased in number and among them many intelligent and sharp people were found at. While the influence of businessmen began to wane, the new class of white collar workers correspondingly gained in influence. After passing through this phase for a long time at last we have reached dead end. This class, once renowned for their efficiency in classical works finds its profession very tough going indeed. Simultaneously, the upper strata was materially benefitted from the British rule in some way or other. In addition, the Bengalee mind was powerfully impressed by the impact of Western culture. Since the days of Rammuhan Ray this trend was marked in Bengal. Even Tagore had hinted that after following

45. Sinha, Bimal Chandra, in the above quoted book.

46. Ghosh, Benoy, *Banglar Samajik Itihaser Dhara, 1800—1900*, Path-Bhavan, Calcutta. 1968.

the speeches and writings of eminent Englishman like John Bright, we are led to believe, in spite of British misdeeds in India, that we could expect justice and fairplay from some large-hearted Englishmen.⁴⁷ Dinabandhu too expressed same idea while writing Preface of *Nil Durpan*: He writes...“Oh, ye Indigo Planters! Your malevolent conduct has a stain upon the English Nation, which was so graced by the ever memorable names of Sydney, Howard, Hall and other greatmen...Mr. Grant, who always suffers in the sufferings of his people, and is happy when they are happy...has taken the charge of Lieutenant Governorship, and other persons, as Messrs. Eden, Herschel, etc., who were well-known for their love of truth, for their great experience and strict impartiality are continually expanding...these great men will soon take hold the rod of justice in order to stop the sufferings which the ryots are enduring” Although Dinabandhu wanted to stand up for the peasantry, but he was unable to act on his own. He was ready to connive at the raiyat arming himself against the planter. But he would not take up arms himself. That would be indulging in illegality as much as the planters themselves. The only means of ending oppression is for the law to assert itself. It is only the Government, the true custodians of the law, can restore the rule of law.

Nil Durpan is a story not only of the suffering peasantry but also it is a story of the failure of liberal government to shield its subjects from planter's oppression. It tells the story of a affluent Kayastha family who are getting new education. The father or Goluk Basu, without western type of schooling, is very much proud of Bindumadhab, youngest son, a student of a law college in Calcutta. He has, in fact, considerably added to his own status by getting his son married to a leading suburban

47. Sinha, Bimal Chandra, in *War of Independence 1857* (ed. by Sankar Sen Gupta, Calcutta, 1957).

Kayastha family who, normally, would not like to establish marriage-relations to a lad from an obscure village. The young wife in her soliloquy about the dull domesticity remarks : 'we are born women, and cannot even go out to walk in the garden ; we are unable to walk out in the city ; can by no means form clubs for general good ; we have no Colleges nor Courts, no Brahma Samaj of our own ; we have nothing of our own to compose the mind when it is once disturbed' (Act. II, Sc. 2). This suggests that she is familiar with the fruits of western culture. Even the women of Basu family are not against putting her literacy to good use and have her read out Vidyasagar's *Betala Panchavinsati* (Act. I, Sc. 4). Nabinmadhab wants to open a school when the planters' depredations are over within the grounds of his own homestead : for, 'what is more happy than to have the boys of one's own country to read and write'. This confirms how "by the middle of the nineteenth century, schools had already joined with the list of traditional public works such as temples and tanks as an index of a landlord's munificence."⁴⁸

Nabinmadhab presses his father to take the Basu family's dispute with the factory to a court of law. Throughout the indigo districts the victims of the planters had been trying to seek the law's protection. It is no wonder that the educated Bengalee found in the law a great ally and an object of the highest admiration then when the play was written. If a nation is known by its theatre then one can view the Bengalee mind and their attitude toward the British Raj through this drama.

Law and Education are two essential components of culture of the British ruling-class and of their Indian collaborators. "They mutually sustain each other. The institutional network of education and that of law soon become interdependant. Education helps in schooling bureaucracy that runs the colonial apparatus which it is

48. Guha, Ranjit. *Frontier*, December, 2 and 9, 1972,

the task of the law to define (by jurisprudence), regulate (by the judiciary), defend (by penalties) and rationalise (with the aid of the legal profession)...The two work fairly together throughout the entire period of British rule in India."⁴⁹ In *Nil Durpan*, the author presents Bengali lawyers as defenders of the raiyats against the planters. Mr. Wood is very angry about a law graduate who writes against the planters in the papers (Act III. Sc. 1). Dinabandhu helped to promote a faith about the morality of the legal profession.

There were indeed a small number of lawyers, according to Kling, who helped the raiyats by acting for them in the mufassil courts and reporting on their plight to the Calcutta press. In fact, when at the height of the revolt the planters went on a rampage and the local European officials, in many areas, swung into their support and venal rewards were not much in sight, legal advice for the raiyats was not easy to mobilize. Even Harish Mukherjee with all his immense prestige barely managed to recruit a couple of lawyers from Calcutta and send them up to defend some peasants hauled up before the law. And in Jessore, the scene of the biggest and bloodiest clashes—we have it on the authority of Sisir-kumar Ghose's biographer—the local lawyers were deterred by the fear of the planter's reprisal from defending the peasant rebels.⁵⁰ Dinabandhu's attitude to legal profession was quite in order. *Nil Durpan* is dominated by the idea of rule of law. So Nabinmadhab, pleads, appropriately enough for the addition of a *dhara* (meaning 'article' rather than 'regulation' as translated) to Act XI to make it hot for the planters (Act III, Sc. 2).⁵¹

There is nothing self-contradictory about the mid-nineteenth century liberal being anti-planter and pro-

49. *ibid.*

50. Kling, B. B. *op. cit.*

51. Guha, Ranjit, *op. cit.*

Government at the same time. It was a time when indigo planters were on their way freeze. 'For the consolidation of Britain's power base in India it was essential that the Government should acquire the image of a well-run concern based on legality, order and responsibility. The planters undermined all these. They regarded themselves as outside the law, flouted it openly whenever it suited them and perverted its processes. Their private armies weakened the standing of the official arms of the law at the local level. Their indulgence in torture, murder, rape and arson made the natives question the superiority of whiteman's religion, civilization and morality. So Government demanded that the planters should be disciplined and for this there were clashes between the planters and the Government. Many people as that like Dinabandhu came forward to stand by the Government officials. In the drama he spoke in a very high tone about the good effect of the British rule. A faith in the ultimate triumph of British justice is based on the illusion that the law is fair in absolute terms. So when someone suggests that the magistrate who sent to Goluk Basu to jail is no more wicked than the Commissioner, Bindumadhab flares up and says—"you know not the Commissioner; and therefore, you spoke thus of him. The Commissioner is impartial, and is always desirous of the improvement of the natives." Dinabandhu Mitra suggests more than once in his play, there are good Sahebs and bad Sahebs: the good ones run the government and the bad ones run the factories. The same was the idea of Tagore

Middle class Bengalees in search of a radical tradition during one such spasm that culminated in the Swadeshi movement, settled on *Nil Darpan* as a patriotic text, according to Reisnes & Goldenberg, is nothing but 'a loyalist play' which manifested a 'petty-bourgeois radicalism'.

Prior to 1857-war, the British had to expend much of their energy, for nearly half a century, to curb mass uprising and all type of protests in Bengal. None of the

leaders of revolts, or who raised their hands against the British, were outstanding personalities. They were ordinary men like Titu Mir or Birsha Munda. When their interest was hurt, the aristocrats protested against the tyranny of indigo planters in the mild way but the masses were virulent all the time. The writers and journalists echoed the same sentiment as the masses. Simultaneously, the upper class, for first time, since the second half of the last century, expressed their resentment against alien rule based upon their growing historical consciousness. This deep emotion found its widespread expression in Bengal when a section of this middle class joined their hands with the masses. It is in this time Dinabandhu came out with a most powerful drama to enthuse the people in his own way. Prior to this, there was published Upendracharan De's "Baapre Baap ! Nilkarer ki Atyachar" in 1856, a caricature.

After enjoying country's independence and passing more than a century one may see in *Nil Durpan* not much revolutionary ideas as he likes to see in such a drama these days. But one should not forget that the drama was written more than 110 years ago when the country was completely under a strong foreign rule, and when quite a large numbers of people were satisfied with the rule of the law of the then British Government. Under such a condition it was difficult for a Government employee to propagate a more straight revolutionary idea than what was propagated in the book under study. Particularly because the class-consciousness and revolutionary ideas were not sufficiently clear and so to propagate for liberalism was considered then as a revolutionary act. Yet, however, one many have grievance with the playwright as to why he could not produce such a drama as *Nil Durpan* in future when he was able to do so. This deviation is nothing but a typical middle-class character of Dinabandhu which has been handed down to his subsequent generation also. Thus we see in the budding youth that he was a

revolutionary but with the coming of age he surrendered to the circumstances and thus he began to compose such plays that were different in characters than that of his first drama.

V

Nil Durpan tells the story of inhuman oppression of the indigo planters. To know the woes of a class of Bengal peasantry under European planters, it is necessary to say a few words about indigo cultivation which had been known in India from the earliest times. It was an important Indian export to the seventeenth century. English East India Company made an enormous profit from the indigo trade as early as the year 1600-01. During this time Company's supply was obtained from Agra, Lahore and Ahmedabad. Owing to the progress of Indigo of West Indies, early in the eighteenth century, the demand for Indian indigo in the British market fell off, and in 1724, it was omitted from the list of Company's investment.⁵² But by 1747, most of the British colonies in West Indies abandoned indigo cultivation, as a result, the demand of indian indigo revived once again.⁵³ Thus there established a number of experimental indigo works as the Company was more interested in the production of the commercial crops than food crops.

Louis Bonnaud, a Frenchman, came in 1772, who, it is learnt, was the first indigo planter of Bengal. He built a small factory at Paldanga in Hooghly district first. Finding this place unsuitable, he moved in Gondalpara of Chandernagar. Almost simultaneously, there came Carel Blume in the picture, who commenced his work for the manufacture of indigo. By 1783, there were many indigo establishments in different parts of Bengal, and

52. Sinha, J. C. *Economic Annals of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1927.

53. Wait — *A Dictionary of Economic Products*, Vol. V.

(The Dictionary appeared in 6 vols. from 1889-1896.)

from that time to 1804-05, Bengal produced as many as 24,000 to 62,000 maunds of indigo. It increased to 86,000 maunds during 1814-15. From 1819-20 to 1826-27 Company made a profit of £349,040 or Rs. 45 lakhs in an average.⁵⁴

The manufacture of indigo gradually flourished all over Bengal, particularly in Pabna, Faridpur, Nadia and Jessore. From eighties of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, there left hardly any district in Bengal, which, did not possess some indigo factories. The position of the raiyats who hold lands and cultivate them with indigo under them was scarcely better than that of the slaves, and was somewhat different from that of their brethern, who worked under planters. The only difference between them was, the former patiently submitted to their fate and bore all oppressions, while the latter when oppressed, could fly to the protection of other, yet they were put into great trouble. One may say indigo planter's oppressions have ceased to exist in 1859 so there is no point in dwelling upon them now. But that is really not the case. The peasants are oppressed even now as they were then, the only difference is, in 1859 they rose to open rebellion while now they patiently submit to their fate, and sometimes rise to little rebellions which are quickly suppressed. It is owing to planters' oppression there are many ruins of indigo factories in the land where, it is believed the ghosts of the raiyats who were killed by planters inside the factories, reside and make round.⁵⁵

As it was a costly product, so was its production costly. The land in which indigo was sown lost its fertility and then 'it was a troublesome cultivation. If anybody had sown it undergoing all hardships and trouble, he was not paid duly.⁵⁶

54. Colswarthy, Grant. *Rural life in Bengal*, London, 1860.

55. Ghosh, Benoy. *Banglar Samajik Itihaser Dhara*, 1800-1900. Path Bhavan, Calcutta, 1962.

56. Indigo Commission Report.

For making it ready for export a large number of people were necessary for doing various works from sowing to packing. Persons required to run a factory, in average, may be had from a contemporary account.* Here the types of persons employed, their salaries or wages and the nature of their works are available :

**Personnel of an indigo factory and their salaries
per head per month**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Types of Workers</i>	<i>Number of Workers</i>	<i>Salary or Wage</i>
1.	Bullockcart driver (120 cart)	120	Rs. 7.50
2.	Boatman (48 boat)	96	Rs. 9.00
3.	Sardar (Leader)	1	Rs. 4.00
4.	Bhyat Cooli (Day labourer)	72 Buno 40 Midna- puri }	Rs. 3.00 Rs. 4.00 }
5.	Gachmapa (Weighing machineman)	2	Rs. 2.00
6.	Machineman of China pump	30	Rs. 3.75
7.	Pin-Cooli	1	Rs. 4.00
8.	Boiler House Man	6	Rs. 3.00
9.	Stocker	3	Rs. 3.75
10.	Dalai-Marai (Agricultural Worker)	6	Rs. 3.25
11.	Ghat mute (Female worker)	6	Rs. 2.00
12.	Godown Cooli	4	Rs. 2.00
13.	Cooli Sardar (Leader of Cooli)	2 Buno 2 Midna- puri }	Rs. 3.00 Rs. 5.00 }
14.	Ghat Majhi (Ferry boatman)	1	Rs. 4.00
15.	Cake Cutter	1	Rs. 4.00
16.	Chuttar (Wood worker)	1	Rs. 4.00
17.	Karmakar (Iron worker)	1	Rs. 5.00

* Ghosh, Benoy op, cit.

It is further reported that if the production is not up to the mark then these are the strength of workers in an average factory, but if the production is better, other remains the same, coolis are increased in double or as they are needed. Besides, there are Dewan, Amin, Keeper of the Goal, cow-keeper, lattyal or Club-man, Herdsman and others.⁵⁷

It was not Company's policy to allow too many Europeans to settle in the countryside lest they should destroy that reputation which the Englishmen in India was then supposed to enjoy. In all cases the planters were required to obtain permission from the Company to hold lands for recruiting indigo workers. The record of the Bengal Board of Revenue contain numerous papers on the subject of permission being sought for erecting indigo factories by Europeans.⁵⁸

Not infrequently, the European planters had to face the hostility of the local zaminders who would not allow their tenants to cultivate for the planters.⁵⁹ The main objection of the zaminders seems to have arisen from the fact that they had great difficulty in realizing the rents from the raiyats who cultivated it, because, it was not at all a paying crop. These obstacles were partially overcome afterwards, from the zaminders, for which they had to pay rents to the latter; while they themselves realized rents from the raiyats. After this arrangement, in some places, therefore, zaminders together with planters and police beat the peasants for their declination in sowing indigo as well as for the realisation of money. For more than half a century this oppression and lawlessness remained associated with indigo plantation.⁶⁰

There were, in broad, two types of cultivation of the

57. Colsworth, Grant. op. cit.

58. Kling, B. B. op. cit.

59. Appendix, Report from Select Committee on the Affairs of East India Company, 1832.

60. Sinha, N. K. op. cit.

indigo in Bengal—*nijabad* and *raiya*. Under the first, cultivation was carried on by the owners of the land at his own cost, and in the second, an Establishment of ploughs, bullocks, servants maintained at the planter's expenses upon land over which the factory had obtained agreement beforehand. Strictly speaking, this *raiya* system was of two classes—*ilaka* and *be-ilaka*. When raiyat's land, over which the cultivation was carried on, is situated within the zamindary of a third party, it was called *be-ilaka*. But when the planter himself had acquired the rights of a zamindar over the land, whether permanently or temporarily, it was known as *ileka*.⁶¹

It should be noted here that, when indigo planters were virtually reigning then the Government did not extend much beyond the capital city and in a few large urban centres. Government revenue officers rarely met peasants. Often there was no postal system, no telegraph, no railroads in large parts of the countryside, and it may take days, even weeks, for an official from the capital, to reach some parts of the country.⁶² Police stations were rare. This is not to say, there was no government in the countryside, in the sense that there was no rule-making or order-enforcing authority. Therefore the local chiefs, zaminders, planters and others exercised authority in their own way with the help of *lattyals*⁶³ or club-men as the feudal rulers

61. Ghosal, H.R. The Economic transition in the Bengal Presidency, 2nd edi. Calcutta 1966

62. Sinha, N. K. op. cit.

63. Being possessed a vast of wealth and unlimited power, the rich defied the authority of Government, and take the administration of justice into their own hands. "Without an iota of education, or public spirit, or desire to do good to the people, the only use they have made of their vast wealth is to keep or hire scores and hundreds of *lattyals*, and to pick out quarrels. These *lattyals* were generally the men of lowest strata who were unable to support themselves and their families. They gladly took this opportunity of employing themselves in any capacity, however, detrimental it may be to their future interests, In this way thousands of them in hope of supporting themselves and their families have met with violent death and left their wives

did in mediæval Europe, and colonial government did, or Bismark did in the nineteenth century Europe.

In Bengal, there were several seasons for sowing indigo which varies from one part to another according to the condition of the land. Sometime it was sown in April and May, often in September and October, and sometime in February. The peasants were forced to cultivate indigo in preference to any other crop. Sometime by encouraging words, but more often by force and providing advance money at a very low rate of interest, peasants were bound to cultivate indigo. Once a raiyat had the misfortune to accept advance on account of indigo, there was no escape from it. Thus it was said *niler dadan dhoper bhate, ekbar lagle ar na uthe*,⁶⁴ which means, the advance for indigo is, as it were, the washerman's mask once given (on cloth) cannot be effaced. For whatever reason a peasant failed to deliver the plant, his labour was practically disavowed, and the money paid in advance was set down as debt against him, and the debt went on accumulating year after year which he failed to repay.

When the money-advance method failed; intension and severe measure was adopted by the planters. Various acts of oppression were being committed against the cultivator who refrained to sow indigo. The peasants became united against the planters. They started direct clash with them. Each day, as the disturbances appeared and the excitement intensified, the government was besieged with grim reports from its district officers and desperate petitions from the British mercantile community of Calcutta. The condition was such that the government was bound to take a fundamental policy decision in this respect. Should the government suppress the revolt or

and children cry about in the streets; or having been severely wounded were burdened, or have sentenced to rigorous imprisonment.

64. *Prabadmala*, by Rev. James Long.

should it concern to the welfare of the masses⁶⁵ was the point to be decided.

We know by the mid of 1850s the indigo industry had lost its central position in the export trade of Bengal. At the same time the government began to enact long overdue measures to reform the neglected administration, as a result of the great national uprising of 1857, the most important of which was the creation of the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Sir John P. Grant, the Second Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, not only held liberal opinions but also accustomed to convey his ideas to their logical conclusion. He declared that the peasant was no less a capitalist than the planter, and he must be allowed to sell his product on a free market. It was on the basis of this change in government policy, the raiyats took a determined stand against indigo planting. Lieutenant-Governor further contributed to the freedom of the indigo cultivator by enforcing principle of liberalism in judicial supremacy. He increased the number and accessibility of courts in the *muffasals* and established many police stations in rural areas. When this occurred, the peasantry, even alert to subtle changes in power relationship, recognised that authority of punishment had shifted from the indigo planters to the judiciary. It was a change which were welcomed not only by the peasantry but also by the saner section of the then people.

Between the spring of 1860, when the raiyats were first summoned into court for the violations of contract and in the spring of 1861, when they themselves initiated suits to challenge every demand of the planters, a momentous change took place.⁶⁶ The peasantry grasped the concept of lawful rights. They became enthusiastic supporters of the legal process. Unfortunately, this advantages which occurred to the raiyats or the rule of law were short-lived.⁶⁷

65. Kling. B. B. op. cit.

66, *ibid*

67. *ibid*

After mid-nineteenth century, when the public life of Calcutta divided along racial lines the natives united in the British Indian Association and began to protest against all the tyranny of the British people and their mercantile community. While doing so, they applied the techniques of political agitation they had learnt from the Britishers. The Government had noticed that the natives were awakening in the strings of national sentiment and they were well utilizing planter's oppression and peasants' resistance move in their politics. Events in the countryside infected the public life of Calcutta where the Bengalee community united with the sympathetic officials and missionaries. They waged cold-war against the British mercantile community and other oppressors. From this contest the Bengalees emerged with a heightened political awareness that prepared them in the succeeding decades, to lead the rest of India in national agitation.⁶⁸

The Indigo disturbances originated on the one hand, in the rise of the peasantry or a new social class in rural Bengal, and the other, in a deterioration in the economic condition of a once-mighty industry. In fact, the rule of unmitigated tyranny unleashed by the indigo planters not only caused an active discontent amongst the people of Bengal; but also, it moved the more sympathetic section of the British, who were far-sighted enough to realise the dangers of letting the peasant's discontent grow. Indeed some had been even moved by the raiyat's plight. Amongst them were Sir J. P. Grant, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal for 1859-62, Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, the then Secretary, Bengal Office, Sir Ashley Eden, the then Magistrate of Barasat and others. Sir Grant had earned a great fame by helping the passing of the Widow Marriage Bill, and by lending his support, to the cause of the Bengalee raiyats victimized by the indigo planters. Mr. Eden for his

68. Sinha, Bimal Chandra op. cit.

supporting raiyats,⁶⁹ was censured by the Divisional Commissioner for ordering the police not to allow planters to forcibly plough up the raiyats' land against their wish. He also submitted before the Indigo Commission a statement which set out *inter alia* the following : "As a general rule I do not think the residence of indigo planters has improved to any great extent the physical and moral condition of the people". Mr. E. Delatour, the then Magistrate of Faridpur, said before the Indigo Commission : "There is one thing more I wish to say ; that considerable odium has been thrown on the missionaries for saying that 'not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood'. The planters raised a howl against 'Messrs Grant-Eden & Co.' They slandered Grant, calumniated Eden, and abused the people of India. Ultimately there was a prosecution of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir J. P. Grant, after about ten months of Long's trial for his supporting raiyats' cause, and he was fined one rupee.⁷⁰ Yet the planters could do no great harm to him.

All these excited natives and the elites of the city. The peasants were getting virulent. The rulers or even the planters could not stop peasants' disturbances. Continuous peasant troubles were going on in different places like Nadia, Jessore, Khulna, 24-Parganas, Pabna and Rajshahi.

69. It would be necessary to inform the readers the meaning of the word *raiya* or *ryot* to the then Government, C. Anderson and Boyle define *ryot* in their report : "as the immediate occupant of the soil, whether he be considered as proprietor or tenant. The word, in its most extensive signification, means a subject ; but it is usually applied to the numerous and inferior class of people, who hold and cultivate small plots of land on their own account, and might, perhaps, properly be denominated *terre tenants*." Lord William Bentinck says, "the term *Ryot* comprises the whole agricultural community." *Indian Ryot, Land Tax, Permanent Settlement and the Famine*, compiled by Abhoy Charan Das, Howrah, 1881.

70. Chaklader, H. C., Appendix Two of the book. Reproduced from *The Dawn and Dawn Society's Magazine*, Calcutta, July, 1905.

The planters wanted to check peasant's unrest at any cost. They engaged more and more Clubman but when they fail that way they called police. Whenever a police party were in a village, they were surrounded by the revolutionary peasants from four sides and then they were given a good beat. This was reported to the Indigo Commission. Rev. C. Bomwetsch writes on January 25, 1860⁷¹ that the peasants being divided "themselves into about six companies" faced and routed their enemies. One company consists of merely bowmen, another of slingsmen like David of old. Another company consists of *brickwallas*, for which purpose they have even, as I hear, collected the scattered brick from my own compound. Another company consists of *balewallas*. Their business is merely to send unripe *bale* fruits at the heads of *lattyals*. Again another division consists of *thalwallas* who fling their brass rice-plates in a horizontal way at the enemy which does great execution. Again another division consists of *rola-walls* who receive the enemy with whole and broken well-burned earthen pots. The Bengalee women do at times great execution with this weapon". Planters' took strong measure to check them. Thus in Bansberia of Rajshahi istrict one raiyat was murdered, another was killed by ear in the broad day light by the hired goondas of e planters. The peasants of the neighbourhood took vow i take revenge. They acted accordingly. Their action caused mass arrest among them. It is not only the planters, but also their pet men—Indian dogs like Amins, Dewans etc.—behaved that way with the peasants. Even these people were ready to supply women to the *sahebs* for making their fortune. Thus, we see in the drama *Nil Durpan* "Amin (To himself, observing *Khetromany*). This young woman is not bad-looking ; if our younger Saheb can get her, he will, with his whole heart, take her. But while I was unable to succeed in getting a *peshkari*'s (over-

71. Letter of Rev. C. Bomwetsch in *The Indian Field*, Calcutta, January 26. 1860.

seer's) post by giving him my own sister, what can I expect from getting him this woman; but still she is very beautiful; I will try". (Page 14)

These people are the creation of not only the planters but also of the zaminders. Their extravagance, reckless management and dishonesty nursed these people to grow. The Permanent Settlement inspired their wilful neglect in meeting the demand of the Government and as a result thereof, most of their estates were sold to the highest bidders. Yet they succeeded in inducing the rulers to believe that their inability to pay the revenue arose not from any fault of theirs, but from the stupidity and rascality of the raiyats in not paying the rents due to them, and that it was extremely necessary for the safety of the Government revenue to invest them with summary powers for the realization of their rents from the cultivators. The reason of zaminder's wilful neglect to meet the demand of the Government was, that they might be able to purchase the estates in fictitious names, and to raise the rents of their under tenants. Lord Wellesly who was too aristocratic to pay heed to the cries of the poor, in order to enable the zaminders to meet the Government demands with punctuality passed Distraint Act or *Hueftum* (seventh) Regulation. By it, the raiyats were rendered liable to personal arrest and imprisonment—their doors to be forced open by the Police, and their houses entered, in search of distrainable property; in the event of their being endamaged by the decision passed after the issue of summary process, they could obtain redress only by instituting a civil action'. Within a few years the court of Justice were overwhelmed with suits; when the Government wanted close the door of justice and redress—enacted" that if any ryot should wantonly, and, without due cause, summon, or caused to be summoned, before the Courts of Justice, the chief or subordinate officers of the zemindars employed in collecting rents should be liable to an action for damages with cost; and that all ryots, who

should prefer litigious or groundless complaints against the zamindar, should be punished by fine and imprisonment. Another Act (Act V) most injurious to the interests of the raiyats was passed in 1812. It is generally known as *Punchum* (fifth) Regulation. Thus one vicious Act was followed by another. It was allowed to ruin the poor till Lord Canning repealed it in 1859, after a sad and painful trial of sixty years.⁷² The raiyats have suffered much in person and property in consequence of the corruption, insufficiency, and the oppression of the police, zamindars and indigo planters. The oppressions of the zamindars are intermingled with those of the indigo planters. It is due to the oppression of the indigo planters to many raiyats of Behar and Tirhut, notwithstanding their proverbial tenacity to their ancestral lands, have been forced to leave and to prefer the protection of the Nepal Raj to that of the vaunted British Government, and that almost leading journals lately urged upon the Government to appoint a Commission.⁷³

Considering the great concern of the indigo disturbances the then Government formed Indigo Commission in spring of 1860, to pacify the raiyats, with W. S. Seton-Karr C. S. as the President. The members were : R. Temple, Esq. C. S., Rev. J. Sale, W. F. Fergusson Esq. and Baboo Chunder M. Chatterjee. After a sitting of four months, May to August, 1860, the Commission reported the system on which indigo had been cultivated was a coercive system of an unrelaxing character. It has broken down because its plantation was unremunerative to the cultivator. The Commission have considered a mass of oral and documentary evidence.

So James Long submitted to Indigo Commission a pamphlet published in Bengali, and widely circulated, called *Baap re Baap ! Nilkarer ki Atyachar !* (what an oppression

72. The Indian Ryot, Land Tax Permanent Settlement, and the famine, Compiled by A. C. Das, Howrah, 1881.

73. *ibid.*

of the Indigo Planters). "It contains songs, which have been sung far and wide among the natives and set to music. The drift of some of those songs is the following : that the interest on the planter's advances accumulates for three generations ; that the people sell there *Pottahs* (leases), they do not cross the Ganges, that is, get free from the planters ; that when the planter first applies to the ryot to sow indigo, he comes like a beggar but at last he makes grass to grow on the ryots' bones ; the indigo planters come in like a needle, but go out like a ploughshare, and are desolating Bengal like flocks of locusts ; the king looks on while the subjects are drowned ; all is gone ; 'to whom shall we apply but to Almighty God ; should we shut our eyes at night, we see the white faces before us, and, through fear, our lives fly away like a bird ; our souls are burning in the strong flames of pain.'"

A well-known zaminder in his reply to the question at the Indigo Commission : "Do your ryots sow indigo because it is profitable to them, or because they wish to please you as their zaminder ?"—"It is not at all profitable to them, but rather a loss, as my memo will show. They sow it to please me, their landlord, and because they have sown it before, and also they wish to avoid to possibility of strangers coming in." Another zaminder said in reply to the question : "If the ryots have, for the last 20 years, been unwilling to sow indigo, how then have they gone on cultivating the plant up to the present time ?"—"By numerous acts of oppression and violence, by locking them up in godowns, burning their houses, beating them, &c." Rev. F. Schurr said, "I have seen ryots stand up and say (putting their hands up to their throats)—let the Government cut our throats and soldiers kill us with bullets, but we will not sow indigo."⁷⁴

In his witness Sir Ashley Eden said in answer to the question—"Can you point to any particular record, printed or other, in support of your assertion regarding the act of violence". He replied, "I beg to hand in an abstract of forty-nine serious cases of murder, homicide, rift, arson, dacoity, plunder and kindapping which have occurred from the year 1830 to 1859, some of which I have taken from records which came before me during my incumbency ; others from printed Nizamut reports, and all from authenticated papers. I also give a file of heinous cases connected with the cultivation of indigo, which occurred previous to the year 1810, with a view of showing, that on the commencement of the system of private trade in the interior of the country, these acts of violence were reported from the country ; and the Government, in a Circular Order of the 20th July 1810, considered it necessary to warn the Magistrates to check the system of forcing the cultivation by means of advances on ryots. This last statement I have derived from a printed Parliamentary Report of 1820, on the occasion when the the Directors of the Company were charged with impeding the settlement of Europeans. The great majority of the cases in the first list filed have occurred within the last ten years". Further, he said in reply to another question,—“Could you state how many of the above cases came under your personal observation as Magistrate?” “Under my own actual observation I only remember two cases of those noted in the list. One was the case of kidnapping in Shanpore Factory, Bansbaria in the Rajshahi district, in which one man was confined and died in the godown and his body thrown by the factory servants, and sunk by means of bag of bricks, in a jheel. This I know from having been assistant to the Magistrate who tried the case, and being acquainted with the parties concerned in it. The native servants of the factory were punished by the judge, but were released by the Nizamut who ruled,

that although there was no doubt the man had met his death whilst confined in the godown yet there was no distinct proof of the precise means by which he met his death, and therefore they merely punished those who were engaged in concealing the body. Another mentioned there which I myself investigated was a case in which the servants of the Hobra Factory went with large party of ploughman and ploughs and ploughed up about 125 bighas of the ryots' cultivation and sowed indigo on the land. I imprisoned the factory people, and was reprimanded of leniency, and for having shown a prejudices in favour of the planters. Another case which I want to mention, which though within my own knowledge is not contained in the list, was that when I went to the Aurangabad Subdivision I found that it was the custom to carry off the cattle of the ryots who would not sow indigo. It having been brought to my notice that a great deal of suffering was occasioned to the ryots, by the sale of their cattle in the previous year, I instituted enquiries, and having ascertained one of the places in which the cattles were kept, I sent out a party of police, and released from one of the out-factories about two or three hundred heads of cattle which even when brought to my own house, the ryots, through fear of the planters were afraid for several days, to come forward and claim." In reply to Mr. Fergusson's question—"In the 49 cases which you ferretted out, as having occurred during the last 30 years, is it not the case that in more than half of them, Europeans have not been accused, or, if accused, have been acquitted?" Sir Eden replies, "There are scarcely any one of these cases, in which the European or principal manager of the concern has even put upon his trial, although in many of them, the Judge in the cases have expressed strong opinions that such Europeans were themselves implicated in them, and it is to this importunity and freedom from responsi-

bility that I attribute the constant recurrence of these violent outrages.”⁷⁵

VI

When the indigo question had reached a crisis and the galling yoke of tyranny had reached the breaking point, and when the report of the Indigo Commission was out, Dinabandhu came out with his *Nil Durpan* in disguise of a traveller within a month of the publication of the Report of the Indigo Commission. The success of the book was great as it was quick. In the drama two planters, J. J. Wood and P. P. Rogue commit conceivable outrage ever attributed to the planters of lower Bengal.⁷⁶ They force the raiyats to plant indigo without remuneration. They confine, beat and corrupt the villagers as well as their own Indian servants, violate Indian maidens and encourage prostitution. Their oppression result in either the madness or death of almost everyone of the principal characters of the drama. Not only do the planters ruin the raiyats but also they corrupt judiciary.

Goluk Basu is a respectable peasant, what he gets from his land, provides him food for whole year, and hospitality to guests and religious performances are met with by that. But planters have forcibly captured his lands for indigo plantation and if he obliges the Sahebs, he will have to starve. Thus, his eldest son, Nobinmadhab wants to a file suit, he cannot do so owing to his father's objection to that. Not only this but also the Amin and other personnel of the factory at the instigation of Mr. Wood have marked the land of Sadhuchurn-Raichurn ignoring all their objections. They were also taken to the factory for taking advance where the planter in person flogs and kicks them. Again, in

75. Indigo Commission Report.

76. Lower Bengal was the administrative term for Bengal proper (West Bengal and Bangla Desh)

the Begunbari factory Mr. Rouge behave tyrannically with Torap and four other agricultural labourers. Then again, Mr. Wood, with the help of Dewan Gopinath instituted a false suit against Goluk Basu and Nobinmadhab. The Factory Amin is made to say that he gave his own sister to the young Saheb, and that he will now try to get raiyat's beautiful daughter, who had just appeared, for him, in hopes of promotion. He informed Choto-saheb about Khetro, who somehow arranged to bring her to his chamber taking the help of Podi and insulted her. Mr. Wood is always after money, he calls raiyats 'bloody nigger' to be beaten and does it himself with the help of *Shamchand* or leather whip. Two brave raiyats (Nobin and Torap) rescue Khetromany after she had been brought to Mr. Rouge's chamber. One of the two (Torap), gave the planter a good beating. The Magistrate in the court scene openly favours Mr. Wood, the planter.

It is for trouble-free living Goluk Basu, as has been seen, was prepared to provide many allowances, his son was not willing to that. This is a change in raiyat's outlook. Yet he could neither save his family nor others. Being not strong in money and men peasantry suffered in spite of the fact, they were on the right tract. The planters Mr. Rogue and Mr. Wood had Dewan, Amin, Clubmen, herdsman, Podi or both men and money, and they had white skin so they received support of the Establishment, when their opponents had none.

There are critics who say *Nil Durpan* is more a sketch or a design for a dramatic representation than a full length drama. Others believe, it has fulfilled all the requirements of a perfect drama. Here the dramatist, centering a single story, had created a few realistic characters and scenes in a fifth act book. While planning for the drama, he has followed the old tract, particularly in respect of dialogues. He has maintained two types of dialogues as we find in Sanskrit dramas like *Shakuntala*. The dialogues

of *Nil Durpan* for the peasants and the dialogues of the middle class Basu family and that of the Pandits are quite different from each other. Like a bolt from the blue, outrage of the planters have totally annihilated the two classes of rural people—the middle and lower.

The resistance power of the peasants has increased in every scene of the drama but as the two fighting parties were unequal, the weaker one suffered a defeat always. In reality, truthfulness, bravery and valour have been defeated in the hands of hypocrisy and wealth. Some say, Nabinmadhab should shew more vigour and be a better fighter, but it should be remembered that, he had come of a middle class landlord family and have risked many thing in contesting with the planters without having a fighting tradition. He was short of money too. If under such a social condition he was pictured contrary to what he is in the drama, that would have been unrealistic in ventilating the class of people he represents. Torap had little fighting tradition thus he had pictured that way. In reality, Torap is pictured in no better way than Nabinmadhab, his master, who has, except in the scene of Kshetramani's release althrough shown his anti-revolutionary character.

It is well-known, the peasant revolt like blue mutiny came to acquire the responsibility of a patriotic enterprise led by benevolent landowners like Nabinmadhab and peasants like Torap. The emphasis has been laid on the unity of the interest between the peasant and his native exploiter against a common foreign enemy. "This has helped to mask the truth, first about the fierce contest between the landed magnets and the common peasantry for the initiative of the struggle against the planters, and secondly, about the defeatism and the general lack of a fighting spirit which characterised the upper classes, particularly those of intermediate means', in this struggle". Let us further clarify this point.

Nil Durpan presents a story of such a class of people as Basus whose annual income under normal condition

would amount to seven hundred rupees in rents alone and their other assets to fifteen warehouses for corn, sixteen bighas of garden land, twenty ploughs and fifty day-labourers. They could afford to celebrate the pujas in great style, entertaining their guests with music and *jatra*. They grow enough food to feed the family for the whole year and still have a good deal left over. They make a bit of money by selling their produce like mustard and tobacco which they do not require for their family use. It is an index of their culture and resources.

Side by side we see Sadhuchurn, the principal raiyat of the village. He has only a half plough and twenty bighas of land of which about half has been rendered unproductive by salt water. He cannot afford to have his house protected by a fence, so that his wife and daughter are defenceless when the menfolk left for the fields for sowing seeds.

The play also provides a more realistic aspect of village economy, the role of moneylender.⁷⁷ Here even the raiyat has to share his hard-earned money with the *mahajans* every year. 'The money-lender is a well-wisher of his debtors'. Again, "the *mahajans* never bring an action against their debtors". These are said in defending the *mahajani*. The Dewan who with all his wickedness is

77. It is a notorious fact, that almost all the raiyats are entirely in the hands of the money-lender because of the exorbitant rate of land-rent and high prices. It is impossible for him to meet exorbitant demand of interest out of small profits from the cultivation of his land. So he is forced to go to the money-lender time and again. As the demand for money is great so it is impossible for a raiyat to borrow it without paying an exorbitant rate of interest. On the other hand, if he is unable to pay his-rent, he is sure to be oppressed and harassed by his zamindar. He thus always thinks it better to be in the hands of his Mahajan than in those of his zamindars. The Mahajans are most oppressive class of men and from the day "a raiyat falls into the hands of the Mahajans he becomes a degraded being." (The Calcutta Review, vol. vi). "The evil has now attained to such proportions, that it can no longer be left to itself, without serious political damages." (The Indian Mirror, Sept., 28, 1875).

represented as a sympathetic one to the raiyats and is therefore regarded as unreliable one by the planters. Dinabandhu sets himself also as a defender of the contemporary landlord who was represented by Nabinnmadhab. As a 'progressive' writer, he was at the same time striking a blow for an emergent class who, as Kling points out, benefited from the rebellion: 'Ultimately they snatched the fruits of a victory from the peasants and the indigo disturbances mark the transfer of power from planter to money-lender in lower Bengal'. In this light we will consider Torap who is the most popular character of the drama and "is largely responsible for Dinabandhu's fame as a 'progressive' writer...(He) has been the symbol of peasant insurgency...(But the author) has turned him into a perfect petty bourgeois... What can be more endearing to the Calcutta intelligentsia of 1860 than to read about some one who thinks like themselves and is helped by his fictional existence to perform such brave and noble deeds as beating up a wicked white planter and saving a pregnant woman from his lust ?"⁷⁸

Act. II, Sc. I provides us with some details of Torap's ideology. He is seen as a prisoner here in the warehouses of Begunberey factory. Three other raiyats are his fellow captives. Of these, one is an agricultural labourer, the Tikiri, and the rest are poor peasants. Torap dominates the conversation as one who obviously is a selfmade leader of the poor and deals with the doubts and questions of others with a certain amount of authority. One of the raiyats seems to have little faith in the Sahebs. He was twice made the victim of false criminal charges. And here Torap defends the Saheb and explains that the magistrates are the persons of respectable families (*baronoker chhawal*) while the planters are low-caste people of England (*belater chhotonok*). The same idea was expressed by Savitri in her conversation with Sadhuchurn's wife.

78. Guha Ranjit, op cit

"While by the autum of 1860 masses of armed, angry peasants were fighting to *end* the cultivation of indigo once for all—the struggle had by then nearly gone beyond the the bounds of the immediate economic issues involved—the rebel peasant, thought up by a luminary of Bengal Renanissance, is busy trying to reform the planters: he still seems to be hoping that they would give up their predatory ways and take up indigo cultivation as a regular agricultural persuit in which, Torap assures them, they depend on the co-operation of the peasantry (Act. II, Sc. I)... This is not an angry, insurgent peasant's voice addressing an enemy, it is a baboo's voice supplicating the Saheb to come to terms with the turbulent *chashas* before they get out of hand".⁷⁹ A few words from Sisirkumar Ghosh can even at this distance in time sum up for us a conclusion. "The planters are collecting revolvers, ammunition and *lathials*,...while the villagers are gathering clubs and spears..." but *Nil Durpan* is practically silent about this although it was published only a few weeks later. This is so "because the author is simply not responsive to the music of a clash of arms between the peasant and his oppressors".⁸⁰ One should not mistake us with an idea that it has been said that there is no violence in the play. There is indeed. "But the theme of retaliatory violence by the victims is kept firmly under control throughout the text. For whatever the reality of the struggle raging the indigo districts, the author does not allow his realism for which he is so highly rated by the literary critics, to get the better of his philosophy". Torap at last succeeds in laying his hands on the wicked Chotosaheb and even at that time Nabinmadhab tries to reason with him "What is the use of beating him? We ought not to be cruel, because they are so" (Act. III, Sc. 3). In any case, his advice is not lost on Torap, who, after he has bitten of Mr. Wood's nose in the affray involving Barobaboo, says

79. *ibid*

80. *ibid.*

that he would have inflicted further physical punishment on the planter if he had a chance, "but I would not have killed him, he is a creature of God, (Act. V. Sc. 2). Finally, it should be noted that he is not even at all that brave : he confess to being mightily, scared at the sight of Nabin-madhab being hit on his head by the p'anter, and in his very last speech he says : 'Let me now hide myself inside the barn ; I shall fly off in the night' (Act. V, Sc. 2). "This does not strike one as exactly the sentiments of a peasant hero, a fish in water, at the height of a popular rebellion sweeping the countryside...The only character to take a stand of total defiance is a poor ryot who, even as he is forcibly led away from the fields, asserts that he 'would rather have my body rot in the jail than any more prepare the indigo of that white man' (Act. II, Sc. 3). But this one firm voice of a genuinely rebellious peasant drowned in the chorus of petty-bourgeois wailing of the rest of the cast. In the end there is nothing in all their faith in the law, the civil service, the Lieutenant-Governor and the Queen that can save the Basus of Swapur from being utterly ruined".⁸¹

Nil Durpan is written in the midst of a peasant revolt. The author stands close to the power of the State seeking cover behind the law and the bureaucracy. It also shows what happens to him if does so ; he is destroyed. In spite of all these merits and demerits of the play *Nil-Durpan* can be accepted as a revolutionary drama, which speaks for the peasantry in its limited way, considering the time and position when it was written. A revolutionary drama of today will have a different approach and no body should consider a revolutionary drama of the last century taking in a view of the present-day outlook. This is the justification for bringing out the present edition with such an introductory note and after a lapse of more than a century.

81. *ibid.*

VII

With *Nil Durpan* the public stage in Bengal came into existence in 1872. It would be interesting here to discuss as to how the public stage got popularity in course of a few years of the formation of the first public stage. Earlier than the first public performance of *Nil Durpan*, there was some private stages. It was a Russian, Herasian Lebedeff, who is said to have formed the early stage in Bengal as early as 1795. His Theatre was situated at Doomtallah (modern Ezra Street). Although Bengali stage of the later period is in no way related to Lebedeff's Theatre, yet, it was, in a sense, a nucleus to that, therefore, it should be remembered as a historical fact. Lebedeff used to sell ticket. The rate of admission of his performance was Rs. 8 for Box and Rs. 4 for Gallery. This Theatre was divorced from the taste and culture of the sons of the soil. Thus it could not last for long. Prior to Lebedeff, there were sporadic attempts for drama performances which could be known from Seton-Karr's "Selection from the Calcutta Gazetteer" and William Carry's "Good Old Days of Hon'ble John Company". From their account it is known that Calcutta Theatre was the second theatre of Bengal which came into existence during Lebedeff's time. Here "Nick or Nothing", "Trick upon Trick", The "Farce of Barnby Rattle" etc. were played. The rate of season ticket for a family of two was Rs. 120 and for one Rs. 64 only.

During this the time neo-rich class or the Bengalees or the Rajas, Maharajas, Benians were found to spend lakhs of Rupees for the weddings of dogs and monkeys, for *kabigan*, *akhrai*, *half-akhrai* and the type of amusements as well as in playing kites, seeing the fight of pigeons or Indian nightingales and the type of performances. They had no fine taste, they were pleased with cheap, light, sexual, loose and unchaste things. Thus the theatre they produced was in no way better than what their predecessors or the non-Indian theatre parties did.

Bengali theatre by the Bengalees started after seventyfive years of Lebedeff's effort. Although many attempts were made by the rich Bengalees like Prasanna K. Tagore and others to establish Bengali Theatres but they were confined to a limited few. After about thirtyfive years of Lebedeff's efforts, he founded "Hindu Theatre" in 1831. The name of this Theatre was an imitation of the Hindu School which was founded in Calcutta in 1817. In the Hindu Theatre, at the Narikeldanga Garden House of P. K. Tagore, the first play staged was "Uttar-Ram-Charit". It was translated by H. H. Wilson. Here a portion of Shakespear's "Julius Ceasor" and "Nothing Superfluous" were staged. This Theatre could not last for long, because, it had no mass base. No Bengali play was staged here and when the performance was held that was confined to the invited guests only. Then came "Desiya Natyasala" in 1833, where too first English and Sanskrit dramas were staged. It was founded by Nabin Chandra Basu at Shambazar. Here amorous play like "Vidya Sundar" got popularity. Next came into existence "Oriental Theatre." This was situated at 268, Guranhatta, Chitpore Road, Calcutta. Here "The Merchant of Venice" was staged in 1854. Pearymohon Basu's "Jorassanko Natyasala" was founded soon after and by 1857 there came into being a number of theatres, yet, none was open to all. It was the National Theatre, which was founded in 1872, a theatre for all. This was founded with Dinabandhu's *Nil Durpan*. The drama soon got wide popularity. Meantime, different theatre parties were established in different places, one after another, for the general public. A glance may be had from the following account.⁸²

82. Bandyopadhyay, B. *Bangiya Natya-salar Itihas*. 1795-1876, Calcutta. Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, Calcutta, 4th edn. 1368. B.S.

A List of a Few Early Stages

A. Theatres from 1831 to 1870

<i>Name of Theatres</i>	<i>Year of Establishment</i>	<i>Name of Proprietors etc.</i>
1. Hindu Theatre	1831	Prasanno K. Tagore
2. Desiya Natyasala	1833	Nobinchandra Basu
3. Bidyotsahini	1853	Kaliprasanna Sinha
Rangamancha		
4. Natyamancha	1857	Chhatu & Latu Babu
5. Belgachia Natyasala	1859	Pratap C. Sinha & Iswar C. Sinha
6. Metropolitan Theatre	1859	
7. Private Theatrical Society	1865	Sovabazar Rajbati
8. Banga Natyasala	1865	B. Dhar & C. L. Bose
9. Natyasala	1867	Jorasanko Thakurbari

B. Theatres from 1871 to 1900

1. National Theatre	1872	Aurdhendoo Sikur, Dharmadas Sur etc. later Pratap C. Jahuri
2. Hindu National Theatre (Great National)	1873	N. Bandyopadhyay, Bhuban Neogi
3. Calcutta Oriental Theatre	1873	K. C. Deb's House
4. Bengal Theatre	1873	Saratchandra Ghosh
5. Great National Opera Co.	1873	Nagendranath Bandyopadhyay
6. Royal Bengal Theatre	1874	B. Chattopadhyay
7. Indian National Theatre	1875	K. Bandyopadhyay
8. The Indian Theatre	1875	Rajkrishna Roy
9. City Theatre	1875	Amarendranath Dutta
10. New Aryan (late National)	1884	Dharmadas Sur
11. Star Theatre	1884	Gurmukh Roy
12. Emerald Theatre	1887	Gopal Lal Seal Sarat K. Roy
13. Classic Theatre	1894	Amarendranath Dutta

Although National Theatre is the first public stage of Calcutta, yet, first show of *Nil Durpan* by selling tickets was done in Dacca in the "Purba Ranga Bhumi"* which enthused people and helped for a great national agitation.

When National Theatre was formed and it decided to stage *Nil Durpan*, Girishchandra objected to the very name of the Theatre. Since others were interested in that name, Girish left the organisation. But afterwards he joined them and again there came a rift. However, in the absence of Girish, Aurdhendoo Sikur Mustafy and his friends took the charge of the play. On 20th November, 1872 the following advertisement appeared in *The Englishman*.

"A new native theatre society—a few native gentlemen, residents of Bagh Bazar; have established a Theatrical Society. The Calcutta National Theatrical Society, their object being to improve the stage, as also to encourage youths in the composition of new Bengali drama from the proceeds of sales of tickets. The attempt is laudable one and is the first of its kind. The first public performance is to take place on 7th on the premises of late Babu Madhushudan Sanyal, Upper Chitpore Road."

It is known from the announcement that the name of the National Theatre, when *Nil Durpan* was held, was The Calcutta Theatrical Society. National Theatre is abridgement of this long name. It was first held on 7th December. The price of the tickets for this show was for the first class one rupee; and second class 50 paise. The following was the casting for the first night:

Aurdhendoo—Wood, Sabitri, Goluk Basu, and Ryot.
 Nagendranath—Nabinmadhab
 Kironchandra—Bindumadhab
 Mahendralal—Sadhuchurn, Podi and Magistrate
 Motilal Sur—Raichurn, Toraji, Gope and Mokhtiar.
 Shibchandra—Gopinath
 Abinash—Mr. Rogue

* Ghosh, Hemendra Prasad *Nil Durpan*, pub. by, Kar, Majumdar & Co.,

Sashibhusan—Amin, Pandit & Kabiraj

Goloknath—Khalasi

Purnachandra—Lathiyal or Club-man

Gopalchandra—Nabinmadab's Mukthier, Aduri & a Ryot

Jadunath—Ploughman

Amritalal Basu—Sairindri

Khetramohan—Saralata

Tinkari—Rebati

Amritalal (Bel Babu)—Kshetromani.

Benimadhab Mitra was advisor and President of the Theatre. Nagendranath Bandyopadhyay was the Secretary and Kartick Chandra Pal was the dresser. In the musical hand, Kalidas Sanyal played harmonium, Nemai Ostadji, Gourdas Babaji and Rajababu of Bagbazar played violin, Jogendranath Bhattacharjee played Dhol or a kind of drum.⁸³

The drama was a great success, yet, Girish Chandra was not satisfied with the performance. He wrote in a pseudonym many criticism in different newspapers. He also founded a Jatra Party and for this Party he wrote a farce-song. Before starting the play the following song was sung by Radhamadhab Kar where all the members and staff of the National Theatre were taunted :

• luptabeni⁸⁴ baiche terodhar ।
 tate purna⁸⁵ aurdho-indu⁸⁶ kiron⁸⁷
 sindurmakha matir⁸⁸ har ॥
 naga⁸⁹ hote dhara dhai, saraswati kshinakai⁹⁰
 bibidha bigraha⁹¹ ghaater upar sova pai ;
 shib⁹² sambhysuta⁹³ mahendradi⁹⁴ jadupati⁹⁵ abatar ॥

83. Mitra Sailendranath—"Bangiya NatyaSalae Nil Durpan", *Nil Durpan* published by Kar Majumdar & Co. op. cit.

(84) Benimadhab Mitra (President) (85) Purnachandra Ghosh
 (86) Aurdendoo Sikur Mustafy (87) Kironchandra Bandyopadhyaya
 (88) Motilal Sur (89) Nagendranath Bandyopadhyay (All actors)
 (90) shallow knowledge (91) an abusive word (92) Shibeandra
 Chattopadhyay (Actor) (93) Kartick Chandra Pal (Dresser) (94)
 Mahendralal Basu (Actor) (95) Jadunath Bhattacharya (Actor)

alakheyate bishnu⁹⁶ kare gan,
 kiba dharma⁹⁷ khetro⁹⁸ sthan,
 abinashi⁹⁹ muni hrishi karche bashe dhyan ;
 sabai mile deke bale, dinabandhu¹⁰⁰ kara par ||
 kiba balumai bela¹⁰¹ palepal¹⁰² reter bela,¹⁰³
 bhubanmohan chare,¹⁰⁴
 kare gopale¹⁰⁵ khela,
 miche kare asha, jato chasa¹⁰⁶
 niler gorai dechche sar ||
 kalinkito sashi¹⁰⁷ harase amrita¹⁰⁸ barashe,
 jnan hai ba diner¹⁰⁹ gaurab etodine khashe,
 sthan mahatme hari—sunri
 paisa de dekhe bahar ||

This farce of Girishchandra speaks that although it was highly received, yet, he did not like it. Dinabandhu too was not satisfied with the first night's performance. Even though it was staged in two consecutive Saturdays and then it was stopped. Further again, the drama was staged when Girishchandra joined in the National Theatre. He with his team appeared on 29th March, 1873. This was well advertised—"The National Theatre will re-open, for the benefit of the Native Hospital at the Town Hall."¹¹⁰ But once again it was divided into two, one led by Girishchandra, Dharmadas Sur, Mohendralal Basu, Motilal Sur etc., and the other by Aurdhendoo Sikur Mustafy and others. The opposite party also published an announcement in the following way :

(96) Bishnucharan Chattopadhyaya, a singer of behind the scene
 (97) Dharmadas Sur (Stage Manager) (98) Kshetromohan Gangyopadhyay (Actor) (99) Abinashchandra Kar (Actor) (100) Dinabandhu Mitra, the dramatist (101) Amritlal Mukhopadhyaya, Bel Babu or Kapten Bel. (Actor) (102) Rajendranath Pal (103) Rehearsal at night (104) Bhubanmohan Neogi (105) Gopal Chandra Das (Actor) (106) Sad Gope Actors (107) Sashibhusan Das (Actor) (108) Amritlal Basu (Actor) (109) Dinabandhu, the playwright.

110. Mitra, Sailendranath—"Bangiya Natyasalae Nil Durpan," published by Kar, Majumdar & Co. op. cit.

National Theatre, Calcutta

We are sorry to announce that owing to a breach amongst the Members of the above society through the instrumentality of the Directors Babu Girish Chandra Ghose, the play of Nil Darpan, to take place this evening at the Town Hall, is hereby postponed till further notice.

29th March, 1873

Nogendranath Banerjee,
Hony. Secretary.
Aurdhendoo Sikur Mustafy,
Master.

In reply to this announcement the following notice appeared in the same paper.

To night ! To night !!
at the Town Hall !!!
The Grand Re-opening of the
NATIONAL THEATRE
For the benefit of the Native Hospital.
The Tragedy of Nil Durpan.
Doors opened at 7 p.m.
Play to commence at 8 p.m.

N.B.—Gentlemen, friends, and patrons are requested not to lend their ears to the above advertisement of several persons who are against the Theatre.

National Theatre

Office : Baug Bazar
29th March, 1873.

Aumritalal Paul,
Hony. Secretary.¹¹¹

In 1873 Hindu National Theatre also staged *Nil Durpan* at Howrah Railway Theatre on April 23. After this, the party went to Dacca. In Dacca the drama was highly

111. Bandyopadhyay, Brijendranath op, cit.

received. They also went to Allahabad, where, when the performance was in progress, had to be given up as the British Army men rushed there to the stage with swords. They were furious, particularly against Torap, who, was acting lively and snubbing Mr. Rogue. In another occasion, it is said, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar was carried away by the play to the extent that he took one of his slippers and threw it at the head of Aurdhendoo Sikur Mustafy who was playing the role of Mr. Rogue. The drama was staged in various centres of the country. The following is a list of the play from a recorded history¹¹² but this is only a fraction of the actual data of performance :

Some Dates of the play "Nil Durpan" from 1872—1875

<i>Date of performance</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Produced by</i>
7th December	1872	National Theatre, Jorasanko
21st December	1872	,,
1st February	1873	,,
15th February	1873	,,
25th February	1873	,,
5th March	1873	,,
29th March	1873	,,
19th April	1873	Natya Mandir of R. Deb
26th April	1873	Howrah Railway Theatre
May—June	1873	East Bengal Theatre (Purba Ranga Bhumi)
1st January	1874	Sanyal Lodge, Jorasanko
21st January	1874	Great National Theatre
25th February	1874	,,
11th April	1874	,,
30th January	1875	,,
6th February	1875	,,
21st August	1875	The Indian (Late Great) National Theatre

Among all the dramas of Dinabandhu *Nil Durpan* is most powerful. Here upper and lower grade peasantry got their places. The revolutionary spark which Dinabandhu showed in *Nil Durpan*, we very much regret to point out, gradually ended with *Nabin Tapaswini*, *Lilabati*, *Jamai Barik* and *Kamale Kamini Natak*. In these he was a different playwright. Slowly Dinabandhu went away from his revolutionary ideas and has shown his typical middle class character. He, afterwards, or after 1860, followed the old beaten track of his predecessors, or Bankim and others. He could not follow the path of Kaliprasanna Sinha, Harishchandra Mukherjee or others who stood for justice and freedom. For this adjustment in life he suffered in his service career also. He could not protest even when there were gross injustice against him.

From the very beginning of the Bengali stage peasant life is being depicted. Some dramas not only depicted peasant life but also preached for class consciousness. The relation between oppressor and oppressed was also visualised by these dramatists. Thus they could propagate for the unity of the same class of people. Bigotry of Hinduism, gloomy superstition, pungent living in the style of Europeans, were also criticized in their plays as well as in the writings of others. In this trend litterateurs, poets, dramatists have shared their role duly. Along with these people, there were a group of natives who wanted to imitate *Sahebs*. They were of the opinion that what the *Saheb's* do, only that are to be done. Thus there were two parallel thinking among the intelligentsias and playwrights, and the dramas bore these Bengali characters then. One was confined among the luxurious and the other among the common men. Thus there were dramas like "*Vidya-sundar*", "*Ratnabali*" in one side, and on the other "*Nil Durpan*" of Dinabandhu, *Zamider Durpan* of Meer Mosharaf Hussain, *Cha-kar-Darpan* of Dakshinaranjan, *Buro Shaliker Ghare Ro* of Michael and others. These persons have created a different environ-

ment in the drama movement. Although it is true that all these dramas were not of the same standard, and were not able to promote the same ideas or class consciousness or could create then existing class character, yet, they served faithfully their purpose they wanted to cater. Only in *Nil Durpan*, and *Cha-kar-Darpan* there are flashes of class consciousness or class struggle. Other dramas although failed to focuss class-struggle, could unlock the mask of exploitation of the people and the excess of feudal lords. Therefore these dramas of a new consciousness were not liked by the ruling class.

In conclusion, it can be said that *Nil Durpan* could successfully focuss the oppression of the indigo planters who were symbols of the Europeans business community. This is a drama where peasantry is accepted as a class who are found to do struggle, in their own way, for class interest. It is here, the oppressed are seen to rise to establish their right in accordance with their class consciousness and ideas which should not be examined in the light of present day idea. Thus it was a 'barometer of people's opinion'. Likewise, *Zamindar Darpan* is a vivid picture where the tyranny of the zaminders be had faithfully. In *Cha-kar-Darpan* one finds a picture of the tea plantation workers who were treated like cates and dogs by the European tea planters. They revolted when opportunity came to them. Here one find direct clashes among the rulers and the ruled and therefore these dramas were prohibited by the then law of the country. Here we remember Michael's "Bur-Salika Ghare ro" that comes out almost simultaneously with *Nil Durpan*, *Zamindar Darpan*, *Cha-kar-Darpan* and other *Darpan*-dramas. It also depicts social injustice and the sufferings of the peasantry at large.

In the early period of Bengali stage these 'Mirror'-dramas were responsible for bringing a new air in the drama movement. But after that, or from 1860 to 1940, unfortunately, for about 80 years, no important drama depicting the

life of the peasantry or the down-trodden people, were written. Even though several hundred dramas, during these years, came into being. But since the forties of this century there came a flood of the drama that depict the peasantry, labourers as well as and other weaker sections of the people. These dramas infiltrated new consciousness with the masses. Here one finds dramas on the routed rural economy, famine, food problem, land hunger, oppression of the zaminders and many others. It cannot be said with certainty that the dramatists of the 40s and thereafter were not educated with the spirit and ideas for their dramas of 60s of the last century. And it is here there is the necessity of remembering *Nil Durpan* even after a hundred years and more and that justify our stand why we have re-published the book after a lapse of so many years. With these words we introduce the book to the readers with more valuable information, as will be found in the appendices, for their consideration.

Monograph Association
of India, Calcutta,
December, 27, 1972.

SANKAR SEN GUPTA

(Title Page of the 1st English edition)

NIL DURPAN,

OR

THE INDIGO PLANTING MIRROR.

A Drama

TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI

BY

A Native.

CALCUTTA.

C. H. MANUEL, CALCUTTA PRINTING & PUBLISHING PRESS,
No. 10, Weston's Lane, Cossitollah

1861.

(প্রথম সংস্করণের টাইটেল পেজ)

নীল দর্পণঃ

নাটকঃ

নীলকর-বিবধর-দংশন-কাতর প্রজানিকর-
ক্ষমস্বরেণ কেনচিং পথিকেনাভিপ্রণীতঃ

— o —

ঢাকা

শ্রীরামচন্দ্র ভৌমিক কর্তৃক
বাংলা যন্ত্রে মুদ্রিত

শকাব্দ ১৭৮২। ১৮৬০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ

INTRODUCTION

BY THE PUBLISHER OF FIRST ENGLISH EDITION

The original Bengali of this Drama—the Nil Durpan, or Indigo Planting Mirror—having excited considerable interest, a wish was expressed by various Europeans to see a translation of it. This has been made by a Native ; both the original and translation are *bona fide* Native productions and depict the Indigo Planting System as viewed by Natives at large.

The Drama is the favourite mode with the Hindus for describing certain states of society, manners, customs. Since the days of Sir W. Jones, by scholars at Paris, St. Petersburg, and London, the Sanskrit Drama has, in this point of view, been highly appreciated. The Bengali Drama imitates, in this respect its Sanskrit parent. The evils of Kulin Brhminism, widow marriage, prohibition, quackery, fanaticism, have been depicted by it with great effect.

Nor has the system of Indigo planting escaped notice ; hence the origin of this work, the Nil Durpan, which, though exhibiting no marvellous or very tragic scenes, yet, in simple homely language, gives the “annals of the poor” ; pleads the cause of those who are the feeble ; it describes a respectable ryot, a peasant proprietor, happy with his family in the enjoyment of his land till the Indigo System compelled him to take advances, to neglect his own land, to cultivate crops which beggared him, reducing him to the condition of a serf and a vagabond ; the effect of this on his home, children and relatives are pointed out in language, plain but true ; it shows how arbitrary power debases the lord as well as the peasant ; reference is also made to the partiality of various Magistrates in favour of Planters and to the Act of last year penally enforcing Indigo contracts.

Attention has of late years been directed by Christian Philanthropists to the condition of the ryots of Bengal, their teachers, and the oppression which they suffer, and the conclusion arrived at is, that there is little prospect, or possibility of ameliorating the mental, moral, or spiritual condition of the ryot without giving him security of landed tenure. If the Bengal ryot is to be treated as a serf, or a mere squatter or day-labourer, the missionary, the school master, even the Developer of the resources of India, will find their work like that of Sisyphus—vain and useless.

Statistics have proved that in France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Saxony, the education of the peasant, along with the security of tenure he enjoys on his small farms, has encouraged industrious, temperate, virtuous, and cleanly habits, fostered a respect for property, increased social comforts, cherished a spirit of healthy and active independence, improved the cultivation of the land, lessened pauperism, and has rendered the people averse to revolution, and friends of order. Even Russia is carrying out a grand scheme of serf-emanicipation in this spirit.

It is the earnest wish of the writer of these lines that harmony may be speedily established between the Planter and the Ryot that mutual interests may bind the two classes together, and that the European may be in the Mofussil the protecting Aegis of the peasants, who may be able “to sit each man under his mango and tamarind tree, none daring to make him afraid.”

—Rev. James Long

PREFACE
BY THE AUTHOR

I present "The Indigo Planting Mirror" to the Indigo Planters' hands ; now, let every one of them, having observed his face, erase the freckle of the stain of selfishness from his forehead, and in its stead, place on it the sandal powder of beneficence, then shall I think my labour successful, good fortune for the helpless class of ryots, and preservation of England's honour. Oh, ye Indigo Planters ! Your malevolent conduct has brought a stain upon the English Nation, which was so graced by the ever-memorable names of Sydney, Howard, Hall and other great men. Is your desire for money so very powerful, that through the instigation of that vain wealth, you are engaged in making holes like rust in the long acquired and pure fame of the British people ? Abstain now from that unjust conduct through which you are raising immense sums as your profits ; and then the poor people, with their families, will be able to spend their days in ease. You are now-a-days purchasing things worth a hundred rupees by expending only ten ;—and you well know what great trouble the ryots are suffering from that. Still you are not willing to make that known, being entirely given up to the acquisition of money. You say, that some amongst you give donations to schools, and also medicine in time of need—but Planters' donations to school are more odious than the application of the shoe for the destruction of a milch cow, and their grants of medicine are like unto mixing the inspissated milk in the cup of poison. If the application of a little turpentine after being beat by *Shamchand* be forming a dispensary, then it may be said that in every factory there is a dispensary. The Editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other

people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What surprising power of attraction silver has ! The detestable Judas gave the graat Preacher of the Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder then, if the proprietors of two newspapers becoming enslaved by the hope of gaining one thousand rupees, throw the poor helpless of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths. But *misery and happiness revolve like a wheel*, and that the sun of happiness is about to shed his light on the people of this country, is becoming very probable. The most kindhearted Queen Victoria, the mother of the people, thinking it unadvisable to suckle her children through maid-servants, has now taken them on her own lap to nourish them. The most learned, intelligent, brave, and open-hearted Lord Canning is now the Governor General of India ; Mr. Grant, who always suffers in the sufferings of his people, and is happy when they are happy, who punishes the wicked and supports the good, has taken charge of the Lieutenant-Governorship, and other persons, as Messers. Eden, Herschel, etc., who are all well-known for their love of truth, for their great experience and strict impartiality, are continually expanding themselves lotus-like on the surface of the lake of the Civil Service. Therefore, it is becoming fully evident that these great men will very soon take hold of the rod of justice in order to stop the sufferings which the ryots are enduring from the great giant *Rahu*, the Indigo Planter.*

—A Traveller

* Translated from the Bengali by a Native.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

GOLUK CHUNDER BASU.

NOBIN MADHAB	}	<i>Sons of Goluk Chunder.</i>
BINDU MADHAB	}	

SADHU CHURN—*A Neighbouring Ryot.*

RAY CHURN—*Sadhu's brother.*

GOPI CHURN DAS—*The Dewan.*

J. J. WOOD	}	<i>Indigo Planters.</i>
P. P. ROSE*	}	

THE AMIN or LAND MEASURER.

A KHALASI—*A Tent-pitcher.*

TAIDGIR—*Native Superintendant of Indigo Cultivation.*

Magistrate, Amla, Attorney, Duputy Inspector, Keeper of the Gaol, Doctor, a Cow-keeper, a Native Doctor, Four Boys, a Latyal or Club-man, and a Herdsman.

WOMEN

SABITRI—*Wife of Goluk Chunder.*

SOIRINDRI—*Wife of Nobin.*

SARALOTIA—*Wife of Bindu Madab.*

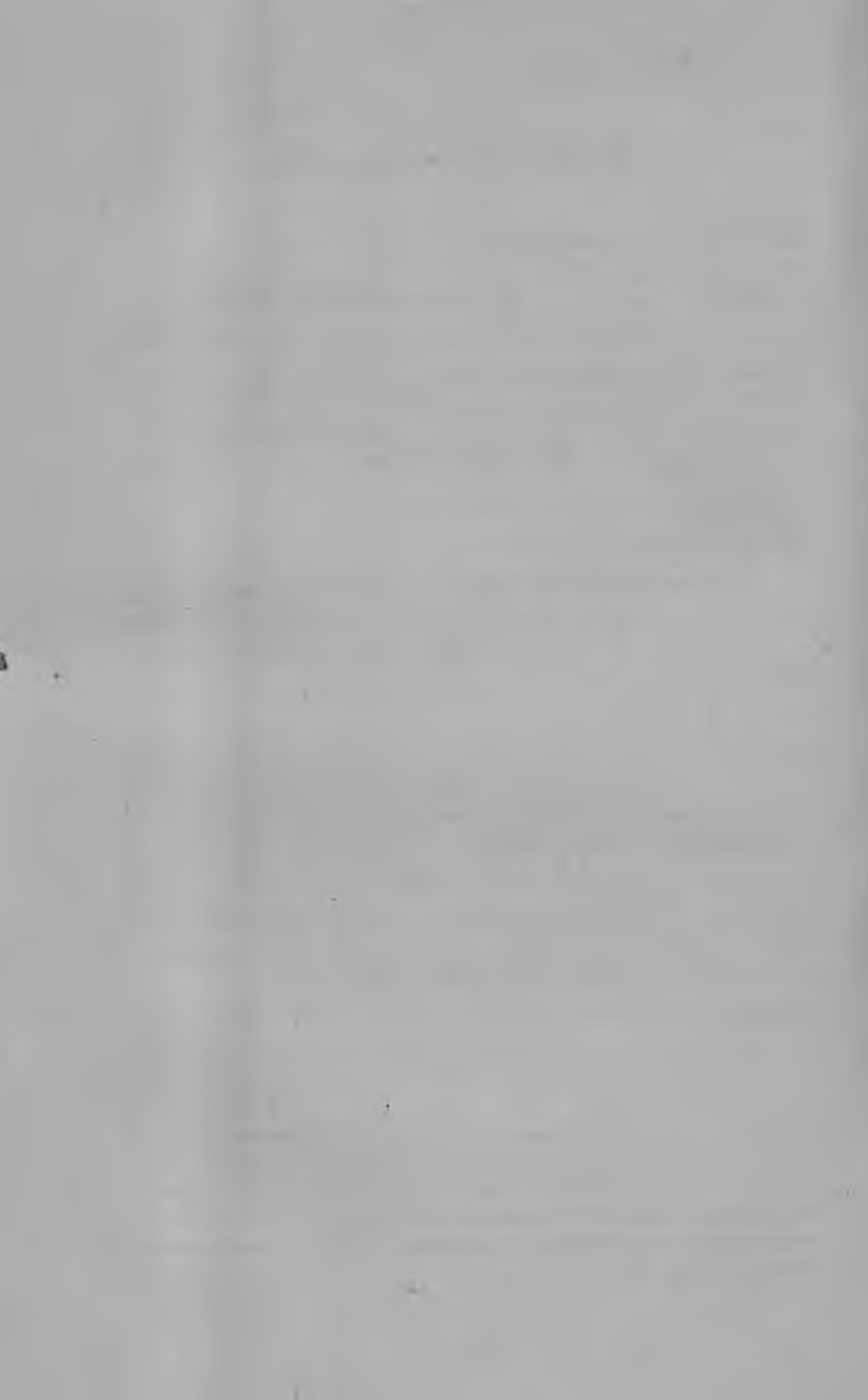
REBOTI—*Wife of Sadhu Churn.*

KHETRAMANI—*Daughter of Sadhu.*

ADURI—*Maid-servant of Goluk Chunder's house.*

PODI MOYRANI—*A Sweetmeat maker. (This woman was a procuress gathering women for the gratification of planter's lust—Ed.)*

* The name of Indigo Planter Mr. Rogue was translated as Mr. Rose, and we have, in this edition, introduced Mr. Rogue (as in the original) as Mr. Rose (as per First English edition) when he first appears on the stage, and later on, we have mentioned him as Mr. Rogue following the original Bengali. The same method was followed even in the third Indian edition.—Ed.



FIRST ACT

FIRST SCENE

*Svaropur (a veranda attached to)—Goluk Chunder's
Gola or Store-House*

Basu Goluk Chunder and Sadhu Churn sitting

Sadhu. Master, I told you then we cannot live any more in this country. You did not hear me however. A poor man's word bears fruit after the lapse of years.

Goluk. O my child ! Is it easy to leave one's country ? My family has been here for seven generations. The lands which our forefathers rented have enabled us never to acknowledge ourselves servants of others. The rice, which grows, provides food for the whole year, means of hospitality to guests, and also the expense of religious services ; the mustard seed we get supplies oil for the whole year, and, besides, we can sell it for about sixty or seventy rupees. Svaropur is not a place where people are in want. It has rice, peas, oil, molasses from its fields, vegetables in the garden, and fish from the tank ; whose heart is not torn when obliged to leave such a place ? And who can do that easily ?

Sadhu. Now it is no more a place of happiness ; your garden is already gone, and your holdings are well nigh gone. Ah ! it is not yet three years since the Saheb took a lease of this place, and he has already ruined the whole village. We cannot bear to turn our eyes in the southern direction towards the house of the heads of the villages (*Mandal*). Oh ! what was it once, and what is it now ! Three years ago, about sixty men used to make a daily feast in the house ; there were ten ploughs, and about forty or fifty oxen ; as to the court-yard, it was crowded like as at the horse races ; when they used to arrange the ricks of corn it appeared, as it were, that the lotus had expanded itself on the surface of a lake bordered by

sandal groves ; the granary was as large as a hill ; but last year the granary, not being repaired, was on the point of falling into the yard. Because he was not allowed to plant Indigo in the rice-field, the wicked Saheb beat the *Majo* and *Sajo Babus* most severely ; and how very difficult it was to get them out of his clutches ; the ploughs and kine were sold, and at that crisis the two Mandals left the village.

Goluk. Did not the eldest Mandal go to bring his brethren back ?

Sadhu. They said, "We would rather beg from door to door than go to live there again." The eldest Mandal is not left alone, and he has kept two ploughs, which are nearly always engaged in the Indigo-fields. And even this person is making preparations for flying off. Oh, Sir, I tell you also to throw aside this infatuated attachment (*maya*) for your native place. Last time your rice went, and this time, your honour will go.

Goluk. What honour remains to us now ? The Planter has prepared his place of cultivation round about the tank, and will plant Indigo there this year. In that case, our women will be entirely excluded from the tank. And also the Saheb has said that if we do not cultivate our rice-fields with Indigo, he will make Nobin Madhab to drink the water of seven Factories. (*i. e. to be confined in them*).

Sadhu. Has not the eldest Babu gone to the Factory ?

Goluk. Has he gone of his own will ? The *Pyeadah* (a servant) has carried him off there.

Sadhu. But our eldest Babu has very great courage. On the day the Saheb said, "If you don't hear the Amin, and don't plant the Indigo within the ground marked off, then shall we throw your houses into the river Betroboti, and shall make you eat your rice in the factory godown," the eldest Babu replied, "As long as we shall not get the price for the fifty bighas of land sown with Indigo last year, we will not give one bigha this year for Indigo.

What do we care for our house? We shall even risk (pawn) our lives."

Goluk. What could he have done, without he said that? Just see, no anxiety would have remained in our family if the fifty bighas of rice produce had been left with us. And if they give us the money for the Indigo, the greater part of our troubles will go away.

Nobin Madhab enters

O my son, what has been done?

Nobin. Sir, does the cobra shrink from biting the little child on the lap of its mother on account of the sorrow of the mother? I flattered him much, but he understood nothing by that. He kept to his word and said, "Give us sixty bighas of land, secured by written documents, and take 50 rupees, then we shall close the two years' account at once."

Goluk. Then, if we are to give sixty bighas for the cultivation of the Indigo, we cannot engage in any other cultivation whatever. Then we shall die without rice crops.

Nobin. I said, "Saheb, as you engage all our men, our ploughs, and our kine, everything in the Indigo field, only give us every year through, our food. We don't want hire." On which, he with a laugh said, "You surely don't eat Yaban's rice."

Sadhu. Those whose only pay is a bellyful of food are, I think, happier than we are.

Goluk. We have nearly abandoned all the ploughs; still we have to cultivate Indigo. We have no chance in a dispute with the Sahebs. They bind and beat us, it is for us to suffer. We are consequently obliged to work.

Nobin. I shall do as you order, Sir; but my design is for once to bring an action into Court.

Aduri. Our Mistress is making noise within. The day is far advanced; will you not go to bathe, and take your food? The boiled rice is very near become dry.

Sadhu. (*Standing up*) Sir, decide something about this, or I shall die. If we give the labour of one-and-half of our ploughs for the cultivation of nine bigahs of Indigo fields, our boiling pots of rice will go empty. Now, I am going away, Sir, farewell, our eldest Babu.

Goluk. We don't think that God will any more allow us to bathe and to take food in this land. Now, my son, go and bathe.

[*All go away*]

SECOND SCENE

The house of Sadhu Churn

Ray Churn enters with his plough

Ray. (*Laying down his plough*) The stupid Amin is a tiger. The violence with which he came upon me ! Oh my God ! I thought that he was coming to devour me. That villain did not hear a single word and with force he marked off the ground. If they take five bighas of land of Sanpoltola what will my family eat ? First, we will shed tears before them ; if they don't let us alone, as a matter of course, we shall leave the country.

Khetromany enters

Is my brother come home ?

Khetro. Father is gone to the house of the Babus and is coming very soon. Will you not go to call my aunt ? What were you talking about ?

Ray. I am talking of nothing. Now, bring me a little water, my stomach is on the point of bursting from thirst. I told my brother-in-law so much, but he did not hear me.

Sadhu enters and Khetromany goes away

Sadhu. Ray, why did you come so early ?

Ray. O my brother, the vile Amin has marked off the

piece of ground in Sanpoltola. What shall we eat; and how shall I pass the year? Ah, our land was bright as the golden champah. By the produce of only one corner of the field, we satisfied the mahajans. What shall we eat now, and what shall our children take? This large family may die without food. Every morning two recea (nearly 5 Lbs) of rice are necessary. What shall we eat then? Oh, my ill-fortune (*burnt forehead*); what has the Indigo of this whiteman done?

Sadhu. We were living in the hope of cultivating these bighas of land and now, if these are gone, then what use is there of remaining here any more? And the one or two bighas which are become saltish yield no produce. Again, the ploughs are to remain in the Indigo-field; and what can we do? Don't weep now; tomorrow we shall sell off the ploughs and cows, leave this village, and go and live in the zemindary of Babu Basanta.

Khetromany and Reboti enter with water

Now, drink the water, drink the water; what do you fear? He, who has given life, will provide also food. Now, what did you say to the Amin?

Ray. What could I say? He began to mark off the ground, on which it seemed as if he began to thrust burnt sticks into my breast. I entreated, holding him by his feet, and wanted to give him money; but he heard nothing. He said, "Go to your eldest Babu; go to your father." When I returned, I only punished him with saying, "I shall bring this before Court."

(Seeing the Amin at a distance)

Just see, that villain (*Shala*) is coming; he has brought servants with him, and will take us to the Factory.

The Amin and the two servants enter

Amin. Bind the hands of this villain.

(Ray Churn is bound by the two servants)

Reboti. Oh what is this? Why do they bind him?

What ruin ! What ruin ! (*To Sadhu*) Why do you stand looking on ? Go to the house of the Babus, and call the eldest Babu here.

Amin. (*To Sadhu*) Where shalt thou go now ? You are also to go with me. To take advances is not the business of Ray. We shall have much to bear with if we are to make signature by cross marks. And because you know how to read and to write, therefore you must go and make the signature in the Factory Account-Book.

Sadhu. Sir, do you call this giving advances for Indigo ; would it not be better to call it the cramming down Indigo ? Oh my ill-fortune, you are still with me. That very blow, through fear of which I fled, I have to bear again. This land was the kingdom of Rama before Indigo was established ; but the ignorant fool is become a beggar, and famine has come upon the land.

Amin. (*To himself, observing Khetromany*) This young woman is not bad-looking ; if our younger Saheb can get her, he will, with his whole heart, take her. But while I was unable to succeed in getting a *peshkar's* (overseer's) post by giving him my own sister, what can I expect from him getting him this woman ; but still she is very beautiful ; I will try.

Reboti. Khetro, go into the room.

(*Khetromany goes away*)

Amin. Now, Sadhu, if you want to come in a proper manner, come with me to the Factory.

(*Going forward*)

Reboti. Oh Amin ! Have you no wife nor children ? Have you kept only the plough and this beating (*marpit*) ? He (i. e. Ray) had just laid down the plough, and all this beating ! Did he not want to drink a little water ? Oh God ! he is a growing lad. By this time he ought to take a second meal. How can he then, without taking any food, go to the Saheb's house which is at such a distance ? I ask for the Saheb's grace ; just let him have some food ; and then take him away. Oh ! he is so very

much troubled for his wife and the children. Oh ! he is shedding tears, his face is become dry. What are you doing ? To what a burnt-up land am I come ? Destruction has come upon me both in life and money. Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! I am gone both in life and money. (*Weeps*)

Amin. Oh, stupid woman ! Now stop your grunting. If you want to give water, bring it soon ; else I shall take him away.

(*Ray Churn drinks water ; exit all*)

THIRD SCENE

*The Factory of Begunbari. The veranda of
the large Bangalow*

Enter J. J. Wood and Gopi Churn Das, the Dewan

Gopi. What fault have I done, my Lord ? You are observing me day by day. I begin to move about early in the morning and return home at three o'clock in the afternoon. Again, immediately after taking dinner, I sit down to look over papers about Indigo advances ; and that takes my time to twelve and sometimes to one o'clock in the night.

Wood. You, rascal, are very inexperienced. There are no advances made in Svaropur, Shamanagar, and Santighata villages. You will never learn without Shamchand (*the leather strap*).

Gopi. My Lord, I am your servant. It is through favour only that you have raised me from the *peshkari* business to the Dewani. You are my only Lord, you can either kill me or can cut me in pieces. Certain powerful enemies have arisen against this Factory ; and without their punishment, there is no cultivation of Indigo.

Wood. How can I punish without knowing them ? As for money, horses, *latyals* (clubmen) I have a sufficiency ; can they not be punished by these ? The former Dewan made known to me about those enemies. You do not. I have scourged those wicked people, taken away

their kine, and kept their wives in confinement which is a very severe punishment for them. You are a very great fool ; you know nothing at all. The business of the Dewan is not that of the Kayat caste ; I shall drive you off, and give the business to a Keaot.

Gopl. My Lord, although I am by caste a Kaystha, I do my work like a Keaot (a shoe-maker). The service I have rendered in stopping the rice cultivation and making the Indigo to grow in the field of the Mollahs, and also to take (*Lakhroj*) his rent-free lands of seven generations from Goluk Chunder Bose, and to take away his holdings which were royal gifts ; the work I have done for these, I can dare say, can never be done by a Keaot or even by a shoe-maker. It is my ill-fortune only (*evil-forehead*) that I don't get the least praise for doing so much.

Wood. That fool, Nabin Madhab, wants the whole account settled. I shall not give him a single cowrie. That fellow is very well-versed in the affairs of the Court ; but I shall see, how that braggart takes the advances from me.

Gopl. Sir, he is one of the principal enemies of this Factory. The burning down of Polasapore would never have been proved, had Nabin no concern in the matter. That fool himself prepared the draft of the petition ; and it was through his advice and intrigues that the Attorney so turned the mind of the Judge. Again, it was through his intrigues that our former Dewan was confined for two years. I forbade him, saying, "Babu Nobin, don't act against our Saheb ; and especially as he has not burnt your house." To which he replied, "I have enlisted myself in order to save the poor ryots. I shall think myself highly rewarded, if I can preserve one poor ryot from the tortures of the cruel Indigo Planters ; and throwing this Dewan into prison, I shall have compensation for my garden." The braggart is become like a Christian Missionary ; and I cannot say what preparations he is making this time.

Wood. You are afraid. Did I not tell you at first, you are very ignorant? No work is to be done through you.

Gopl. Saheb, what signs of fear hast thou seen in me? When I have entered on this Indigo profession, I have thrown off all fear, shame, and honour; and the destroying of cows, of Brahmans, of women and the burning down of houses are become my ornaments, and I now lie down in bed keeping the jail as my pillow (*thinking of it*).

Wood. I do not want words, but work.

Sadhu, Ray, the Amin, and the two Servants enter.

Making salams.

Why are this wicked fool's hands bound with cords?

Gopl. My Lord, this Sadhu Churn is a head ryot; but through the enticement of Nobin Bose he has been led to engage in the destruction of Indigo.

Sadhu. My Lord, I do nothing unjust against your Indigo, nor am I doing now, neither have I power to do anything wrong; willingly or unwillingly I have prepared the Indigo, and also I am ready to make it this time. But then, everything has its probability and improbability; if you want to make powder of eight inches thickness to enter a pipe half-an-inch thick, will it not burst? I am a poor ryot, I keep only one and half ploughs, have only twenty bighas of land for cultivation; and now, if I am to give nine bighas out of that for Indigo, that must occasion my death, but my Lord, what is that to you, it is only my death.

Gopl. The Saheb fears lest you keep him confined in the godown of your eldest Babu.

Sadhu. Now, Sir Dewanji, what you say is striking a corpse (useless labour). What mite am I that I shall imprison the Saheb, the mighty and glorious?

Gopl. Sadhu, now away with your high-flown language; it does not sound well on the tongue of a peasant; it is like a sweeper's broom touching the body.

Wood. Now the rascal is become very wise.

Amin. That fool explains the laws and magistrate's orders to the common people, and thus raises confusion. His brother draws the ploughshare, and he uses the high word "*pratapshali*" (glorious).

Gopi. The child of the preparer of cow-dung balls is become a Court *Naeb* (deputy). My Lord, the establishment of schools in villages has increased the violence of the ryots.

Wood. I shall write to our Indigo Planters' Association to make a petition to the Government for stopping the schools in villages ; we shall fight to secure stopping the schools.

Amin. That fool wants to bring the case into Court.

Wood. (*To Sadhu*) You are very wicked. You have twenty bighas, of which, if you employ nine bighas for Indigo, why can't you cultivate the other nine bigahs for rice.

Gopi. My Lord, what to speak of nine bighas. The debt which is credited to him can be made use of by bringing the whole twenty bighas within our own power.

Sadhu. (*To himself*) O, Oh ! The witness for the spirit-seller is the drunkard. (*Openly*) If the nine bighas which are marked off for the cultivation of the Indigo were worked by the plough and kine of the Factory, then can I use the other nine bighas for rice. The work which is to be done in the ricefield is only a fourth of that which is necessary in the Indigofield, consequently if I am to remain engaged in these nine bighas, the remaining eleven bighas will be without cultivation.

Wood. You, dolt, are very wicked, you scoundrel (*Haramjada*) ; you must take the money in advance ; you must cultivate the land ; you are a real scoundrel (*kicks him*). You shall leave off everything when you meet with *Shamchand* (*takes Shamchand from the wall*).

Sadhu. My Lord, the hand is only blackened by killing a fly, i. e. your beating me only injures you. I am too mean. We.....

Ray. (*Angrily*) O my brother, you had better stop ; let them take what they can ; our very stomach is on the point of falling down from hunger. The whole day is passed, we have not yet been able either to bathe or to take our food.

Amin. O rascal, where is your Court now ? (*Twists his ears*).

Ray. (*With violent panting*) I now die ! My mother ! My mother !

Wood. Beat that "bloody nigger" (*beats with Shamchand, the leather strap*).

Enters Nobin Madhab

Ray. O thou Babu, I am dying ! Give me some water. I am just dead !

Nobin. Saheb, they have not bathed, neither have they taken the least food. The members of their family have not yet washed their faces. If you thus destroy your ryots by flogging them, who will prepare your Indigo ? The Sadhu Churn prepared the produce of about four bighas last year with the greatest trouble possible ; and if with such severe beatings you make such cruel advances to them, that is only your loss. For this day give them leave, and tomorrow I myself shall bring them with me, and do as thou do'st bid me.

Wood. Attend to your own business. What concern have you with another's affairs ? Sadhu, give your opinion quickly, and it is my dinner time.

Sadhu. What is the use of waiting for my opinion ? You have already marked off the four bighas of the most productive land ; and the Amin has, to-day, marked off the remaining part. The land is marked without my consent, the Indigo shall be prepared in the same way ; and I also agree to prepare it without taking any advances.

Wood. Do you say my advances are all fictitious, you cursed wretch, bastard and heretic (*beats him*).

Nobin. (*Covers with his hand the back of Sadhu*). My Lord, this poor man has many to support in his family. Owing to the beating he has got, I think, he will be confined in bed for a month. Oh ! what pains his family is suffering ! Sir, you have also your family. Now, what sorrow would affect the mind of your wife if you were taken prisoner at your dinner-time ?

Wood. Be silent thou fool, braggart, low fellow, cow-eater. Don't think that this Magistrate is like that one of Amaranagara, that you can, for every word, lay complaints before him, and imprison the men of the Factory. The Magistrate of Indrabad is as death to you. You rascal, you must first give me a handnote to state you have received the advance for sixty bighas of land, or else I shall not let you go this day. I shall break your head with this Shamchand, you stupid. It is owing to your not taking advances, that I have not been able to force advances on ten other villages.

Nobin. (*With heavy sighs*) Oh my mother Earth ! separate yourself that I may enter into you. In my life I never suffered such an insult. O, Oh !

Gopi. Babu Nobin, better go home, no use of making fuss.

Nobin. Sadhu, call on God. He is the only support of the helpless.

(*Nobin Madhab goes away*)

Wood. Thou slave of the slave ! Take him to the factory, Dewan, and give him the advance according to rules.

(*Wood goes away*)

Gopi. Sadhu, come along to the factory. Does the Saheb forget his words ? Now ashes have fallen on your ready-made rice ; the Yama of Indigo has attached you, and you have no safety.

FOURTH SCENE

Goluk Chunder Basu's Hall

Enter Soirindri Preparing a hair-string

Soirindri. I never did prepare such a piece of hair-string. The youngest Bou is the most fortunate, since whatever I do in her name proves successful. The hair-string I have made, is the thinnest possible. According to the hair, the hair-string is made. Oh how beautiful the hair is, it is like unto that of the Goddess Kali. The face is as the lotus, always smiling. People say two sister-in-laws never agree. I don't attend to that. For my part, I feel pleasure when I see the face of the youngest Bou. I consider the youngest Bou in the same light, as I do Bipin. The youngest Bou loves me as her own mother.

Saralota enters with a braid in hand.

Saralota. My sister, just see whether I have been able to make the under part of this braid? Is it not made?

Soirindri. (*Seeing the braid*) Yes, now it is well made. O My sister, this part is made somewhat bad; the yellow does not look well after the red colour.

Saralota. I wove it by observing your braid.

Soirindri. Is the yellow after the red in that?

Saralota. No; in that the green is after the red. But because my green thread is finished, therefore, I placed the yellow after that.

Soirindri. You were not able, I see, to wait for the market day. I see, my sister, everything is in haste with you. As it is said, "Hurry (*Hari*) is in Brindabun; but as soon as the desire rises, there is no more waiting."

Soirindri. Oh! what fault have I committed for that? Can that be got in the market? At the last market-day, my mother-in-law sent for it; but that was not got.

Soirindri. When they write a letter this time to my

husband's brother we shall ask to send for threads of various colours.

Suralota. Sister, how many days are there still remaining of this month ?

Soirindri. (*Laughingly*) On the place where the pain is, the hand touches. As soon as his college closes, he shall come home, therefore you are counting the days Ah ! my sister, your mind's words are come out.

Saralota. I say truly, my sister ; I never meant that.

Soirindri. How very good-natured our Bindu Madhab is ! His words are honey. When we hear his letters read, they rain like drops of nectar. I never saw such love towards one's brother as his, and also his brother shows the greatest affection for him. When he hears the name of Bindu Madhab, his heart overflows with joy, and it becomes, as it were, expanded. Also, as he is, so our Saralota is, (*pressing Saralota's cheek*) Saralota is as simplicity itself. Have I not brought with me my hukā ? It is the first thing which I have forgotten to bring with me.

Enters Aduri

Aduri. Will you just go and bring me some ashes of tobacco ?

Aduri. Where shall I now seek for it ?

Soirindri. It is stuck on the thatched roof on the cookroom, on the right side of the steps leading into the room.

Aduri. Then let me bring the ladder from the threshing floor ; else how can I reach to the roof ?

Saralota. Nicely understood indeed.

Soirindri. Why, can she not understand our mother-in-law's word ? Don't you understand what steps are, and What Dain signifies ?

Aduri. Why shall I become a Dain ; it is my fate. As soon as a poor woman becomes old and her teeth fall out she is immediately called a Dain. I shall speak of

this to our mistress : am I become so old as to be called a Dain ?

Soirindri. Silly (*Rising up*) Youngest Bou, sit down, I am coming ; to-day we shall hear the Betal of Vidya-sagar. (*Soirindri goes away*)

Aduri. That Sagar (who) allows marriage to the widows ; fie ! fie ! Are there not two parties to that ? I am of the Ajah's party.

Saralota. Aduri, did your husband love you well ?

Aduri. O young Haldarni, do not raise that word of sorrow now. Even up to this day, when his face comes to my mind's eye, my heart, as it were, bursts with sorrow. He loved me very much, and he even wanted to give me a daughter-in-law.

Let alone a Paiche ;
What worth indeed may it be !
I can find a gold bangle for one,
If after my heart she be !

Does it fit in ? He even did not give me time to sleep. Whenever I felt drowsy, he said, "Oh my love, are you sleeping ?"

Saralota. Did you call him by this name ?

Aduri. Fie ! Fie ! The husband is one's Lord. Is it proper to call him by his name ?

Saralota. Then, how did you call him ?

Aduri. I use to say, "O ! Do you hear me ?"

Enters Soirindri again

Soirindri. Who has irritated this fool again ?

Aduri. She was inquiring after my husband, therefore, I was speaking with her.

Soirindri. (*Laughing*) I never saw a greater fool than this our youngest Bou. While having so many subjects of talk, still you are exciting Aduri in order to hear from her about her husband.

Enter Reboti and Khetromany

Welcome, my dear sister, I have been sending for you for these many days ; still I see, you don't get time to come. O our youngest Bou, here take your Khetro ; here she is come (*To Reboti*). She was troubling me for these days, saying, "My sister Khetromany of the Ghose family, is come from her father-in-law's house ; then, why is she not yet coming to our house ?"

Reboti. Yes such is your love towards us. Khetro, bow down before your aunts.

(*Khetromany bows down*)

Soirindri. Remain with your husband for life ; wear vermilion even in your white hair ; let your iron circlet continue for ever and the next time you go to your father-in-law's house, take your new-born son with you.

Aduri. The young Haldarni spoke most fluently before me ; but this young girl bowed down before her ; and she spoke not a single word.

Soirindri. Oh ! what of that Aduri, just go and call our mother-in-law here.

The fool knows not what she says. For how many months is she with child !

Reboti. Did I yet express that ; the bad turn of my fortune (*broken forehead*) is such, that I yet cannot say whether that is actually the case or not. It is because that you are very familiar with us, that I tell it you—at the end of this month she will be in her fourth month.

Saralota. But her belly has not yet bulged.

Soirindri. What madness ! She has not yet completed her third month and you expect a bulged belly.

Saralota. Khetro, why did you cut off the curls of your hair ?

Khetro. The elder brother of my husband was much displeased at seeing the curls in my hair. He told our mistress (*mother-in-law*), that curls agree best with prostitutes and women of rich families. I was so much ashamed

at hearing his words, that from that very day I cut off my curls.

Soirindri. Youngest Bou, the shades of evening are spreading about; just go, my sister, and bring the clothes.

Enters Aduri again

Saralota. (*Standing up*) Aduri, come with me; let us go up, and bring down the clothes.

Aduri. Let young Haldar first come home, ha! ha! ha!

(*Ashamed Saralota goes away*)

Soirindri. (*With anger, yet laughing*) Go thou unfortunate fool; at every word, you joke. Where is my mother-in-law?

Enters Sabitri

Yes, she is come.

Sabitri. Ghose Bou, art thou come, and hast thou brought your daughter with you? Yes, you have done well. Bipin was making a noise, therefore, I sent him out and am come here.

Reboti. My mother, I bow down before you, Khetro, bow down before your grandmother.

(*Khetromany bows down*)

Sabitri. Be happy, be the mother of seven sons. (*Coughing aside*) My eldest Bou, just go into the room. I think my son is up. Oh! my son has no regular time for bathing, neither for taking food. My Nobin is become very weak by mere vain thoughts—(*Aside "Aduri"*) Oh! my daughter, go in soon. I think, he is asking for water.

Soirindri. (*Aside to Aduri*) Aduri, calling for you.

Aduri. Calling for me, but asking for you.

Soirindri. Thou burn-faced! Sister Ghose meet me another day.

(*Exit Soirindri*)

Reboti. O my mother, here is none else. Some great danger has fallen upon me, that Podi Moyrani came to our house yesterday.

Sabitri. Rama ! Rama ! Rama ! who allows that nasty fool to enter this house ? What is left of her virtue ? She has only to write her name in the public notices.

Reboti My mother, but what shall I do ? My house is not an enclosed one. When our males go out to the fields the house is no more a house ; but you may call it a mart. That strumpet says (*I do shrink at the thought*), she says, that the young Saheb is become, as it were, mad, at seeing Khetromany ; and wants to see her in the Factory.

Aduri. Fy ! fy ! fy ! bad smell of the onion ! Can we go to the Saheb. Fy ! fy ! fy ! bad smell of the onion ! I shall never be out any more alone. I can bear every other thing, but the smell of the onion I can never bear. Fy ! fy ! fy ! bad smell of the onion.

Reboti. But, my mother, is not the virtue of the poor actual virtue ? That fool says, he will give money, give grants of lands for the cultivation of rice and also give some employment to our son-in-law. Fie ! Fie ! to money ! Is virtue something to be sold ? Has it any price ? What can I say ? That fool was an agent of the Saheb, or else I would have broken her mouth with one kick. My daughter is become thunderstruck from yesterday ; and now and then, she is starting with fear.

Aduri. Oh, the beard ! When he speaks, it is like a he-goat twisting about its mouth. For my part, I would never be able to go there as long as he does not leave off his onions and beard. Fie ! fie ! fie ! the bad smell of the onion.

Reboti. Mother, again that unfortunate fool says, if you do not send her with me, I shall take her away by certain latyals.

Sabitri. What more is the Burmese (Mug) power ? Can any one take away a woman from a house in the British Dominion ?

Reboti. O my Mother ! Every violence can be committed in the ryot's house. Taking away the women, they bring the men under their power. In giving advances for

Indigo they can do this ; they will do it more when they are infatuated. Don't you know, my mother, the other day, because certain parties did not agree to sign a fictitious receipt of advances, they broke down their house and took away by force the wife of one of the Babus.

Sabitri. What anarchy is this ! Did you inform Sadhu of this.

Reboti. No, my mother. He is already become mad on account of the Indigo ; again, if he hear this, will he keep quiet ? Through excessive anger he will rather smite his head with axe.

Sabitri. Very well, I shall make this known to Sadhu, through my husband ; you need not say anything. What misfortune is this ! The Indigo Planters can do anything. Then why do I hear it generally said, that the Sahebs are strict in dispensing justice. Again, my son Bindu Madhab speaks much in praise of them. Therefore I think that these are not Saheb ; no, they are dregs (*Chandal*) of Sahebs.

Reboti. Respecting another word which Moyrani has said, I think the eldest Babu has not heard of it that a new order has been proclaimed, by which the wicked Sahebs, by opening a communication with the Magistrate, can throw any one into prison for six months , again, that they are making preparations for doing the same with the Babus. (*Your husband*).

Sabitri. (*Sighing deeply*) If this be in the mind of God it will be.

Reboti. Many other things she said, my mother : but I was not able to understand her. Is it the fact, that there is no appeal when once a person is imprisoned ?

Aduri. I think, Lady, imprisonment has been made sterile.

Sabitri. Aduri, be silent a little my child.

Reboti. Moreover, the wife of the Indigo Planter, in order to make her husband's case strong (*pakka*), has sent a letter to the Magistrate, since it is said that the Magistrate hears her words most attentively.

Aduri. I saw the lady; she has no shame at all. When the Magistrate of the Zillah (*whose name occasions great terror*) goes riding about through the village, the lady also rides on horseback, with him—The Bou riding about on a horse! Because the aunt of Kasi once laughed before the elder brother of her husband, all people ridiculed her; while this was the Magistrate of the Zillah.

Sabitri. I see, wretched woman, thou wilt occasion some great misfortune one day. Now it is evening, Ghose Bou, better go home. There is Goddess Durga with you.

Reboti. Now, I go my mother. I shall buy some oil from the shop; then there will be light in the house.

(*Exit Reboti and Khetromany*)

Sabitri. Can't you remain without speaking something at every word.

Enters Sarolata with clothes on her head

Aduri. Here, our washerwoman is come with her clothes.

Sabitri. Thou, fool, why is she a washerwoman? She is my Bou of gold, my Goddess of good Fortune (*patting her back*). Is there no one in my family excepting you to bring down the clothes? Can't you, for one dunda sit quiet in one place? Art thou born of such a mad woman? How did you tear off your cloth? I think you bruised yourself. Ah, her body is, as it were, a red lotus; and this one bruise has made the blood to come out with violence. Now, my daughter, I tell you, never move up and down the steps in the dark, in such a manner.

Enters Soirindri

Soirindri. Now, our young Bou, let us go to the ghat.

Sabitri. Now, my daughters, while the evening light continues, you two together go and wash yourselves.

(*Exit all*)

SECOND ACT

FIRST SCENE

*The Godown of Begunbari Factory
Torapa and four other Ryots sitting*

Torapa. Why do they not kill me at once ? I can never show myself ungrateful. That eldest Babu, who has preserved my caste ; he, through whose influence I am living here ; he, who by reserving my plough and the cows, is preserving my life, shall I by giving false evidence, throw the father of that Babu into prison ? I can never do that ; I would rather give my life.

First Ryot. Before sticks there can be no words ; the stroke of Shamchand is a very terrible thrust. Have we a film on our eyes ; did we not serve our eldest Babu ? Are we devoid of all sense of shame ? And has not our eldest Babu given us salt to eat ? But, then, what can we do ? If we do not give evidence they will never keep us as we are. Wood Saheb stood upon my breast and blood began to fall drop by drop. And the feet of the filth-eater were, as it were, the hoofs of the ox.

Second Ryot. Thrusting in the nails ; don't you know the nails which are stuck under the shoes worn by the Sahebs ?

Torapa. (*Grinding his teeth with anger*) Why do you speak of the nails ? My heart is bursting with having seen this blood. What do I say ? If I can once get him in the Vataramari Field, with one slap I can raise him in the air ; and at once put a stop to all his "gad dams" and other words of chastisement.

Third Ryot. I am only a hireling, and work on commission. It won't cut ice if I say that I refused to take indigo advance under the influence of the Babus. Why was I then confined in the godown ? I thought that serving under him at this time, I shall be able to make a

good collection and shall be able to invite my friends, on the occasion of my wife's completing her seventh month of pregnancy, but I am rotting here in this place for five days and again I am to go to that Andarabad.

Second Ryot. I went to that Andarabad once ; as also to that Factory of Bhabnapore, every one speaks good of the Saheb of that place ; that Saheb once sent me to the Court, then I saw much fun in that place. Ha ! just as the Magistrate, sitting at the tails of the two Mukhtears (lawyers) shouted "Hyal" (Hallô), the two brother-in-laws in the persons of the Mukhtears kicked up a row. The wordy battle they fought made me think there was literally a bull-fight as between the white ox of Sadhukhan and the bull-calf of Jamadar on the field of Moyana.

Torapa. Did he find any fault with you ? Saheb of Bhabnapore never raises a false disturbance. "By speaking the truth, we shall ride on horse-back." Had all Sahebs been of the same character with him then none would have spoken ill of the Sahebs.

Second Ryot. Don't be overjoyous. There is a saying : "I thought Kelo's mother was chaste. But she slips with her son-in-law". Now this torturing is all put a stop to. In his godown there are now seven persons, one of them a child. The vile man has filled his house also with kine and calves. Oh, what robbery is he carrying on !

Torapa. As soon as they get a Saheb, who is a good man, they want to destroy him. They are holding a meeting to drive off the Magistrate.

Second Ryot. I cannot understand how the Magistrate of this Zillah has found fault with the Magistrate of the other Zillah.

Torapa. He did not go to dine in the Factory. They prepared a dinner for the Magistrate, in order to get him within their power, but the Magistrate concealed himself like a stolen cow ; he did not go to dinner. He is a person of a good family. Why should he go to the Indigo Planters ?

We have now understood, these Planters are the low people of Belata.

First Ryot. Then how did the late Governor Saheb go about all the Indigo Factories, being feasted like a bridegroom just before the celebration of the marriage? Did you not see that the Planter Sahebs brought him to this Factory well adorned like a brideroom?

Second Ryot. I think he has some share in this Indigo Company.

Torapa. No! can the Governor take a share in Indigo affairs? He came to increase his fame. If God preserve our present Governor, then we shall be able to procure something for our sustenance; and the spectre of Indigo shall no more hang on our shoulders.

Third Ryot. (With fear) I die. If the ghost of this burden once attack a person, is it true that it does not quit him soon? My wife said so.

Torapa. Why have they brought this brother-in-law here? He does not understand a thing. For fear of the Sahebs, people are leaving the village; and my uncle Bochoroddi has formed the following verse:

“The men with eyes like those of the cat, is an
ignorant fool;
So the Indigo Saheb of the Indigo Factory is a
blue devil.”

Bochoroddi is very expert in forming such verses.

Second Ryot. Did not you hear another verse which was composed by Nita Atai?

“The Missionaries have destroyed the caste;
The Factory monkeys have destroyed the rice.”

Torapa. What a composition! But what is really meant by “Destroyed the caste?”

Torapa repeating the words of the Second Ryot

“The Missionaries have destroyed the caste;
The Factory monkeys have destroyed the rice.”

Fourth Ryot. Alas ! I do not know what is taking in my house : I am a ryot of a different village. How could I claim to have come to Svaropur, and at the instigation of Bose, thrown away the advance offered me ? When my youngest child had a fever I came to Bose to get from him a little sugar-candy. Ah ! how very kind he was ; how agreeable and good-looking in countenance I found him ; and sitting as solemn as an elephant.

Torapa. How many bighas have they thrust on you this year ?

Fourth Ryot. Last year I prepared ten bighas but as to the price of that, they raised great confusion. This year again, they have given advances for fifteen bighas and I am doing exactly as they are ordering me, still, they leave not off insulting me.

First Ryot. I am labouring with my plough for these two years, and I have cultivated a little piece of ground. That piece of ground which I prepared this year, I kept for sesamum ; but one day, young Saheb, riding on his horse, came to the place, and waiting there himself, took possession of the whole piece. How can the ryots live if this is to continue ?

Torapa. This is only the intrigue of the wicked Amin. Does the Saheb know everything about land ? This fool goes about like a revengeful dog ; when he sees any good piece of land, he immediately gives notice of it to the Saheb. The Saheb has no want of money, and he has no need for borrowing money on credit. Then, why is it that the fool does so ; if he has to cultivate Indigo, let him do so ; let him buy oxen ; let him prepare ploughs ; if he cannot guide the plough himself, let him keep men under him. What want have you of lands ? Why not cultivate from end to end ? We stand ready to help in the cultivation. In that case the land can overflow with Indigo in two years. But he will not do it.....

(*Aside, ho ; ho ; ho ; ma ; ma ;*) Gazi Saheb Gazi Saheb ;

Darga Darga Call your Rama. Within this there are ghosts. Be silent, be silent.

(*Aside*, Oh Indigo ; you came to this land for our utter ruin. Ah ! I cannot any more suffer this torture. I cannot say how many other Factories there are of this concern. Within this one month and-a-half, I have already drunk the water of fourteen Factories ; and I do not know in what Factory I am now ; and how can I know that, while I am taken in the night from one Factory to another, with my eyes entirely shut. Oh my mother where art thou now ?)

Third Ryot. Rama ; Rama ; Rama, Kali, Kali, Durga, Ganesh, Ashrai.

Torapa. Silence, Silence.

(*Aside*, Ah, I can make myself free from this hail, if I take the advance for five bighas of land. Oh ! My uncle, it is now proper to take the advance. Now, I see no means of giving the notice ; my life is on the point of leaving the body. I have no more any power to speak. Oh my mother, where art thou now ? I have not seen thy holy feet for a month and-a-half.)

Third Ryot. I shall speak of this to my wife ; did you hear now ? Although these are become ghosts after death, still have they not been able to extricate themselves from the Indigo advances.

First Ryot. Art thou so very ignorant ?

Torapa. A person of a good family ; I have understood that by the words. My uncle Prana, can you once take me up on your shoulders, then I can ask him where his residence is ?

First Ryot. Thou art a Mussalman.

Torapa. Then, you had better rise on my shoulders and see—(*sits down*) rise up (*sits on the shoulders*) take hold of the wall ; bring your face before the window—(*seeing Gopi Churn at a distance*) come down, come down, my uncle, Gopi is coming—

(*First Ryot falls down*

Enter Gopi Churn and Mr. Rose with his Ramkanta in his hand

Third Ryot. Dewan, there is a ghost in this room. Now, it was crying aloud.

Gopi. If you don't say as I teach you, you must become a ghost of the very same kind. (*Aside to Mr. Rose*) These persons have known about Majumder's confinement, we must no more keep him in this Factory. It was not proper to keep him in that room.

Rose. I shall hear of that afterwards. What ryot has refused ; what rascal is so very wicked ? (*Stamps his feet*).

Gopi. These are all well-prepared. This Mussalman is very wicked ; he says, I can never show myself ungrateful, (*nimakharami*).

Torapa. (*Aside*) O my father ! How very terrible the stick is. Now I must agree with them ; as to future considerations I shall see what I can do afterwards. (*Openly*) Pardon me, Saheb ! I, also, am become the same with you.

Planter. Be silent, thou child of the sow ! This *Ramkant* is very sweet. (*Strikes with Ramkant and also kicks him*).

Torapa. Oh ! Oh ! My mother, I am now dead. My uncle Prana, give me a little water ; I die for water. My father, father !

Rose. Shall not filth be discharged into your mouth ?

(*Strikes with his shoes*)

Torapa. Whatever thou shalt say, I shall do. Before God, I ask pardon of thee, my Lord.

Rose. Now the villain has left his wickedness. To-night all must be sent to the court. Just write to the Attorney, that as long as the evidence is not given, not one of these shall be let out. The Agent shall go with them. (*To the Third Ryot*) Why art thou crying ? (*Gives a kick*).

Third Ryot. Bou, where art thou ? These are murdering me. Oh my mother ! Bou ! My mother ! I am killed, am killed. (*Falls upside down on the ground*).

Rose. Thou, stupid, art beome (*bawra*) mad.

(*Exit Mr. Rose*)

Gopi. Now, Torapa, have you got your full of the onion and the shoe ?

Torapa. Oh Dewanji, preserve me by giving a little water. I am on the point of death.

Gopi. The Indigo warehouse and the steam engine room, these are places where the sweat shoots forth and water is drunk. Now, all of you come with me, that you may at once drink water.

(*Exit all*)

SECOND SCENE

The bed-room of Bindu Madhab

Saralota sitting with a letter in her hand

Saralota. Now, my dear love with an honest tongue is not come, and an elephant, as it were, is treading on the lotuslike heart. I have become helpless amid very great hope. In expectation of the coming of the Lord of my life, I was waiting with greater disquietude of mind than the swallow (*Chatak*) does when waiting for the drops of rain at the approaching rainy season. The way in which I was counting the days exactly corresponded with what my sister said, that each day appeared, as it were, a year (*deep sigh*). The expectation as to the coming of my husband is now of no effect. The course of his life itself will prove successful, if the great action in which he is now engaged, can prove so. Oh Lord of my life. We are born women, and cannot even go out to walk in the garden ; we are unable to walk out in the city ; can by no means form club for general good ; we have no Colleges nor Courts, nor Brahma Samaj of our own ; we have nothing of our own, to compose the mind when it is once disturbed ; and moreover, we can never blame a woman

when she feels any disquietude. Oh my lord, we have only one to depend upon—the husband is the object of the wife's thoughts, of her understanding, her study, her acquisition, her meeting, her society ; in short, this jewel—the husband is all to a virtuous woman. Oh thou letter, thou art come from the hand of the dear object of my heart, I shall kiss thee, (*kisses it*) ; in thee is the name of my lord ; I shall hold thee on my burnt heart, (*keeps it on her breast*). Ah ! How sweet are the words of my Lord, as often as I read it, my mind is more and more charmed (*reads*).

MY DEAR SARALA, in my letter I cannot express what anxiety my mind feels to see your sweet face. O what inexpressible pleasure do I feel when I place your beautiful (*moonlike*) face on my breast, I thought that that moment of happiness is come ; but pain immediately overtook pleasure. The College is closed, but a great misfortune has come upon me ; through the grace of God, if I be not able to extricate myself from it, I shall never be able any more to show my face to thee. The Indigo Planters have secretly brought an accusation against my father in the court ; their main design being, in some way or other, to throw him into jail. I have sent letters, one after another, to my brother giving him this information ; and I myself am remaining here with the greatest care possible. Never disturb yourself with vain thoughts. The merciful Father must certainly make us successful. My dear, I have not forgotten the Bengali translation of "Shakespeare" ; it cannot be got now in the shops, but one of my friends, Bonkima by name, has given me one copy. When I come home, I shall bring it with me. My dear, what a great source of pleasure is the acquisition of learning ! I am conversing with you, although at such a great distance. Ah ! what great happiness would my mind have enjoyed if my mother did not forbid you to send letters to me.

"I am yours,
Bindu Madhab."

As to myself I have a full confidence as to that. If there be any fault in your character, then who should be an example of good conduct? Because I am fickle; cannot sit for some time quietly in one place, my mother-in-law calls me the daughter of a mad woman. But, where is my fickleness now? In the place, where I have opened the letter of my dear Lord, I have spent nearly a fourth part of the day. The fickleness of exterior part has now gone into the heart. As, on the boiling of the rice, the forth rising up makes the surface quiet, but the rice within is agitated; so am I now. I have not that smiling face now. A sweet smile is the wife of happiness; and so soon as happiness dies, the sweet smile goes along with it. My Lord, when thou shalt prove successful, everything shall be preserved; if I am to see your face disquieted, all sides will be dark unto me. O my restless mind, wilt thou be not quieted? If you remain unquiet, that can be suffered. As to your weeping, none can see it, nor can hear it; but my eyes! You shall throw me into shame, (*rubbing her eyes*); if you are not pacified I shall not be able to go out of doors.

Enters Aduri

Aduri. What are you doing here? The elder Haldarni is not able to go the tank-side. All whom I see are of a disturbed countenance.

Saralota. (*A deep sigh*) Let us then go.

Aduri. I see you have not yet touched the oil. Your hairs are yet dusty, and you have not yet left the letter. Does our young Haldar write my name in the letter?

Saralota. Has the Bara Thakur finished his bathing?

Aduri. The eldest Haldar is gone to the village. A law-suit is being carried on. Was that not written in your letter! Our master was weeping.

Saralota. (*Aside*) Truly, my Lord! Thou shalt not be able to show thy face, if thou can't prove successful.

(*Openly*) Let us now rub ourselves with oil in the cookroom.

Exit both

THIRD SCENE

*A Road pointing three ways**Enters Podi Moyrani*

Podi. It is the degenerate Amin who is ruining the country. It is through my own choice that I am levelling the axe at my feet, by giving the young women to the Saheb? Oh to think of the club which Rai (Ray Churn), lifted against me that day. If it were not for Sadhuda, the day would have proved my last. Ah, it bursts my heart when I see the face of Khetromany. Have I no feeling of compassion, because I have made a paramour my companion? Whenever she sees me still, she comes to me, calling me Aunt, Aunt! Can the mother, with a firm heart, give such a golden deer into the grasp of the tiger? The younger Saheb is never satiated even with two of us—Kali, the daughter of a rude tribe and me. How detestable is this, that for the sake of money I have given up my caste and my religion; and also am obliged to touch the bed of a Buno (rude tribe). That libertine, the elder Saheb, has made it a practice to beat me whenever he finds me, and has also said, he will cut off my nose and ears; that vile man is come to an old age, can keep women in confinement, and can kick them on their buttocks, but never runs after women. Let me go to the blackmouthed Amin and tell him that shall not be effected by me. Have I any power to go out in the town? Whenever the nasty fellows of the neighbourhood see me, they follow me as the Phinge (a kind of bird) does the crow.

(Aside, a song)

Waenever I sit down to reap the rice in the field, her eyes immediately come before my sight.

Enters a cowherd

Cowherd. Saheb, have not insects attacked thine Indigo twigs?

Podi. Let them attack thy mother and sister, thou degenerate fool. Leave off thy mother's breast, go to the house of Death ; go to Colmighata, to the grave.

Cowherd. I have also sent orders to prepare a pair of weeding knives.

Enters a Latyal or Club-man

Oh ! the Latyal of the Indigo Factory !

(The Cowherd flies off swiftly

Latyal. Thou, Oh lotus-faced, hast made the tooth-powder very dear.

Podi. *(Seeing the silver chain round the waist of the Latyal)*
Your chain is very grand.

Club-man. Don't you know, my dear, wherefrom comes the clothing of the bailiff and the dress of the nautch girl ?

Podi. I wanted a black calf from you a long while ago, but yet you did not give it me. My brother, I shall not ask from thee any more.

Club-man. Dear lotus-faced, don't be angry with me. Tomorrow, we shall go to plunder the place called Shamanagar ; and if I can get a black calf, I shall immediately keep that in your cow-house. When I shall return with my fish, I shall pass by your shop.

(Exit the Club-man

Podi. The Planter Saheb do nothing but rob. If the ryots be loaded in a less degree with exactions they can preserve their lives ; and you can get your Indigo. The Munshies of Shamanagar entreated most earnestly to get ten portions of land free. "The Thief never hears the instructions of Religion." The wretched elder Saheb remained quiet having burnt his wretched tongue.

Enter four boys of a native Pathshala

Four Boys. *(keeping down their mats and expressing great mirth with the clapping of their hands)*

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

Podi. My child Kesoba, I am your aunt. Never use such words to me.

Four Boys. (*Dance together*) My dear Moyrani ; where is your Indigo ?

Podi. My dear Ambika, I am your sister ; don't use me in this manner.

Four Boys. (*Dance round Podi*)

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

My dear Moyrani, where is your Indigo ?

Enters Nobin Madhab

Podi. What a shame is this, that I exposed my face to the elder Babu.

(Exit Podi, covering herself with a veil)

Nobin. Wicked and profligate woman. (*To the children*) You are playing on the road still ; it is now too late, go home now.

(Exit Four Boys)

Ah ! I can within five days establish a school for these boys, if only the tyranny of the Indigo be once stopped. The Inspector of this part of the country is a very good man. How very good a man becomes, if only learning be acquired. He is young ; but his conversation he has the experience of years. He has a great desire that a school be established in this country. I am also not unwilling to give money for this purpose ; the large Bungalow which I have, can be a good place for a school ; moreover, what is more happy than to have the boys of one's own country to read and write and study in his own house, this is the true success of wealth and of labour. Bindu Madhab brought the Inspector with him, and it is his desire, that all with one mind try to establish the school. But observing the unfortunate state of the country, he was

obliged to keep his design to himself. How very mild, quiet, good-natured, and wise is he become now ! Wisdom in younger years is as beautiful as the fruits in a small plant. In reading of the sorrow, which my brother has expressed in his letter, even the hardstone is melted and the heart of the Indigo Planter would become soft. I cannot now rise up to go home, I do not see any means ; I was not able to bring one of the five to my side, and cannot find where they are taken away. I think Torapa will never speak a lie. It shall be a great loss to us, if the other four give evidence ; especially as I was not able to make the least preparation ; and again the Magistrate is a great friend of Mr. Wood.

*Enter a Ryot, two Pyeadas or Bailiffs of the Police
and a Taidgir of the Indigo Factory*

Ryot. My elder Babu, preserve my two children ; there is no one else to feed them. Last year, I gave eight carts' load of Indigo, and did not get a single pice for that, and also I am bound, as with cords, for the remainder. Again they will take me to Andrabad.

Guard. The advance-money of the Indigo and the marking nut of the washerman behave alike ; as soon as they come in contact, they become mostly joined. You villain come, you must first go to the Dewanji ; your elder Babu also shall come to this end.

Ryot. Come, I don't fear this. I would rather have my body rot in the jail than any more prepare the Indigo of that white man. My God ! my God ! none looks on the poor (*weeps*). My elder Babu, give my children food ; they brought me from the field ; and I was not able to see them once.

(exit all except Nobin Madhab)

Nobin. What injustice ! These two children will die without food in the same way as the new-born young of the hare suffers when the hare is in the hand of the savage hunter.

Enters Ray Churn

Ray. Had not my brother caught hold of me, I would have put a stop to her (Refers to Podi) breathing, I would have killed her ; then, at the utmost, I had been hanged for six months. That villain !

Nobin. Ray Churn, where art thou going ?

Ray. Our mistress ordered me to call Putakur. The stupid Podi told me that the bailiff will bring the summons tomorrow.

(Exit Ray Churn)

Nobin. Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! That which never took place in this family has now come to pass. My father is very peaceful, honest, and of a sincere mind, knows not what disputes and enmities are, never goes out of the village, trembles with fear at the name of Court affairs, and even shed tears when he read the letter. If he is to go Indrabad, he will turn mad ; and if, to the jail, he will throw himself into the stream. Ah, such are the misfortunes that are to fall on him while I, his son, am living : My mother is not so much afraid as my father is, she does not lose hope at once ; with a firm mind she is now invoking God. My dear-eyed is become, as it were, the deer in my volcano ; she is become mad with fear and anxiety. Her father died in an Indigo Factory and her fear now, is lest the same happens to her husband. How many sides am I to keep quiet ; is it proper to fly off with the whole family or, is not right that to do good unto others is the highest virtue ? I shall not turn aside hastily. I see, I am not able to do any good to Shamanagara ; still, what work is there which is beyond the power of exertion ? Let me see what I can do.

Enter two Pundits

First Pundit. My child, is the house of Goluk Chunder Bose in this quarter ? I heard from my uncle, that person is very honest—the grandeur of the Bose family.

Nobin. *(Bowing before him)* Sir, I am his eldest son.

First P. Yes, yes, very honest : To have such a son is not the result of a little virtue.

To such a family is an unworthy child never born.

Can a piece of glass be found in a bed of rubies ?

What is said in the Shastras never proves wrong. Haven't you followed the sloka brother, Tarkalankar ?
(*Takes snuff*).

Second P. We had been invited by Babu Arabindu of Sougandha. To-day, we remain in the house of Goluk Chunder ; and shall do good unto you.

Nobin. This is my good fortune. Sirs, come by this way.

(*Exit all.*)

THIRD ACT

FIRST SCENE

Before the Factory in Begunbari

Enter Gopi Churn and a Native Jailor

(*Khalasi i. e. Warder*)

Gopi. As long as your share is not less, you donot care to bring anything to my notice.

Jailor. Can that filth be digested by one person eating the whole ? I told him, if you eat, give a part to the Dewanji ; but he says what power has your Dewan ? He is not so much the son of a Keot, (*Shoe-maker caste*) that he shall direct the Saheb like unto one leading a monkey.

Gopi. Very well, now go. I shall show that Keot what a club he is. I shall show how strong the son of a Keot may be.

(*Exit Khalasi*)

The fellow has got so much power through the authority of the younger Saheb. I shall also say it is a very easy thing for one to carry on his work, if his master be the husband of his sister. The elder Saheb becomes very angry with me ; at every word, he shows me the *Shamchand*. That day he kicked me with his stocking on. These few days, I see that his temper is become somewhat mild towards me ; since Goluk Bose is summoned, he has expressed a little kindness. A person is considered very expert by the Saheb, if he can bring about the ruin of many. "One becomes a good physician by the death of one hundred patients."

(*Seeing Mr. Wood*)

Here he is coming ; let me first soften up his mind by giving him some information about the Boses.

Enters Mr. Wood

Saheb, tears have come out of the eyes of Nobin Bose. Never was he punished more severely. His garden is taken away from him ; the small pieces of land he had are all included among the lands which are given to Gadai Pod (a low caste), his cultivation is nearly put a stop to, his barns are all become empty, and he was sent into Court twice ; in the midst of so many troubles, he still stood firm ; but now he has fallen down.

Planter. This rascal was not able to do anything in Shamanagara.

Gopi. Saheb, the Munshies came to him ; but he told them, "my mind is not at rest now, my limbs are become powerless through weeping for my father, and I am, as it were, become mad." On observing the wretched condition of Nobin, about seven or eight ryots of Shamanagara have all given up, and all are doing exactly as your Honour is ordering them.

Planter. You are a very good Dewan, and you have formed a very good plan.

Gopi. I knew Goluk Bose to be a coward, and that if

he were obliged to go to Court, he would turn mad. As Nobin has affection for his father, he will of course be punished; and it was for this reason that I gave the advice to make the old man the defendant. Also, the plan which your Honour formed was not the less good. Our Indigo cultivation has been nearly made on the sides of his tank; thus laying the snake's eggs in his heart.

Planter. With one stone two birds have been killed; ten bighas of land are cultivated with Indigo, and also that fool is punished. He shed much tears, saying that if Indigo be planted near the tank we shall be obliged to leave our habitation; but I said, to cultivate Indigo in one's habitation is to the best advantage.

Gopi. And the fool brought an action in the Court, on hearing that reply.

Planter. That will be of no effect; that Magistrate is a very good man. If the case turn into a civil one it will never be concluded in less than five years. That Magistrate is a great friend of mine. Just see, by the new Act, the four rascals were thrown into prison only on the strength of your evidence. This Act is the become brother of the *Shamchand*.

Gopi. Saheb, in order that those four ryots might not suffer loss in their cultivation, Nobin Bose has given his own plough, kine, and harrow for the ploughing of their lands; and he is trying his utmost that their families might not suffer great trouble.

Planter. When he is required to plough his land, for which advances are allowed, he says, "my ploughs and kine are less in number." He is very wicked; and now he is very well punished. Dewan, now you have done very well, and now I see work may be carried on by you without loss.

Gopi. Saheb, it is your own favour. My desire is that advances should be increased very year. But that cannot be done by me alone; some confident Amin and Khalasis are necessary. Can the Indigo cultivation be

improved by those who, for the sake of two rupees, occasioned the loss of the produce of three bighas of lands ?

Planter. I have understood it, the rascally Amin occasioned this confusion.

Gopi. Saheb, Chunder Goldar is a new-comer here, and has not taken any advance. The Amin once, according to regular custom, threw one rupee on his ground as an advance. That person, in order to be allowed to return that rupee, even shed tears and came along with the Amin as far as Ruthtollah, begging him earnestly to take it back. There he met with Nilkanta Babu, who has chosen the profession of an attorney immediately after leaving the college.

Planter. I know that rascal ; he it is, who writes everything concerning me in the newspapers.

Gopi. Their papers can never stand before yours, can by no means bear a comparison ; and moreover, they are as the earthen bottles for cooling water compared to the jars of Dacca. But to bring the newspapers within your influences, great expense has been incurred. That takes place according to time ; as is said—

“According to circumstance, the friend becomes
an enemy :”

“The lame ass is sold at the price of the horse.”

Planter. What did Nilkanta do ?

Gopi. He sharply rebuked Amin ; and the Amin with no little shame brought back that one rupee, with two rupees more, from Goldar's house. Chunder Goldar would have been able very easily to supply the Indigo for three or four bighas. Is this the work of a servant ? If I can conduct the Dewany and the business of the Amin, then this kind of ingratitude can be stopped.

Planter. Great wickedness this is ; evident ingratitude.

Gopi. Saheb, grand pardon for this bad conduct ; the Amin brought his own sister to our younger Saheb's room.

Planter. Yes ! Yes ! I know ; that rascal and Podi corrupted our young Saheb. I must give that wicked fool

some instructions very soon. Send him to my sitting room.

(Exit Mr. Wood)

Gopi. Just see, in whose hand the monkey plays best. The Kayastha is one rogue, and the crow another.

“Now have you fallen under the stroke of the Khait (Kayastha), where even the grand-father of the sister’s husband loses the game.”

SECOND SCENE

The bedroom of Nobin Madhab

Soirindri. Lord of my soul, what is preferable, whether the ornament or my father-in-law ? That, for which thou art wandering about day and night ; that, for which thou hast left thy food and sleep ; that, for which thou art shedding tears incessantly ; that, for which thy pleasant face has been depressed ; and that which has occasioned thy headache ; my dear Lord, can I not for that give away this my truffling ornament ?

Nobin. My dear, you can, with ease, give ; but with what face shall I take it ? What great troubles the husband is to undergo in order to dress his wife ; he has to swim in the rapid stream, to throw himself into the deep ocean, engage in battles, to climb mountains, to live in the wilderness, and to go before the mouth of the tiger. The husband adorns his wife, with so much trouble ; am I so very foolish as to take away the ornament from the very same wife. O my lotus-eyed, wait a little. Let me see this day, and if, finally I cannot procure it then I shall take your ornaments afterwards.

Soirindri. O my heart’s love ! We are very unfortunate now ; and who is there that shall give you on loan the sum of Rs. 500/- at such a time. I am entreating you again, take my ornaments and those of our younger Bou, and try to procure money from a banker. Observing your troubles the lotus-like young Bou is become sad.

Nobin. Ah ! my sweet-faced, the cruel words which

you used struck on my heart like arrows of fire. Our youngest Bou, she is a girl; good clothes and beautiful ornaments are objects of pleasure to her. What understanding has she now? What does she know of family business? As your young Bipin cries when his necklace is taken from him in play, so our youngest Bou weeps when her ornaments are taken away. Oh! Oh! Am I formed so mean-spirited a man? Am I to be so cruel a robber? Shall I deceive a young girl? This can never be, as long as life exists. The worthless Indigo Planters even cannot commit such a crime. My dear, never use such a word before me.

Soirindri. Beloved of my soul, that pain, with which I told these words, is only known to me and omniscient God. What doubt is there, that they are fiery arrows? They have burst my heart and burnt my tounge, and then having divided the lips, have entered your heart. It is with great pain that I told you to take the ornaments of the youngest Bou. Can there be any pleasure in the mind, after having observed this your insane wandering, this weeping of my father-in-law, the deep sighs of my mother-in-law, the sad face of the youngest Bou, the dejected countenance of relatives and friends, and the sorrowful mournings of the ryots. If by any means we can restore safety, then all shall be safe. My Lord, I do feel the same pain in giving the ornaments of our youngest Bou, as if I had to give those of Bipin; but if I give away the ornaments of Bipin, before giving those of the youngest Bou, that would prove an act of cruelty to her; since, she might think that my sister looks on me as a stranger. Can I give pain to her honest heart by doing this? Is this the work of the elder sister who is like a mother.

Nobin. My dear love! Your heart is very sincere. There is not a second to you in sincerity in the female race. Is this my family reduced to this state! What was I, and what am I now become? The sum of my profits was seven hundred Rupees. I had fifteen ware-

houses for corn, sixteen bighas of garden land, twenty ploughs and fifty harrows. What great feasts had I at the time of the Puja ; the house filled with men, feasting the Brahmins ; gifts to the poor, the feasting of friends and relations, the musical entertainments of the Voishnabas, and also pleasant theatrical representations. I have expended such large sums, and even given as donations one hundred Rupees. Being so rich, now I am obliged to take away the ornaments of my wife and the wife of my young brother. What affection ! God, thou doest give these, and thou hast taken them again. Then what sorrow ?

Soirindri. My dear when I see you weep, my life itself weeps (tears in her eyes). Was there so much pain in my fate ; am I thus destined to see such distress in my Lord ? Do not prevent me any more (*Takes out amulet.*)

Nobin. My heart bursts when I see your tears (*rubbing the tears*). Stop my dear, of the moon-like face, stop (*taking hold of her hands*). Keep these one day more, let me see.

Soirindri. My dear, what further resource is left ? Do, as I tell you now. If it be so destined, there shall be many ornaments afterwards (*aside sneezing*) ; true, true, Aduri is coming.

Enters Aduri with two letters

Aduri. I can't say whence the letters come ; but my mistress told me to give them to you.

(Exits Aduri, after giving the letters

Nobin. It shall be known by those letters whether your ornaments are to be taken or not (*Opens the first letter*).

Soirindri. Read it aloud.

Nobin. (*Reads the letter*).

Dear Friend—This is to make it known to you, that to give a sum of money to you at present is only to make a return of favours. My mother has taken leave of this world yesterday ; and the day of her first funeral obse-

quies is very near. This have I written yesterday. The tobacco is not yet sold.

"I am yours,
Ghonosyam Mukherji."

What misfortune in this ! Is this my assistance on the funeral obsequies of the honourable Mukherji ? Let me see what deadly weapon hast thou brought. (*Opens the letter*).

Soirindri. My dear, it is very miserable to fall into despair after entertaining high hopes. Let the letter remain as it is.

Nobin. (*Reads the letter*).

Honoured Sir,—I received your last letter, and noted the contents thereof. Be it known to you that your well-being is my well-being. I have already collected the sum of three hundred rupees, and shall take that along with me to you to-morrow. As to the remaining one hundred I shall clear that on the coming month. The great benefit, which you have bestowed on me, excites me to give some interest.

"I am your most obdt. serv.,
Gokul Krishna Palita"

Soirindri. I think God has turned His face towards us, now, let me go, and give this information to our youngest Bou.

(*Exit Soirindri*)

Nobin. (*Aside*) My life (wife) is, as it were, the idol of simplicity ; it is a piece of straw in a rapid stream. Let me take my father now to Indrabad, depending on this ; as to the future it shall be according to Fate. With me I have one hundred and fifty rupees. As to the tobacco, if I had kept it for a month more, I would have sold that for the sum of five hundred Rupees ; but what can I do ? I am obliged to give it for three hundred and

fifty Rupees ; since I have to pay much for the officers of the Court ; and also heavy expenses for going to and returning from the place. If on account of this false case my father is imprisoned then am I certain that the destruction of this land is very near. What a brutal Act is passed ! But, what is the fault of the Act ; or of those who passed the Act ? What misery can the country suffer if those, who are to carry out the Act, do it with impartiality ? Ah, by this Act how many persons are suffering in prison-houses without a fault ! It bursts the heart to see the miseries of their wives and children ; the pots for boiling rice on the hearths are remaining as they are ; the several kinds of grain in their yards are being dried up ; their kine in the rooms are all remaining bound in their places ; the cultivation of the fields is not fully carried out, the seeds are not sown, and the wild grass in the rice fields is not cut off. What further prospects are there in the present year ? All are crying aloud, with the exclamation : "Where is my lord ? Where is my father ?" Some Magistrates are dispensing justice with proper consideration ; in their hands this Act is not become the rod of death. Ah ! Had all Magistrates been as just as the Magistrate of Amarnagara is, then could the harrow fall on the ripe grain and the locusts destroy the fields ? Had that been the case, would I ever have been thrown into so many danger ? O, thou Lieutenant Governor ! Hadst thou engaged men of the same good character as thou hadst enacted laws, then the country would never have been miserable. O, thou Governor of the land, hadst thou made such a regulation, that every plaintiff, when his case is proved false, shall be put in prison, then the jail of Amarnagara would have been so very powerful. Our Magistrate is transferred, but our case is to continue here to the end ; and that will occasion our ruin.

Enters Sabitri

Sabitri. If you are to give up all the ploughs, is it that

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even then you are to take the advance-money? Sell all your ploughs and kine, and engage in trade; we shall enjoy ourselves with the profits that shall accrue from that. We can no longer endure this.

Nobin. Mother, I also, have the same desire. Only, I wait till Bindu is engaged in some serviee. If we leave off ploughing the land, it will be impossible for us to maintain the family and it is for this reason that we have still, with so much trouble, kept these ploughs.

Sabitri. How shalt thou go with this headache? Oh! Oh! Was such Indigo produced in this land; Oh! This hell of Indigo plantation (*Places her hand on Nobin's head*).

Enters Reboti

Reboti. My mother! Where shall I go? What shall I do? They have done what! Why is it that through ill fortune I brought her. Having brought one who now belongs to another family, I am become unable to preserve property. My eldest Babu! Preserve me; my life is on the point of bursting out. Bring me Khetromany; bring me my puppet of gold.

Sabitri. What has happened?

Reboti. My Khetromany went to fetch water in the evening from Das's tank along with Panchu's mother: while she was returning through the forest path, four club-men kidnapped her. That devil of the woman, Podi, was there to point her out, and to flee afterwards. Oh, eldest Babu! What a terrible thing I did by bringing down my daughter here. She is now a member of another family. She is carrying. Oh, how I dreamt of celebrating it.

Sabitri. What misfortune! These destroyers can do all things. Ye are taking by force the pieces of ground of men, their grain, their kine and calves. By the force of clubs, ye are cultivating Indigo, and the people are doing your work with cries and sobbings. But what is this—the violation of the modesty of women.

Reboti. My mother ! I am preparing the Indigo, taking only half the food. Those bighas which they had marked, on them I worked. When Ray works, he weeps with deep sighs ; if he hear of this my work, he would become, as it were insane.

Nobin. Where is Sadhu now ?

Reboti. He is sitting outside, and is weeping.

Nobin. To a woman of good family, constancy in faithfulness to her husband is, as it were, the loadstone ; and how very beautiful does she appear (*ramani ki ramaniya*) when she is decorated with the ornament, is a woman of a good family carried off, when the Bhima-like (son of) Svaropur of my father is still in existence ? At this very moment shall I go. I shall see what manner of injustice this is. The Indigo frog can never sit on the white waterlily-like constancy of a woman.

(*Exit Nobin*)

Sabitri. Chastity is the store of gold which is given by Providence ; it is so valuable that it makes the beggar woman, a queen. If you can rescue this jewel before it is soiled, from the hands of the Indigo monkey, then shall I say that you have actually answered the purpose of my being your mother. Such injustice I never heard of. Now, Ghose Bou, let us go outside.

THIRD SCENE

Mr. Rogue's Chamber

Mr. Rogue sitting

Enters Podi Moyrani and Khetromany

Khetro. My aunt, don't speak of such things to me ; I can give up my life, but my chastity never ; cut me in pieces, burn me in the fire, throw me into the water, and bury me under ground, but as to touching another man that can I never do. What will my husband think ?

Podi. Where is your husband now, and where are

you ? This shall no one know. Within this night, I shall bring you back with me to your mother.

Khetro. Very well the husband may not know it—but God above will know it, and I shall never be able to throw dust in His eyes. Like the fire of the brick-kiln it will still burn within my breast, and the more my husband shall love me for my constancy, the more my soul shall be tortured. Openly or secretly, I never can take a paramour.

Planter Rogue. Padma ! Why don't you get her down here to the bed ?

Podi. My child, come, come to the Saheb. Whatever you have to say, say to him. To speak to me is like crying in the wilderness.

Planter Rogue. To speak to me is throwing pearls at the hog's feet. Ha, ha, ha, we Indigo Planters, are become the companions of Death. Right in our presence our men have burnt down villages. Women died in the fire with babies at their breasts. Have we ever shown any compassion ? Can our Factories remain, if we have pity ? By nature, we are not bad ; our evil disposition has increased by Indigo cultivation. Before, we felt sorrow in beating one man ; now, we can beat ten women with the Ramkant (*leather strap*), making them senseless ; and immediately after, we can, with great laughter, take our dinner or supper. I like women more. They give me stimulus for my work at the Indigo factory. Everything—big or small—has lost itself in the waters of the ocean. Podi, are you not strong enough to drag her down to me ?

Podi. Khetromany, my sweet little daughter, be seated on his bed. The Saheb promises you a Lady's gown.

Khetro. Hell with your gown ! Better to wear a gunny bag. Auntie, I feel very thirsty. Please accompany me to my home so that I can quench my thirst. Oh I fear my mother has committed suicide by putting noose round her neck by this time, my father has broken his skull by a stroke of the axe, and my uncle is rushing about like a

wild buffalo. I am the only child not only to my parents but also to my uncles. Please let me go, send me to my home. Auntie Podi, I am at your feet and ready to swallow your excretions. Oh Mummy, I die, I die of thirst.

Planter Rogue. There is drinking water in that earthen pot, give her some.

Khetro. Being a Hindu girl how can I drink water from a Saheb's pot? The club-men have touched me, I cannot even enter my house before I wash myself clean.

Podi. (*Aside*) Religion or caste I have none. (*Openly*) What can I do, my daughter? It is very hard to extricate oneself from a Saheb's clutches. Oh, younger Saheb let Khetro go home to-day. She will come some other time.

Planter Rogue. Then you stay with me and enjoy yourself. Get out of the room you damned hoar. If I am strong I shall subdue her, or I shall send her back with you. I fear you created some obstacles, and did not allow her to come on her own; that is why club-men had to be engaged to bring her here. Did I ever engage club-men of our Indigo Factory to such jobs? You untruthful Podi.

Podi. You call your Koli. It seems she is dearer to you now.

(*Exit Podi*)

Khetro. Auntie! Oh Auntie! Please do not go away. Oh you leave me alone in the pit of a deadly serpent? I am horrified, trembling with fear, my body is quaking, my lips are parched with thirst.

Planter Rogue. Dear! Dear! Come come here (*holds both her hands*).

Khetro. Oh, Saheb you are my father, my father! Let me go, please send me home with Auntie Podi. The night is very dark, I shall not be able to go alone (*tries to extricate herself*). You are my father, my father! If you touch me I shall be an out-caste.

Planter Rogue. I like to be the father of your child! I

am not swayed by any pleadings. Come to my bed or I shall burst open your belly with a kick.

Khetro. Oh Saheb ! Have pity. I am now carrying, and my child will die.

Planter Rogue. You will not behave yourself unless you are stripped (*Catches her outer clothes*).

Khetro. Oh Saheb ! I am your mother. Do not make me naked, you are my son. Please let go my clothes. (*She makes a scratch on Rogue's hand by her finger nails*).

Planter Rogue. Infernal bitch (*takes a cane and brandishing it*) Now I shall make an end of your false chastity.

Khetro. Finish me all at once. I shalln't protest. Let a sword be thrust on my heart so that I go straight to heaven. You, son of a beast who live on excretions, you son of a barren woman, let two of your dear ones die your hand, till it comes off in bits. Haven't you your own mother and sister ? Why don't you go and make them naked ? You, brother of a man who corrupts his own sister, beat me, finish me all at once. I cannot stand any more.

Planter Rogue. Shut up you sinful woman, no more tall talks from a low-bred. (*Lands a blow on her belly and pulls her by the hair*).

Khetro. Where is my father ; Oh my mother ! Behold your Khetro died. (*She trembles with fear*)

Breaking through the window enter Nobin and Torapa

Nobin. (*Helping Khetro's hair from Rogue's grip*) Dehumanised Indigo Planter of evil disposition ! Is this the sample of your Christian asceticism, your Christian kindness, humanity and manners ? Such rude behaviour to a poor helpless girl, going to be a mother.

Torapa. The brother of my wife looks like a wooden doll—speechless now. Oh, Elder Babu ! Has he got a conscience that will follow your moral preachings ? If he is a mad dog, I am the right whip. If he makes a face, I have a strong fist. (*He holds Rougues by his neck and slaps him on his face*). If you cry aloud, I shall send you

to hell. (*gags him*). A thief may have many opportunities to steal, but an honest man also has his day. You have beaten us so often and now it is our turn. (*Pulls him by the ear*).

Nobin. Have no fears, Khetro. Arrange your clothes. (*Khetro arranges her clothes*). Torapa, gag him so that he may not shout. Let me first escape with Khetro on my shoulders. When I go past the area of pig raisers, you let the Saheb go and run for your safety. It is very difficult to travel by the bank of the river. My whole body is torn by thorns. The people there are in deep sleep by this time, but even if they remain alert, they won't create any trouble for you, when they come to know your mission. Then you meet me in my house, and tell me all about your escape from Indrabad and your whereabouts now.

Torapa. I will swim across the stream to my house, this night. What more shalt thou hear of my fate; I broke down the window of the Attorney's stable, and immediately ran off to the Zemindary of Babu Bosonto, and then, in the night come to my wife and children. This Planter has stopped everything; has he left any means for men to live by ploughing? How very terrible are the thrusts of the Indigo? Again, the advice is given to betray you. (*To Rogue*) Now, Sir, where are your kicks with your shoes on, and your beating on the head? (*Thrusts him with his knees*).

Nobin. Torapa, what is the use of beating him? We ought not to be cruel, because they are so; I am going.

(*Exit Nobin, with Khetromany*)

Torapa. Do you want to show such ill-usage and bad conduct (*to these Boses*)? Speak to your old father (*Mr. Wood*) and carry on your business by mutual consent; how long shall your force of hand continue? You shall not be able to do anything, when the ryots shall fly. There is no abuse more horrid than to say, Die! When the ryots

abscond *en masse* your factory will go to ruins. Just settle our eldest Basu's account of the last year ; and take what he consents to sow of Indigo in the present year. It is owing to you that they have fallen into a state of confusion. It is not merely to load one with advances, but cultivation is necessary. Good evening, our young Saheb. Now, I go. (*Throws him about, lying on his back, and flies off.*)

Planter Rogue. By Jove ! Beaten to jelly.

FOURTH SCENE

The Hall in the House of Goluk Basu

Enters Sabitri

Sabitri. (*With a deep sigh.*) O thou cruel Magistrate why didst not thou also give me a summons ? I would have gone to the Zillah with my husband and my child ; that would have been far better than remaining in this desert. Ah, my husband always remains in the house, never goes out to another village even on invitation. Is he destined to suffer so much ? The peadahs taking him away, and he himself to go to the jail. Bhagavati, my mother was there so much in thy mind ? Ah, he says that he can never sleep but in a room very long and broad ; he eats only the boiled Atapa rice ; he takes the food prepared by no other hand but that of the eldest Bou. Ah ! He brought blood out of his breast by severe slaps ; he made his eyes swollen by tears ; and at the same time he took his leave, he said : "this is my going to the side of the Ganges" (*weeps*). Nobin says, "Mother, call on Bhagabati. I must return home having gained my object and bring him also." Ah ! The face of my son, like unto that of gold, is blackened ; what great troubles for the collection of money.

Wandering about without rest, his brain is become like a whirlpool. Lest I give away the ornaments of the Bous, my son encourages me, saying. "My mother,

what want of money ? What large sum will be necessary for this case ?” How did my child grieve, when my ornaments were given in mortgage for our suit on small portions of land, said, “as soon as I get a small sum of money, I shall immediately bring back the ornaments.” My son has courage in his tongue, and tears in his eyes. My dear Nobin, in this heat of the sun, went to Indrabad ; and I, a great sinner, remained confined in my room. Is this the life thy mother should spend ?

Enters Soirindri

Soirindri. Mother, it is now too late. Now bathe. It is our unfortunate destiny : else, why shall such an occurrence come to pass ?

Sabitri. (*With tears*) No my daughter, as long as my Nobin does not return, I shall never give rice and water to my body. Who shall serve food to my son ?

Soirindri. His brother has a lodging house there, and they have a Brahmin cook ; there will be no disturbance. You had better come and bathe.

Enters Saralota with a cup of oil

Young Bou, you had better rub the oil on her body, and make her bathe, and bring her to the cook-room. Let me go to prepare the place.

(Exit Soirindri)

(Saralota rubs the oil on her mother-in-law's body)

Sabitri. My parrot is become silent ; my daughter has no more words in her mouth ; she is faded like a stale flower. Ah ! Ah ! For how long have I not seen Bindu Madhab ? I am waiting in expectation that the College will be closed, and my son will come home. But this danger is come. (*Applying her hand on Saralota's chin*) Ah, the mouth of my dear one is dry, I think you have not yet taken any food. While I have fallen into this danger, when shall I examine, whether any have taken

their food or not. Let me bathe, you go, and take some food. I am also going.

(*Exit both*

FOURTH ACT

FIRST SCENE

The Criminal Court of Indrabad

Enters Mr. Wood, Mr. Rogue, the Magistrate and an officer, sitting. Goluk Chunder, Nobin Madhab, Bindu Madhab, the Attorneys of the Plaintiff and the Defendant, the Agent, Nazir, a Bailiff, servants, ryots etc. standing

Defendant's Attorney. May the prayer in this application be granted. (*Gives the application to the Seristadar*)

Magistrate. Very well ; read it. (*Speaks with Mr. Wood and laughs*).

Sheristadar. (*To the Defendant's Attorney*). You have written here what equals the length of the Ramayana. Can the petition be read without its being in abstract ? (*Turns to another page of the application*).

Magistrate. (*Having spoken with Mr. Wood, and concealing his laughter*). Read clearly.

Sheristadar. In the absence of the defendant and his attorneys, the evidence is already taken from the witnesses of the plaintiff. We pray that the witnesses of the plaintiff be again called.

Plaintiff's Attorney. My Lord, it is true that attorneys are given to lying, deceiving and forgery ; they easily forge and tell lies, and are incessantly engaged in immortal

action. Leaving their wives, they spend their time in the 'blissful abode' of prostitutes. The zemindars hate the attorneys ; but for effecting their special purposes, they call them, and give them a seat on their couch. My Lord, the very profession of the Attorneys is a cheating one. But the Attorneys of the Indigo Planters can never deceive. The Indigo Planters are Christians ; falsehood is accounted a great sin in the Christian Religion. Stealing, licentiousness, murder, and other actions of that nature are also looked upon as hateful in that religion. Not only taking evil actions into consideration, even forming evil designs in the mind dooms a man to burn in the fire of hell. The main aim of the Christian Religion is to show kindness, to forgive, to be mild, and to do good unto others ; so, it is by no means probable that the Indigo Planters, who follow such a true and pure religion, ever give false evidence. My Lord, we do serve such Indigo Planters ; we have reformed our character according to theirs, and even, if we desire, we can, by no means, teach the witness anything false ; since if the Sahebs, the lovers of truth, find the least fault in their servants, they punish them according to the rules of justice. The Amin of the Factory, the witness of the defendant, is an example of that. Because he deprived the ryot of his advances, the kind Saheb drove him from his office ; and being angry on account of the cries of the poor ryot, he also beat him severely.

Wood, the Planter. (*To the Magistrate*) Extreme provocation ! Extreme provocation !

Plaintiff's Attorney. My Lord, many questions were put to my witnesses ; had they been witnesses who were prepared ones (*perjured*) they would have been caught by those very questions. The lawyers have said, "The Judge is an advocate of the defendant, consequently," the questions to be put by the defendant, are already asked by your Honour. Therefore, there is no probability of any advantage to the defendant, if the witnesses be

brought here again ; but on the other hand, it will prove very disadvantageous to them. Honoured Sir, the witnesses are poor people who live by holding the plough. By the plough they maintain their wives and children ; their fields become ruined if they do not remain there for the whole day ; so much so, that because it proves a loss to them if they come home, their wives bring boiled rice and refreshments bound in handkerchiefs to them in the fields and make them eat that. It proves an entire loss to the ryots to come away from the fields for one day ; and at such a time, if they be brought to such a distant part of the Zillah by summons, then the labours of the whole year will go for nothing. Honoured Sir, Honoured Sir, do as you think just.

Magistrate. I don't see any reason for that (*as advised by Mr. Wood*). There seems no necessity for that.

Defendant's Attorney. My Lord, the ryots of no village take the advances of the Indigo Planters with their full consent. The Indigo Planter, accompanied by the Amins and servants, or his Dewan, goes on horse-back to the field, marks off the best pieces of land, and orders the preparation of the Indigo. Then the owner of the land brings the ryots to the Factory, and having made known to them the particulars of the matter, takes their signatures for the advances. The ryots taking the money in advance, come home with tears in their eyes ; and the day on which any of them comes home with the money, his house becomes filled, as it were, with the tears of persons weeping for the death of a relative or friend. On the payment of the Indigo to Indigo Planters, even if the latter have something still to pay to the farmers above the sum of the advances as the price of that article, yet they keep it in their Account-books that the farmers have still something to pay. The ryots, when they have once taken the advance, will suffer pain for not less than seven generations. The sorrow, which the ryots endure in the preparation of the Indigo, is known only to

themselves and the Great God, the Preserver of the poor. Whenever some sit together, they converse about the advances and inform each other of their respective sums; and also try how to save themselves. They have no necessity for forming plans and mutually taking the advance of each other. Of themselves they are become as mad as the dog who received a blow on the head. The witnesses gave evidence that the ryots were willing to prepare Indigo, but that the person who has engaged me had, by advice and intimidation, stopped their engaging in the preparation of Indigo. This is a very striking and an evident forgery. Honored Sir, once more bring them before the Bench, and your servant will by two questions disclose the falsity of their evidence. I do acknowledge that Nobin Madhab Bose, the son of Goluk Chunder Bose, who engaged me tried his utmost to extricate the helpless ryots from the hands of the giant-like Indigo Planters. I do acknowledge this. He also proved himself successful in stopping tyranny of Mr. Wood, which is known fully by the case which was brought here for the burning of the village of Polaspore. But Goluk Chunder Bose is of very peaceful character; he fears the Indigo Planters more than the tigers, never engages in any quarrels; at no time injures another, and even is not courageous enough to save another from danger. My Saheb, that Goluk Chunder Bose is man of a good character, is known to all persons in the Zillah, and can be known even by enquiring of the Amlas of the Court.

Goluk. Honoured Sir, the whole sum due for my Indigo of the last year was not paid; still only through fear of coming into Court, I consented to take the advance for sixty bighas of land. My eldest son said, "Father, we have other ways of living; the loss in Indigo for one year or two might stop feasts and religious ceremonies, but will not produce want of food. But those who entirely depend on their ploughs; what

means have they? Losing this case, if we be obliged again to engage in the Indigo cultivation, all will be obliged to do the same afterwards." He said this as a wise man; and consequently, I told him to make the Saheb by entreaties and supplications, to agree to fifty bighas. The Saheb said nothing neither 'Yes' nor 'No'; and secretly made preparations to bring me in my old age, to gaol. I know that the only way to get happiness is to keep the Sahebs contented; the country is the Sahebs', the Judges are their brothers and friends and is it proper to do anything against them? Extricate me, and I make this promise, that if I cannot prepare the Indigo for want of ploughs and kine, I will annually give the Saheb Co. Rs. 100 in the place of that. Am I a person to tutor the ryots? Do I meet them?

Defendants's Attorney. Honored Sir, of the four ryots who came as witness, one is of the Tikiri caste; he has no knowledge of what a plough is; he has no lands and no rents to pay; has no kine and no cow-house; and this can be best known by proper examination. Kanai Toroldar is a ryot of a different village; and as to our Babu, he has no acquaintance with him. For these reasons we do pray that these men be brought again. The legislators have said, before the decision, the defendant ought to be supplied with all proper means. Saheb, if this my prayer be granted, I shall have no more reasons for complaint.

Plaintiff's Attorney. Saheb.

Magistrate. (*Writes a letter*). Speak, Speak! I am writing with my finger, not with my ears.

Plaintiff's Attorney. Saheb, if at this time, the ryots be brought here they will suffer great loss; else, I, also, would have prayed for their being brought here again, since the offences of the defendant, which are already proved, may receive stronger confirmation. Sir, the bad character of Goluk Chunder Bose is known throughout

the country ; he who benefits him, in return, receives injuries. The Indigo Planters crossing the immeasurable ocean have come to this land, and have brought out its secret wealth ; have done great benefit to the country, have increased the royal treasure, and have profited themselves. What place, besides the prison, can best befit a person who thus opposes the great actions of these noble men ?

Magistrate. (*Writes the address*) Chaprasi.

Chaprasi. Sir (*Comes to the Saheb*).

Magistrate. (*Advises with Mr. Wood*). Give this to Mrs. Wood. Tell the Khansamah, the Saheb, who is come here, will not go to-day.

Sheristadar. Sir, what orders are to be written ?

Magistrate. Let it remain within the Nathi or Court documents.

Sheristadar. (*Writes*) It is ordered that it remains pending with the Nathi (*signed by the Magistrate*). Saheb, thou hast not yet made a signature on the orders to the reply of the defendant.

Magistrate. Read it.

Sheristadar. It is ordered, that the defendant is to give Rs. 200/- or two persons as security, and that the subpoenas be sent to the truthful witnesses. (*The Magistrate gives the signature*).

Magistrate. Bring the case of the robbery in Mirghan to the Court to-morrow.

(*Exit Magistrate, Mr. Wood, Mr. Rogue, Chaprasi, and Bearers*).

Sheristadar. Nazir, take the security bond from the defendant properly.

(*Exit Sheristadar, agent, the plaintiff's Attorney, the royts.*)

Nazir. (*To the Defendant's Attorney*) How can we write now, while it is evening ; moreover, I am somewhat busy now.

Defendant's Attorney. (*speaks with the Nazir*) They

(i. e., the Boses) are great only in name. Not much wealth left. This amount was had by selling the jewellery.

Nazir. I have no estates, have no trade, nor lands for cultivation. This is my whole stock. It is for your sake only that I have agreed to take Rupees 100/-. Let us go to our lodging. Be careful that the Dewan does not hear this. They have been paid elsewhere.

(Exit all)

SECOND SCENE

Indrabad : The Dwelling of Bindu Madhab

Nobin Madhab, Bindu Madhab and Sadhu sitting

Nobin. I am now obliged to go home. My mother will die as soon as she hears of this. What more shall I do now for you? See that our father does not suffer great sorrow. I have now determined on leaving our habitation. I shall sell of everything, and send the money. Whoever wants any sum you will give him that.

Bindu. The Jailor does not want money; only for fear of the Magistrate, he does not allow the cooking Brahmin to be taken there.

Nobin. Give him money and also entreat him. Ah! His body is old; he had been without food for three days. I explained to him, and entreated him greatly. He says; "Nobin, let three days pass and then shall I think whether I shall take food or not; within these three days, I shall not take anything.

Bindu. I do not find any means how I can be able to make my father take some boiled rice. The hand which he has placed on his eyes from the time when the Magistrate, the slave of the Indigo Planters, ordered him to be kept in the prison, that hand he has not yet removed. The hand is filled with the tears; and the place where he was made to sit down at first, is still that where he now is. Being entirely silent, and remaining weak in body and without power to move, he is become

like a dead pigeon in this cagelike prison. This day is the fourth, and to-day I must make him take food. You had better go home, and I shall send a letter every day.

Nobin. Oh God, what great sorrow art thou giving to our father ! If they do allow you, my dear Bindu, to remain day and night in the prison ; then can I quietly go to our house.

Sadhu. Let me steal, and you bring me before the Court as a thief. I will make the confession ; they will put me in prison, then I will be best able to serve my master.

Nobin. O Sadhu, thou art the actual Sadhu (*the honest man*). Ah ! You are now very anxious on learning the deadly illness of Khetromany ; and the sooner I can take you home, the better.

Sadhu. (*Deep sigh*) My eldest Babu ! Shall I see my daughter on my return ? I have none other.

Bindu. If you make her take that draught which I gave you, she must be cured by that. The Doctor heard every particular of her disease, and gave that medicine.

Enters the Deputy Inspector

Dy. Inspector. Bindu Babu, Mr. Commissioner has written very urgently about releasing your father.

Bindu. There is no doubt the Lieutenant-Governor will grant him release.

Nobin. After what time can the notice of the release come ?

Bindu. It will not be more than fifteen days.

Dy. Inspector. The Deputy Magistrate of Amarana-gara gave an order of imprisonment for six months to a certain Mooktyar according to this law, but he had to remain for sixteen days in the gaol.

Nobin. Shall such a time ever come, that the Governor, becoming friendly, will destroy the evil desires of the unfriendly Magistrate ?

Bindu. There is a God, the Lord of the Universe ;

and he must do it. Sir, you had better start, for there is a long way to go. *(Exit Nobin, Bindu and Sadhu)*

Dy. Inspector. Alas ! Two brothers burnt up by these anxieties have, as it were, become dead, while living. The order of release from the Lieutenant-Governor will be as the restoration of life of them. Babu Nobin Chunder is of a brave spirit, does good to others, is very munificent, a great improver of learning, and also of a patriotic mind ; but mist of the cruel Indigo Planters withered all his good qualities in the bud.

Enters the Pundit (a Sanskrit teacher) of the College

Welcome, Sir !

Pundit. My body is naturally somewhat of a warm nature. I cannot bear the sunshine. The heat of the sun makes me, as it were, mad in the months of March, April and May. I had a very severe headache for a few days ; and was not able to attend Bindu Madhab at all.

Dy. Inspector. The Vishnu Taila *(a kind of oil)* can do you some good. The oil is prepared for Babu Vishnu, and to-morrow I shall send some to your house.

Pundit. I am much obliged to you for that. A man of a healthy constitution becomes mad by teaching children ; such am I.

Dy. Inspector. Why don't we see our elder Pundit any more ?

Pundit. He is now trying some means to leave this doggish service. While his good son is making some acquisition of property, the family will be maintained like that of a king. It does not seem good for him now to go to and come from the college looking, with his books under his arm, like a bull yoked to the plough. He is now of age.

Re-enters Bindu Madhab

Bindu. The Pundit is come.

Pundit. Did the sinful creature show so much injustice ? You did not hear it ; at Christmas he spent ten

days continually in that Factory. The ryot is to have justice from him ! Can the Hindu celebrate his religious services before the Kazi (*the Mahomedan judge*).

Bindu. The decree of Providence.

Pundit. Whom did you appoint as Muktyar ?

Bindu. Pradhan Mullik.

Pundit. Why did you appoint him your Mukhtear ? It would have better if you had engaged some other person. "All gods are equal. To make a separation from the wicked, the village becomes empty."

Bindu. The Commissioner has made a report to the Government recommending the release of my father.

Pundit. One is ashes and so is the other ; as is the Magistrate such is the Commissioner.

Bindu. Sir, you know not the Commissioner ; and therefore, you spoke thus of him. The Commissioner is very impartial, and is always desirous of the improvement of the natives.

Pundit. Whatever that be ; now if through the blessings of God your father be released, then all shall be well. In what condition is he in the gaol ?

Bindu. He is shedding tears day and night, and for the last three days has taken no food. Just now I shall go to the gaol, and shall make him happy by giving him this good news.

Enters a Chaprasi

Art thou a chaprasi of the gaol ?

Chaprasi. Sir, come quickly to the gaol. The Darogah has called you.

Bindu. Have you seen my father this day ?

Chaprasi. Come Sir, I cannot say anything.

Bindu. Come Sir (*to the Pundit*). I don't suppose all good. I go.

(Exit Bindu Madhab and Chaprasi)

Pandit. Yes ; let us all go. I think some bad accident has taken place.

(Exit both)

THIRD SCENE

The Prison-House of Indrabad

The dead body of Goluk Chunder swinging, bound by his outer garment twisted like a rope ; the Darogah of the Gaol and the Jamadar sitting.

Darogah. Who is gone to call Babu Bindu Madhab ?

Jamader. Manirodi is gone there. Till the Doctor comes, we cannot bring it down.

Darogah. Did not the Magistrate say, he will come here this day ?

Jamadar. No, Sir, he has four days more to come. At Sachigunge on Saturday, they have a Champagne-party and ladies' dance. Mrs. Wood can never dance with any other but our Saheb ; and I saw that when I was a bearer. Mrs. Wood is very kind ; through the influence of one letter, she got me the Jamadary of the jail.

Darogah. Ah ! Babu Bindu Madhab expressed great sorrow at his (*father's*) not eating food. When Babu Bindu sees this, he will quit life.

Enters Bindu Madhab

All things are by the will of God.

Bindu. What is this ! What is this ! Ah ! Ah ! My father is dead while bound above ground with a rope ! I was coming to try some means for his release. What sorrow (*places his own head on the breast of the dead body, then clasps the corpse, and weeps*) Oh father ! Hast thou at once broken the ties of affection towards us ? Shalt thou no more praise Bindu before other men for his English education ? Calling Nobin Madhab by the name of "Bhima of Svaropur" ; is that now put at an end ? You have now at last made your peace with Bipin with whom you had so often quarrelled over the eldest Bou saying : "She is my mother, my mother." Ah, as in the case of a heron and its mate with their young ones flying in the air in

search of food, if the heron be killed by a fowler, the mate with her young ones falls into great danger, so shall my mother be when she hears of your being put to death, while hung above ground by a rope.

Darogah. (*Bringing Babu Bindu aside by taking hold of his hands*). Babu Bindu, do not be so impatient now. Get the permission of the Doctor and try to take the corpse soon to the Amritaghata.

Enter Deputy Inspector and the Pundit

Bindu. Darogah, do not speak of anything to me. Whatever consultation you have to make, make that with the pundit and the Deputy Inspector. Through sorrow, I have lost the power of speech ; let me take my father's feet once on my breast. (*Sits up, taking the feet of Goluk on his breast*).

Pundit. (*To the Deputy Inspector.*) Let me take Bindu Madhab on my lap ; you better unloose the rope. It is never proper to keep such a godly body in this hell.

Darogah. It will be necessary to wait for a short time.

Pundit. Are you the Chowkidar (*gate keeper*) of hell, else why have you such a character ?

Darogah. Sir, you are wise, you are wrongly reproaching me.

Enters the Doctor

Doctor. Ho ! Ho ! Bindu Madhab ; God's will. The pundit is come. Bindu must not leave the College.

Pundit. It is not proper for Bindu to leave the College.

Bindu. As to our estates and possessions we have lost everything ; at last, our father has left us beggars (*weeps*), how can studying be any more carried on ?

Pundit. The Indigo Planters have taken away the all of Bindu Madhab and his family.

Doctor. I have heard of these Planters from the Missionaries and also I have seen them myself. Once as I was coming from a certain Planter's Factory at Matanganagar,

while I was sitting in a village, two ryots of the place were passing by the side of my palanquin ; one of them had some milk with him, which I wanted to buy. Immediately, one whispered to the other, "The Indigo giant, the Indigo giant." Then having left the milk, they ran off. I asked another ryot, and he said, that these persons ran off for fear of being compelled to take advances for Indigo ; and as they had taken the advance for Indigo, so why should they have to go to the godown again ? I understood, they took me for a planter ; I gave the milk into that ryot's hand, and went away from that place.

Dy. Inspector. A certain Missionary was passing through a village within the concern of Mr. Vally. As soon as the ryots saw him they began to cry aloud, "The Indigo ghost is come out, the Indigo ghost is come out," and having left that path, flew into their own houses. But as the ryots found, by and by, the bounty, mildness, and forgiving temper of these gentlemen, they began to wonder ; and as much as the Missionaries showed heartfelt sorrow for the tortures which the poor people suffered from the Indigo Planters, so much the more they began to love them, and to have faith in them. Now the ryots say to each other, "All bamboos are of one tuft ; but of one is made the frame of the Goddess Durga, and of another the sweeper's basket."

Pundit. Let us take away the dead body.

Doctor. I shall have to examine the dead body a little. You can bring it out then.

(Bindu Madhab and the Deputy Inspector, loosening the rope, bring out the corpse).

(Exit all

FIFTH ACT

FIRST SCENE

Before the Office of the Begunbari Factory

Enters Gopinath and Herdsman

Gopi. How did you get so much information ?

Cowherd. We are their neighbours ; day and night we go to their house. Whenever we are in want of anything, either a little salt or a laddle of oil, we immediately go to them and bring it ; if the child cry, we bring a little molasses from them and give it to the child ; we are getting our support for nearly even generations from the Bose family ; and can't we get information about them ?

Gopi. Where was Bindu Madhab married ?

Cowherd. Oh, it is in a village to the west of Calcutta. In which they wanted to have the Kaistas wear the *poita*. We cannot satisfy all the Brahmins now in existence in a great feast, and still they wanted to increase the number of the Brahmins. The father-in-law of our young Babu is greatly respected. The Judge or Magistrate, when they come to him, take off their hats. Even the Governor takes off his hat while coming to meet him. Do such men give their daughters to men of these places ? Observing the improvements in learning made by our young Babu, they did not care about the village belonging to ryots. People say that the women in cities are showy and that there is no distinction between them and those who live in the bazar. But we do not at all find a young woman of a mild temper as the Bou of the Bose family is. The mother of Goma goes to their house every day still, although she has been married for nearly five years, she has never seen her face. We saw her only on that day when she came here. We thought that the Babus in the city keep company with the Europeans ; therefore, they have brought their females into public like English ladies,

Gopi. But the Bou is always engaged in attending on her mother-in-law.

Cowherd. Dewanji, what shall I say? The mother of Goma says: I heard a report that, had not the youngest Bou been in the house when the news of Goluk Bose being bound by the rope and thus killed came, the mistress of the family would have died. We have heard also that the women in the city treat their husbands as sheep (slaves) and murder their parents by not giving them any support; but observing this Bou, I now know that it is a mere hearsay.

Gopi. I think, the mother of Babu Nobin Chunder also loves her.

Cowherd. I don't see any one in the world whom she does not love. Ah! She is an Annapurnah (full of rice). But have you kept the rice that she shall be full of it? The vile Planters have swallowed up the old man, and they are now on the point of swallowing up the old woman.

Gopi. Thou braggart fool, if the Saheb hear this, he will bring out your new moon.

Cowherd. What can I do? Is it my desire to sit in the Factory and abuse the Saheb? It is you who are drawing the venom out of me.

Gopi. I am very sorry that I have destroyed this man of great honour by a false law-suit. I have also felt great pain on hearing of Nobin's severe headache and the miserable condition of his mother.

Cowherd. It is the cold attacking a frog. Dewanji, don't be angry with me, I am as a mad goat; shall I prepare the tobacco?

Gopi. This filth-eater of Nanda's family is very senseless.

Cowherd. The Sahebs are doing all; they are the blacksmiths and you are the scimitars; the scimitars fall wherever they wish. If a flood comes whirling into the Factories of the Sahebs the villagers would bathe therein for relief.

Gopi. You are very foolish, I don't want to hear any more. Go out, the Saheb will come very soon.

Cowherd. Now, I am going, you must attend to my milk bill, and also give me one rupee to-morrow. We shall go to bathe in the Ganges.

(Exit Cowherd)

Gopi. I think the thunder-bolt will strike this head, which is aching. No one will be able to stop the Saheb from sowing the Indigo seed on the sides of your tank. The Sahebs did something improper. These persons engaged themselves to sow Indigo on fifty bighas of land, although they did not get the full price of the last year. Yet the Sahebs are not satisfied; these disputes arose only for certain pieces of ground; and it would have been good for Nobin Bose to have given them these—to keep the goddess Sitola well-pleased is the best. Nobin will bite once more even after his death. *(Seeing the Saheb at a distance.)* Here the white-bodied man with a blue dress is coming, I think, I am to remain as a companion (*i. e. in prison*) with the former Dewan for some days.

Enters Mr. Wood.

Wood. There will be a great riot at Matanganagar; and all the latyals will be there. Let no one hear this. For this place, make a collection of ten of the Pod caste of spearmen I, Mr. Rogue, and you are to go there. The fool, while he has taken his cacha, will not be able to increase the row greatly. He is sick; then how can he go to bring assistance from the Darogah?

Gopi. The extreme weakness to which these are reduced makes it unnecessary to bring any spearmen: among the Hindus, for a person to die with a rope round his neck, especially within a prison, is very disgraceful; so he is greatly punished by this occurrence.

Wood. You do not understand this. The rascal is become very happy on the death of his father. He took the advances for a long time only through fear of his father ; now that fear is gone, and he will do as he likes. The rascal has given a bad name to my Factory, and I will imprison him to-morrow and keep him along with Mozumdar. If the Magistrate be of the same character with him of Amaranagara, the wicked people will be able to do everything.

Gopi. With respect to what they planned about the case of Mozumdar, I cannot say how very terrible it would have been, had not Nobin Bose fallen into this great danger. I cannot say what they still will do. Moreover, as the Magistrate, who is coming, we have heard, is on the side of the ryots ; and when he comes to the villages, he brings along with him his tents—Observing this, we may say, it might occasion great confusion, and also it is somewhat fearful.

Wood. You are always puzzling me with speaking of fear ; the Indigo Planters, in nothing whatever, have any fear. If you don't desire it, leave your business, thou great fool.

Gopi. Sir, fear comes on good grounds. When the former Dewan was put in prison, his son came to ask for the last six months' salary of his father. On which you told him to make an application. Then, on his making the application, you again say the salary cannot be given before the accounts are closed. Honoured Sir, is this the judgement on a servant when he is put in prison ?

Wood. Did not I know this ? Thou stupid, ungrateful creature. What becomes of your salaries ? If you did not devour the price of the Indigo, would there be any deadly Commission ? Would the poor ryots have gone to the Missionsries with tears in their eyes ? You, rascal, have destroyed everything. If the Indigo lessen in quantity, I shall sell your houses and indemnify myself ; thou arrant coward, hellish knave.

Gopl. Sir, we are like butcher's dogs ; we fill our bellies with the intestines. Had you, Sir, taken the Indigo from the ryots in the very same way as the Mahajans (*factors*) take corn from their debtors, then the Indigo factories would never have suffered such disgrace ; there would have been no necessity for an overseer and the khalasis, and the people would never have reproached me with saying, "Cursed Gopi ! Cursed Gopi !

Wood. Thou art blind, thou hast no eyes.

Enters an Umadar (an Apprentice)

I have seen with my own eyes (*applying his hand to his own eyes*) the Mahajans go to the rice-field and quarrel with the ryots (*their debtors.*) Ask this person.

Apprentice. Honoured Sir, I can give many examples of that. The ryots say, it is through the grace of the Indigo-Planters only that we are preserved from the hands of the Mahajans.

Gopl. (*Aside, to the Apprentice.*) My child, it is vain flattery. No employment is vacant now. (*To Mr. Wood*) It is true that the Maharajans go to rice-fields and dispute with the ryots ; but if your Honour had been acquainted with the mysterious intention of the Maharajans in going to the fields and raising disputes, you would never have compared with the going of the Mahajans to the fields, the punishment of the poor with *Shamchand* resembling the tortures which Lakshman the son of Sumitra, suffered by the Sakti-sela, while they are without food. [The Mahajans' going to the fields and your torturing with *Shamchand* the starving poor—the Lakshmans (*son of Sumitra*) hit by Sakti-sela,—are not comparable].

Wood. Very well, explain it to me. There must be some reasons why these fools speak to us of everything else ; but of the Mahajans they don't say a single word.

Gopl. Honoured Sir, these debtors, whatever sum of money they require for the whole year, they take from

the Mahajans, and that quantity of rice, which is necessary for them for that time, they also take from their creditors. (These debtors take from the Mahajans whatever sum of money they require for the whole year, and it is from the Mahajans again that they take whatever quantity of rice they need). At the end of the year, the debtors clear their debts either by selling the tobacco, sugar-cane, sesamum, and other things which they have, and then giving the sum collected to their creditors with the interest on the sum for the time ; or by giving those very articles according to the market price : and of the corn which grows, they send to the Mahajans' houses, a part half-prepared. That, which remains, proves sufficient for the expenses of the family for three or four months. If through famine or any improper expenses of the debtors, there fall any arrears in their supplies, the remainder of the debt is carried into the new account-book. Then, by and by, the remainder is filled up. The Mahajans never bring an action against their debtors ; consequently the falling into arrears appears to them, as it were, a present loss. I suppose the Mahajans for that reason, sometimes go to the fields, observe the tillage and also enquire whether the extent of land for which the debtors have asked the revenue from them, is all cultivated with grains. Some inexperienced persons, taking under false pretences a large sum than is necessary, and thus being burdened with heavy debts, cause losses on the part of the Mahajans and also themselves suffer great troubles. The Mahajans go to the fields for stopping these, and not like "Indigo Giants" (*strikes his tongue*). Sir, the stupid, shameless Mahajans speak thus.

Wood. I see, Saturn has come upon you to your destruction ; else why art thou become so very inquisitive, and why so presumptuous, you stupid incestuous brute ?

Gopi. Sir, we are made to swallow abuse, to submit to shoe-beating, and also we are the men to go to the Shrighur (the prison) ; should there be a dispensary or school in the Factory you get the credit ; should there be

murders, we are the men. When I come to you for advice, you, sir, become angry. That anxiety which I have felt for the law-suit of the Mojumdars, is only known to the Lord of all.

Wood. The fool is such, that whenever I tell him to do any action requiring courage, he brings to my ears the law-suit of the Mojumdars. I am saying always that thou art an ignorant fool; why don't you become satisfied with sending Nobin Basu to the Godown of Sochigunge?

Gopi. Thou, Sir, art the parent of this poor man; it would be good, if for the benefit of thy poor servant, thou sendest him once to Nobin Basu to ask him about this case.

Wood. Stop, thou upstart of a son. Shall I go to meet a dog for you? You coward son of a Kaistha (*throws him down with kicks*). Were you sent as witness to the Commission you would have ruined everything, you, diabolical nigger (*two kicks more*); with such a tongue you shall do your work like a Caot. You stupid Kaet. Were it not for your work on to-morrow, I would send you to the jail.

(*Exit Mr. Wood and the Apprentice*

Gopi, (*Rubbing his body all over and rising up*) A person becomes the Dewan of an Indigo Planter after being born a vulture seven hundred times; else how are numberless kicks dealt by legs wearing stockings digested? Oh what kickings? Oh the fool is, as it were, the wife (*wearing a gown*) of a student who is out of College.

(*Aside*) Dewan, Dewan.

Gopi. Your servant is present. Whose turn is it?

"In the sea of love are many waves."

(*Exit Gopi*

SECOND SCENE

The bedroom of Nobin Basu

Aduri crying when preparing Nobin's bed

Aduri. Ah ! Ah ! Ah ! Where shall I go ? My heart is on the point of bursting. They have beaten him so severely that the pulse is moving very slowly ; our mistress will die as soon as she sees this. When Nobin was taking by force to the Factory, they were tearing themselves and weeping under the shade of that tree ; but when brought towards our house they did not see that.

(Aside) Aduri, we shall take him into the house.

Aduri. Bring him into the house. None of them are here.

Enter Sadhu and Torapa bearing the senseless Nobin on their shoulders

Sadhu. *(Making Nobin Madhab to lie on the bed)* Madam where art thou ?

Aduri. They began to see standing under the tree. When this person *(pointing to Torapa)* fled away with him, we thought he was taken to the Factory. They began to tear themselves under the tree. I came to the house to call certain persons. Will our mistress remain alive when she sees this dead son ? Do you stand ; let me call them here.

(Exit Aduri)

Enters the Priest

Priest. Oh God, hast thou killed such a man ! Hast thou stopped the provision of so many men. We do not find any such symptom that our eldest Babu sit up again.

Sadhu. God's will. He can give life to a dead man

Priest. On the third day, Bindu Babu, according to the shastras, celebrated the offering of the funeral cake (*pindadan*) on the banks of the Ganges ; it is through the entreaties of his mother that preparations are being made for the monthly ceremony (*Shradh*). It was determined that after the celebration of the ceremony, their dwelling place is to be removed ; and I also heard that they will no more meet with that cruel Saheb ; then why did he go there to-day ?

Sadhu. Our eldest Babu has no fault, nor has he any want of judgement. Our Madam and the eldest Babu forbade him many times. They said, "During the days we are to remain here, we will bathe with the water of the well, or Aduri will bring the water from the tank ; we shall have no trouble." The eldest Babu said, "With a present of 50 Rupees, I shall fall at the Saheb's feet, and thus stop the cultivation of the Indigo on the side of the tank : nothing of the dispute in such a dangerous time." With this intention our eldest Babu took me and Torapa with him, and going there with tears in his eyes, said to the Saheb, "Saheb, I bring you a present of 50 Rupees ; only for this year, stop the cultivation of the Indigo in this place ; and if this be not granted, take the money, and delay that business only till the time when the ceremony is to be performed." There is sin even in repeating the answer which the wretch gave, and the hairs of our body stood on an end. The rascal said, "Your father was hung in the jail of the Yabans with thieves and robbers ; therefore, keep your money for the sacrifice of many bulls which are necessary for his ceremony." Then placing his shoe on one of the eldest Babu's knees, he said, "this is the gift for your father's ceremony."

Priest. Narayan ; Narayan (*Placing his hand on his ears*).

Sadhu. Instantly the eyes of the eldest Babu became red like blood, his whole body began to tremble, he bit his lips with his teeth and then remaining silent for a short time, gave the Saheb a hard kick on the breast, so that he fell

on the ground upside down like a bundle of *bena* (*certain grass*). Kes Dali, who is now the Jamadar of the Factory ; and other ten spearmen immediately stood round him. The eldest Babu had once saved them from a case of robbery in which they were involved ; so they felt a little ashamed to raise their hands against him. Mr. Wood gave a blow to the Jamadar, took the stick out of his hand and smote with it the head of the eldest Babu. The head was cracked, and he fell down senseless on the ground ; I tried much, but was not able to go into that crowd. Torapa was observing this from a distance ; and as soon as the men stood round the eldest Babu, he with violence rushed into this crowd like an obstinate buffalo, took him up, and flew off.

Torapa. I was told (*by the eldest Babu*) “to stand at a distance, lest they take me away by force.” The fools hate me very much. Do I hide myself when there is a tumult ? If I had gone a little before, I would have brought the Babu safe, and would have sacrificed two of those rascals in the Durgah of Borkat Bibi (*the temple of Benediction*). My whole body was shrunk on observing the head of the Babu ; then, when should I kill these ? Oh Allah ! The eldest Babu saved me so many times, but I was not able to save him once. (*Beats his forehead and cries*).

Priest. I see a wound from a weapon on his breast.

Sadhu. As soon as Torapa rushed into the crowd, the young Saheb struck the Babu with the sword. Torapa saved the Babu by placing his own hand, in front of his, which was cut, and there was the sign of a slight bruise on the Babu's breast.

Priest. (*Deeply thinking for some time, says to himself*) “Man knows this for certain, that understanding and goodness are necessary in the friend, the wife, and in servants.” I do not see a single person in this large house ; but a person of a different caste and of another village, is weeping near the Babu. Ah, the poor man is a

day-labourer, and his very hand is cut off. Why is his face all daubed over with blood ?

Sadhu. When the young Saheb struck his hand with the sword, like an ichneumon making a noise when its tail is cut off, his agony from the pain of hand flew off after seizing with a bite the nose of the elder Saheb.

Torapa. That nose I have kept with me, and when the Babu will rise up alive again I will show him that (*shows the nose cut off*) Had the Babu been able to fly off himself, I would have taken his ears ; but I would not have killed him, as he is a creature of God.

Priest. Justice is still alive. The gods were saved from the injustice of Ravana, when the nose of Surpanaka was cut off. Shall not the people be saved from the tyranny of the Indigo Planters by the cutting off of the elder Saheb's nose ?

Torapa. Let me now hide myself inside the barn ; I shall fly off in the night. That fool will overturn the whole village on account of his nose.

(Exit Torapa bowing down twice on the earth near

Nobin Madhab's bed

Sadhu. So very weak is our Madam become by the death of her husband, that there is no doubt she will die, when she see Babu Nobin in this condition. I applied so much water, rubbed my hand over the head so long ; but nothing is bringing him to his senses again. You, Sir, call him once.

Priest. Eldest Babu ! Eldest Babu ! Nobin Madhab ● (*with tears in his eyes*). Guardian of ryots ! Give us food ! Moving his eyes now. Ah ! The mother will die immediately. When she heard of his being bound with ropes above ground, she resolved not to take the rice of this sinful world for ten days. This is the fifth ; this morning, Nobin Madhab taking hold of her shoulders shed much tears and said, "Mother, if thou dost not take food this day, then I shall never take the rice with clarified butter,

thus placing the sin of disobedience to the mother on my head ; but shall remain without food." On which the mother kissing her son Nobin, said, "My son, I was a queen, now am I become the mother of a king. I would never have been sorry, had I once been able to place his feet on my head at the time when he departed his life. Did such a virtuous person die an inauspicious death ? It is for this reason that I am remaining without food. Ye are the children of this poor woman ; looking on you and Bindu Mabhab, I shall, this day take for my food the orts of our reverend priest. Do not shed your tears before me." Saying so much, she took Nobin Madhab on her lap as if he were a child of five. (*Aside, cries of sorrow*)

Coming.

Enter Sabitri, Soirindri, Saralota: Aduri, Reboti, the Aunt of Nobin, and other women of the neighbourhood

There is no fear, he is still alive.

Sabitri. (*Observing Nobin on the point of death.*) Nobin Madhab my son, where, art thou ? Oh ! Alas ! (*Falls senseless*).

Soirindri. (*With tears in her eyes*) Oh young Bou, take hold of our mother-in-law ; let me once see the Lord of my life, in the fulness of my heart. (*Sits near the mouth of Nobin*)

Priest. (*To Soirindri.*) My daughter, thou art a great lover of thy husband, a woman of constancy ; the frame of thy body was created in a good moment. For one who is so entirely devoted to her husband, and who has everything good on her part. Fortune may give life to her husband again ; he is moving his eyes, serve him without fear. Sadhu, remain here till our Madam be in her senses.

(*Exit Priest*)

Sadhu. Just see and place your hand on her nose. The body is become stiffer than that of a dead person.

Saralota. (*Speaking slowly to Reboti, after placing the hand on the nose.*) Her breathing is full, the fire coming out of the head is so very intense that my throat, as it were burns.

Sadhu. Has the Gomastah (*head clerk*) fallen into the hands of the Sahebs while he is gone to bring the physician? Let me go to the lodging-house of that physician.

(*Exit Sadhu*)

Soirindri. Ah ! Ah ! My Lord ! That mother for whose abstinence from food thou hast grieved so much ; that mother, for whose weakness thou hadst served her feet ; that mother who for some days was, by no means, able to sleep without placing thee in her lap, that very same dear mother is now lying senseless before thee, and thou art not seeing her once (*seeing Sabitri.*) As the cow, losing her young one, wanders about with loud cries, then being bit by a serpent falls down dead on the field, so is the mother lying senseless on the ground being grieved for her son. My Lord, open thine eyes once more ; call thy maid-servant once more with thy sweet voice and thus satisfy her ears once. The sun of happiness has set at noon for me ; what shall my Bipin do ? (*With tears in her eyes falls upon the breast of Nobin Madhab.*)

Saralota. Ye who are here take hold of our sister.

Soirindri. (*Rising up*) I became an orphan while very young ; it is for this death-like Indigo that my father was taken to the Factory, and he returned no more. That place became to him the residence of Yama (Death). My poor mother took me to the house of my maternal uncle, and there through grief for her husband, she bade adieu to the world. My uncles preserved me ; I remained like a flower accidentally let fall from the hand of the gardener. My Lord took me up with love and increased my honour. I forgot the sorrow for my parents, and in the life of my husband my parents were, as it were, revived (*deep sigh*). All my griefs, are rising up anew in my mind. Ah ! If I be deprived

of that husband who keeps everything under the shade of his protection, I shall again become the same helpless orphan.

Nobin's Aunt. (*Raising her with the hands.*) What fear my daughter? Why become so full of anxiety? A letter is sent to Bindu Madhab to bring a doctor. He will be cured when the doctor comes.

Soirindri. My aunt-in-law, while I was a girl, I made a celebration of a certain religious observance; and placing my hands on the Alpana (*the whitewashing prepared for the festival*) prayed for these blessings; that my husband be like Rama, my mother-in-law like Kousalya, my father-in-law like Dasaratha, my brother-in-law like Lakshman. My aunt! God gave me more than I prayed for. My husband is as Raghunath (*Rama*)—brave and a provider of his dependants; my mother-in-law is as Kousalya, having a sweet speech and an earnest love for her sons' wives; my father-in-law was always happy in saying Badhumata, Badhumata and was the brightener of the ten sides. Bindu Madhab who surpasses the autumnal moon in purity, is dearer to me than was Lakshmandeva to Sitadevi. My aunt, all has taken place according to my desire; only there is one in which I find some disagreement: I am still alive. Rama is making preparations for going to the forests, but there is no preparation for Sita's going with him. Ah! He was so much grieved on the abstinence of his father; again he took the cacha for the celebration of his funeral ceremony but before that was done he is preparing to go up to heaven (*to die*). (*Looking on his face with a steady sight*) Ah! His lips are dry. Oh my friends and companions, call my Bipin at once from the school; I shall once more (*with weeping eyes*) through his hands pour a little water of the Ganges into his dry mouth. (*Places her mouth on his*).

All (*at once*). Ah! Ah!

Nobin's Aunt. (*Takes hold of her body and raises her*) My

daughter, do not speak such words now (*weeps*); if my sister were in her senses, her heart would have been burst.

Soirindri. Oh mother, my desire is that my husband be happy in a future state in the same proportion as he had suffered misery in this. My Lord, I, your bond-maid, will pray to God for life; thou wast most virtuous, the doer of great Lord of the Universe, who provides for the helpless, must give you a place. Ah! What loss! What ruin! I see that Rama is going to the wilderness leaving his Sita alone. What shall I do? Where shall I go? And how shall I preserve my life? Oh friend of the distressed, Oh Romanath, Oh Great Wealth of the woman, supply me some means in this distress, and preserve me. I see that Nobin Madhab is now being burnt in the fire of Indigo. Oh, Lord of the distressed! Where is my husband going now, making me unfortunate and without support (*placing her hand on the breast of Nobin, and raising a deep sigh*). The husband now takes leave of his family, having placed all at the feet of God. Oh Lord, thou who art the sea of mercy, the supporter of the helpless, now give safety, now save.

Saralota. Sister, our mother-in-law has opened her eyes; but is looking on me with a distorted countenance. (*Weeping*). My sister, our mother-in-law never turned her face towards me with eyes so full of anger,

Soirindri. Ah! Oh! Our mother-in-law loves Saralota so much, that it is through insensibility only that with such an angry face she had thrown this Champa on the burning pot. Oh my sister, do not weep now, when our mother-in-law becomes sensible she will again kiss you and with great affection call you "the mad woman's daughter." (*Sabitri rises up and sits near Nobin, looking steadily on him with certain expression of pleasure*).

Sabitri. There is no pain so excessive as the delivery of a child, but that invaluable wealth which I have brought forth, made me forget all my sorrows on observing its face (*weeping*) Ah! (*what a pity*) If Madam!

Sorrow (planter's wife) did not write a letter to Yama (Death) and thus kill my husband how very much would he have been pleased on seeing this child. (*Claps with her hands*).

All (*at once*) Ah ! Ah ! She is become mad.

Sabitri. Nurse, put the child once more on my lap ; let me pacify my burnt limbs. Let me once more kiss it in the name of my husband. (*Kisses Nobin*).

Soirindri. Mother, I am your eldest Bou ; do you not see me ? Your dear Rama is senseless ; he is not able to speak now.

Sabitri. It would speak when it shall first get rice. Ah ! Ah ! Had my husband been living ! What great joy ! How many musical performances (*weeps*).

Soirindri. It is misfortune upon misfortune ! Is my mother-in-law mad now ?

Saralota. Take our mother-in-law from the bed, my sister ; let me take care of her.

Sabitri. Did you write such a letter, that there is no musical performance on this day of joy ? (*Looking on all sides and having risen from the bed by force, then going to Saralota*) I do entreat thee, falling at thy feet, Madam, to send another letter to Yama, and bring back my husband for once. Thou art the wife of a Saheb ; else, I would have fallen at thy feet.

Saralota. My mother-in-law, thou lovest me more than a mother, and such words from your mouth have given me more pain than that of death. (*Taking hold of the two hands of Sabitri*) Observing this your state, my mother, fire is, as it were, raining in my breast.

Sabitri. Thou strumpet, stupid woman, and a Yabana, why dost thou touch me on this eleventh day of the moon ? (*Takes off her own hand*).

Saralota. On hearing such words from your mouth I cannot live (*lies down on the ground taking hold of her mother-in-law's feet.*) My mother, I shall take leave of this world at your feet. (*weeps*).

Sabitri. This is good, that the bad woman is dead. My husband is gone to heaven ; but thou shalt go to hell. (*Claps with her hand and laughs*).

Soirindri. (*Rising up*) Ah ! Ah ! Our Saralota is very good-natured. Now having heard harsh words from her mother-in-law she is become exceedingly sorry. (*To Sabitri*) Come to me mother.

Sabitri. Nurse, hast thou left the child alone ? Let me go there. (*Goes to Nobin hastily, and sits near him*).

Reboti. (*To Sabitri*) Oh My mother ! Dost thou call that young Bou a bad woman who, you said, was incomparable in the village and without whose taking food you never took food. My mother, you do not hear my words ; we were trained by you, you gave us much food.

Sabitri. Come on the Ata Couria of the child, and I shall give you many sweetmeats.

Nobin's Aunt. My sister, Nobin will be alive again ; do not be mad.

Sabitri. How did you know this ? That name is known to no one. My father-in-law said, when my daughter-in-law gets a child, I shall give it (*if male*) the name "Nobin Madhab." Now the child is born, I shall give it that name. My husband always said, "When shall the child be born, and I shall call him by the name Nobin Madhab" (*weeps*). If he had been alive, he would have satisfied that desire on this day. (*Aside, a sound*) There, the musicians are coming. (*Claps with her hands*).

Soirindri. Bou, go into that room, the physician is coming.

Enter Sadhu Churn and the Physician

(*Exit Saralota, Reboti, and all the neighbouring women ; and Soirindri, putting a veil on her head, stands in one side of the room*).

Sadhu. Our Madam has risen up.

Sabitri. (*Weeps.*) Is it because that my husband is not here that you have left your drums at home ?

Aduri. She has no understanding; she is become entirely insane. She called that elder Halder "My infant child," and chastised the young Halder's wife, calling her an European's wife. That young woman is weeping severely. Again, she is calling you musicians.

Sadhu. So great a misfortune has now come to pass.

Physician. (*Sitting near Nobin*) It is very probable and also according to the *Nidana* that while she is not taking food for the death of her husband, and while she has seen this miserable condition of her dearest son, she should become thus. It is necessary to see her pulse once. Madam, let me observe thy pulse once. (*Stretches out his hand towards her*).

Sabitri. Thou vile man must be a creature of the Factory, else why dost thou want to take hold of the hand of the woman of a good family? (*Rising up*) Nurse, keep your eyes upon the child; I go to take a little water. I shall give you a silk shari.

(*Exit Sabitri*)

Physician. Ah, the light of understanding will not brighten again. I will send the Hima Sagara Toila (a medicinal oil) which is now necessary for her. (*Observing the pulse of Nobin*) His pulse is only very weak, but I do not find any other bad symptom. The doctors are ignorant in other matters, but in anatomical operations they are very expert. The expense will be heavy, but it is of urgent necessity to call one in.

Sadhu. A letter has been sent to the young Babu to come along with a doctor.

Physician. That is very good.

Enter Four Relatives

First. We never even dreamt that such an accident would come to pass. At noon-day, some were eating, some bathing, and some were going to lie down in their beds after dinner. I heard of it now.

Second. The stroke on the head appears fatal. What

illfated accident ! There was no probability of a quarrel on this day ; or else, many of the ryots would have been present.

Sadhu. Two hundred ryots with clubs in their hands are crying aloud, "Strike off," "Strike off," and are weeping with these words in their mouths : "Ah eldest Babu ! Ah ! Eldest Babu" ! I told them to go to their own houses, since if the Saheb get the least excuse, he will, on account of the pain in his nose, burn the whole village.

Physician. Now, wash the head and apply turpentine to it ; in the evening, I shall come again and try some other means. To make noise in a sick person's room is to increase his disease ; so let there be no noise here.

(Exit the Physician, Sadhu Churn and the relatives in one way, and Aduri, the other ; Soirindri sits down)

THIRD SCENE

The Room of Sadhu Churn.

*On one side, Khetromany in great torment on her bed,
and Sadhu on the other side, Reboti, sitting.*

Khetro. Sweep over my bed ; mother, sweep over my bed.

Reboti. My dear, dear daughter, why art thou doing so ; I have swept on the bed, there is nothing then on the coat of shreds. I have placed another which your aunt gave.

Khetro. Thorns are pinching me, I die ; I die ; oh ! turn me to my father's side.

Sadhu. *(Silently turning her to the other side. To himself).* This agony is the presage to death. *(Openly)* Daughter, thou art the precious jewel of this poor man ; my daughter, take a little food. I have brought some pomegranates from Indrabad, and also the ornamented sari but you did not at all express your pleasure when you saw that.

Reboti. How very extravagant are my daughter's desires ! She said once, "Give me a flower garland at the time of Semonton". What is that countenance now become ? What shall I do ? Oh, Oh ! Oh, Oh ! (*places her mouth on the mouth of her daughter*) Ah ! my Khetro of gold is become a piece of charcoal. Where are the pupils of the eye ? See, see.

Sadhu. Khetromany ; Khetromany ; open your eyes fully my daughter.

Khetro. My mother ! My father ! Ah ! It is an axe ; (*turns on the other side*).

Reboti. Let me take her on my lap ; she will remain quiet there. (*Comes to take her on her lap*).

Sadhu. Do not take her up ; she will faint.

Reboti. Am I so very unfortunate ! Ah ! Ah ! My Harana is as Kartika on his peacock. How can I forget him ? Dear me ; My Siva ! (*My son !*)

Sadhu. Ray Churn is gone a long time ago ; he is not yet come.

Reboti. Our eldest Babu preserved her from the grasp of the tiger. Oh ! what a kick did that son of a barren woman give on Khetro's belly ! There was a miscarriage, and since then my child has been dying minutely. Ah, ha ! my grand-son was born—a lump of blood—yet it had developed all features—even those tiny fingers, oh ! The young Saheb killed my daughter, and the elder one killed the eldest Babu. Ah ! Ah ! There is no one to preserve the poor.

Sadhu. What virtuous actions have I done, that I shall see the face of my grand-child ?

Khetro. My body is cut off. My waist is pricked by a tangra fish. Ah ! Ah !

Reboti. I think the ninth of the moon is closed, my image of gold is to go to the water, and what means shall I have ? Who shall call me "Mother ! Mother" ? Did you bring her for this purpose ? (*Taking hold of Sadhu's neck, weeps*).

Sadhu. Be silent, don't weep now ; she will faint.

Enter Ray Churn and the Physician

Physician. How is she now ? Did you give her that medicine ?

Sadhu. The medicine did not act, and whatever went down immediately came up by a vomit. See her pulse once more now ; I think it is a sign of her end.

Reboti. She is crying out, thorns, thorns. I have prepared her bed so thickly, still she is tossing about. Now save her by a good medicine. Dear Sir, this relative is very dear unto me.

Sadhu. We don't see any sign of the pulse.

Physician. (*taking hold of the hand*). In this state, it is good for the pulse to be weak. Weakness makes the pulse strong ; to have a strong pulse is fatal.

Sadhu. At this time, it is the same thing, either to apply or not to apply the medicine. The parents have hope to the very end ; therefore see, if there be any means.

Physician. The water with which the Atapa (*dried rice*) is washed is now necessary. The application of the Suuchikavaran (*a medicine*) is required.

Sadhu. That Atapa which the Barah Ranee sent for offerings of prayer is in the other room. Ray Churn, bring that here. (*Exit Ray Churn*)

Reboti. Is Annapurnah now awake, that she shall with the rice in her hands come to my Khetromany ? It is through my ill-fate that our mistress is become mad.

Physician. She is already full of sorrow for the death of her husband ; again, her son is on the point of death ; her insanity is on the increase. I think she shall die before Nobin ; she is become very weak.

Sadhu. Sir, how did you find our eldest Babu, to-day ? I think, with his pure blood he has extinguished the fire of tyranny of the giants, the Indigo Planters. It is probable, that the Indigo Commissoon might produce to

the ryots some advantage ; but what effect has that ? If one hundred serpents do bite at once my whole body I can bear that ; if on a hearth made of bricks, a frypan be placed full of molasses, and the same be boiling by a great fire ; I can also bear the torment, if by accident I fall into the pan ; if in the dark night of the new-moon a band of robbers with terrible sounds come upon and kill my only son who is honest and very learned, take away all the acquisitions made during the past seven generations, and then make me blind ; all these also I can bear ; and in the place of one, even if there be ten Indigo Factories in the village, that also I can allow ; but to be separated even for a moment from that elder Babu, who is so much the supporter of his dependants, that can I never bear.

Physician. The blow through which the brain has oozed out is fatal. I have found the pulse indicate that death is near ; either at mid-day or in the evening life will depart. Bipin gave a little water of the Ganges in his mouth, but it came out by its sides. Nobin's wife is quite distracted ; but she is trying her utmost for his safety.

Sadhu. Ah ! Ah ! Had our mistress not been insane, her heart would have been burst asunder on seeing this. The doctor has also said, that the bruise on the head is fatal.

Physician. The doctor is a very kind hearted man. When Babu Bindu wanted to give money, he said "Babu Bindu, the manner in which you are already troubled makes it improbable that the funeral ceremony of your father will be performed. I cannot take anything from you now, and also it is not necessary for you to give money for the bearers who brought me and who will now take me away". Had Dushashan, the doctor, been called he would have taken away the money kept for the ceremony. I have seen that kind of doctors twice ; he is as scurrilous as avaricious.

Sadhu. Our young Babu brought along with him

the doctor to see Khetromany ; but he said nothing with certainty. The doctor, observing my want owing to the tyranny of the Planters, gave me two rupees in the name of Khetromany.

Physician. Had Dushashan, the doctor, been called, he would have taken hold of the hand, and said she would die ; and he would have taken the money by selling your kine.

Reboti. I can give money by selling off whatever I have, if they can only cure my Khetro.

Enters Ray Churn with the rice

Physician. Having washed the rice, bring the water here. (*Reboti takes the rice.*) Do not give much water. I see the plate is very beautiful.

Reboti. Our mistress (*Sabitri*) went to Gaya, and brought many plates ; and she gave this to my Khetro. Ah, the same mistress is now turned mad, and her hands are bound with a rope, because she is slapping her cheeks.

Physician. Sadhu, bring the stone-mortar ; I have the medicine here. (*Opens his box of medicine.*)

Sadhu. Sir, don't bring out your medicine ; just see, how her eyes appear. Ray Churn, come here.

Reboti. Oh mother ! What is my fate now ! Oh mother, how shall I forget the figure of Harana ! Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! Khetro, Oh Khetro ! Khetromany ; my daughter ! Wilt thou not speak any more, my daughter ? Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! (*weeps*).

Physician. Her end is very near.

Sadhu. Ray Churn, take hold of her, take hold of her (*Sadhu Churn and Ray Churn take Khetromany from the bed, and go outside*).

Reboti. I cannot leave my Laksmi of gold to float on the water. Where shall I go ? Had she lived with the Saheb, that would have been better. I would have remained at rest by seeing her face. My daughter ! Oh, Oh ! Oh ! (*goes behind Khetro, slapping herself*).

Physician. I die ; I die ; I die ! What pains does the mother bear ; it is good not to have a child.

(*Exit all*)

FOURTH SCENE

The Hall In The House of Goluk Chunder Basu. Sabitri sitting with the dead body of Nobin on her lap.

Sabitri. Let my dear child sleep ; my dear keeps my heart at rest. When I see the sweet face, I remember that other face (*kisses*). My child is sleeping most soundly. (*Rubs the hand over the head of the corpse*). Ah ! what have the mosquitoes done ? What shall I do for the heat ? I must not lie down without letting the curtains fall. (*Rubs the hand on the breast of the body.*) Ah ! Can the mother suffer this, to see the bugs bite the child and let drops of blood come out. No one is here to prepare the bed of the child ; how shall I let it lie down ? I have no one for me ; but all gone with my husband. (*Weeps*) Oh, unfortunate creature that I am ; I am crying with my child here (*observing the face of Nobin*). The child of the sorrowful woman is now making deals (*kissing the mouth*). No, my dear, I have forgotten all distress in seeing thee ; I am not weeping (*placing the pap on its mouth*) my dear, suck the pap my dear, suck it. I entreated the bad woman so much, even fell at her feet, still she did not bring my husband for once, he would have gone after settling about the milk of the child. This stupid person has such a friendship with Yama, that if she had written a letter, he would have immediately given him leave. (*Seeing the rope in her hand*) the husband never gets salvation if on his death the widow still wears ornaments ; although I wept with such loud cries, still they made me wear the Shanka. I have burnt it by the lamp, still it is in my hands (*cuts off the rope with her teeth*). For a widow to wear ornaments it not look good and is

not tolerable. On my hands there has arisen a blister (*cries*). Whoever has stopped my wearing the shanka, let her sankha be fallen off within there days (*snaps the joints of her fingers on the ground*). Let me prepare the bed myself (*prepares the bed in fancy*). The mat was not washed (*extends her hands a little*.) I can't reach to the pillow ; the coat of shreds is become dirty (*rubs the floor with her hand*). Let me make the child lie down (*placing the dead body slowly on the ground.*) My son, what fear near a mother ? You lie down peacefully. I shall spit here (*spits on its breast*). If that Englishman's lady come here this day, I shall kill her by pressing down her neck. I shall never have my child out of my sight. Let me place the bow round it (*gives a mark with her finger round the floor, while reading a certain verse as a sacred formula read to a god*). "The froth of the serpent, the tiger's nose, the fire prepared by the Sala's resin, the whistling of the swinging machine, the white hairs of seven co-wives, bhanti leaves, the flowers of the dhutura, the seeds the Indigo, the burnt pepper, the head of the corpse, the root of the maddar, the mad dog, the thief's reading of the chundi : these together make the arrow to be directed against the gnashing teeth of Yama."

Enters Saralota

Saralota. Where are these gone to ? Ah ! She is turning round the dead body. I think, my husband, tired with excessive travelling has given himself up to sleep, that goddess who is destroyer of all sorrow and pains. Oh, Sleep ! How very miraculous is thy greatness, thou makest the widow to be with her husband in this world, thou bringest the traveller to his country ; at thy touch, the prisoner's chain breaks ; thou art the Dhannantari of the sick ; thou hast no distinction of castes in thy dominions ; and thy laws are never different on account of the difference of nations or castes ; thou must have made my husband a subject of thy impartial power ; or else,

how it is, that the insane mother brings away the dead son from him. My husband is become quite distracted by being deprived of his father and his brother. The beauty of his countenance has faded by and by, as the full moon decreases day by day. My mother, when hast thou come up? I have left off food and sleep, and am looking after thee continually, and did I fall into so much insensibility. I promised that I shall bring thy husband from Yama, in order to cure thee, and therefore, thou remainedest quiet for some time. In this formidable night, so full of darkness, like unto that which shall take place on the destruction of the Universe; when the skies are spread over with the terrors of the clouds, the flashes of lightning are giving a momentary light, like the arrows of fire, and the race of living creatures are given up, as it were, to the sleep of Death; all are silent; when the only sound is the cry of jackals in the wilderness and loud noise of the dogs, the great band of enemies to thieves. My mother, how is it possible, that in such a night as this thou wast able to bring thy dead son from outside the house. (*Goes near the corpse*).

Sabitri. I have placed the circle; and why do you come within it?

Saralota. Ah! my husband shall never be able to live on seeing the death of this land-conquering and most dear brother. (*Weeps*)

Sabitri. You are envying my child: you all-destroying wretch and the daughter of a wretch! Let your husband die. Go out, just now; be out; or else, I shall place my foot on your throat, take out your tongue and kill you immediately.

Saralota. Ah! such Shoranan (*six-mouthed*) of gold, whom our father-in-law and mother-in-law had, is now gone into the water.

Sabitri. Don't look on my child; I forbid you—you destroyer of your husband. I see, your death is very near, (*Goes a little towards her*).

Saralota. Ah ! how very cruel are the formidable arms of Death ? Ah ! Yama ! You gave so much pain to my honest mother-in-law.

Sabitri. Calling again ! Calling again ! (*Takes hold of Saralota's neck by her two hands, and throws her down on the ground*) Thou stupid, beloved of Yama ! Now will I kill thee (*stands upon her neck*). Thou Hast devoured my husband ; again, thou art calling your paramour to swallow my dear infant. Die, die, die, now ! (*Begins to skip upon the neck*).

Saralota. Gah, a, a ! (*death of Saralota*).

Enters Bindu Madhab

Bindu. Oh ! She is lying flat here. Oh mother, what is that ? Thou hast killed my Saralota (*taking hold of Saralota's head.*) My dear Sarala has left this sinful world. (*after weeping, kisses Saralota*).

Sabitri. Gnaw the wretch and destroy her. She was calling Yama to devour my infant ; and therefore I killed her by standing on her neck.

Bindu. As the sleeping mother having destroyed the child she was fondling for making it sleep on her lap, on awaking will go to kill herself, so wilt thou, oh my mother ! go to kill thyself, if thine insanity passing off, thou canst understand that thy most beloved Saralota was murdered by thee. It will be good if that lamp no more give its light to thee. Ah ! how very pleasant it is for a woman to be mad, who has lost her husband and son ! The deer-like mind being enclosed within the stone walls of madness can never be attacked by the great tiger, Sorrow. I am thy Bindu Madhab.

Sabitri. What, what do you say ?

Bindu. Mother, I can no longer keep my life, becoming mad by the death of my father bound by the rope, and the death of my elder brother ; thou hast destroyed my Saralota, and thus hast applied salt to my wounded heart.

Sabitri. What ! Is my Nobin dead ! Is my Nobin dead ! Ah, my dear ! Son, my dear Bindu Madhab ! Have I killed your Saralota ? Have I killed my young Bou by becoming mad (*embracing the dead body of Saralota*). I would have remained alive, although deprived of my husband and my son. Ah, but on murdering you by my own hands, my heart is on the point of being burnt. Oh, Oh Mother ! (*Embracing Saralota, she falls down dead on the ground*).

Bindu. (*placing his hands on Sabitri's body.*) What I said, took place actually. My mother died on recovering her understanding. What affliction ! My mother will no more take me on her lap, and kiss me. Oh mother ! The word *ma ma* will no more come out of my mouth, (*weeps*). Let me place the dust of her feet on my head (*takes the dust from her feet and places that on his own head*). Let me also purify my body by eating that dust. (*Eats the dust of her feet.*)

Enters Soirindri

Soirindri. I am going to die with my husband ; do not oppose me, my brother-in-law. My Bipin shall live happily with Saralota. What's this ! Why are our mother-in law and Bou both lying in this manner ?

Bindu. Oh ! eldest Bou ! Our mother first killed Saralota, then getting her understanding again, she fell into such excess of sorrow, that she also died.

Soirindri. Now ! In what manner ? What loss ! What is this ! What is this Ah ! Ah ! my sister, thou hast not yet worn that most pleasant look of hair on the head which I prepared for thee ! Ah ! Ah ! thou shalt no more call me, 'sister' (*cries*). Mother-in-law, thou art gone to your Rama, but didst not let me go there. Oh my mother-in-law, when I got thee, I did not for a moment remember my mother.

Enters Aduri

Aduri. Oh eldest Haldarni, come soon ; thy young Bipin is afraid.

Soirindri. Why did you not call me thence ? You left him there alone. (*Goes out hastily with Aduri*).

Bindu. My Bipin is now the pole-star in the ocean of dangers ! (*with a deep sigh*). In this world of short existence, human life is as the bank of a river which has a most violent course and the greatest depth. How very beautiful are the banks, the fields covered over with new grass, most pleasant to the view, the trees full of branches newly coming out ; in some places the cottages of fishermen ; in others the kine feeding with their young ones. To walk about in such a place enjoying the sweet songs of the beautiful birds, and the charming gale full of the sweet smell of flowers, only wraps the mind in the contemplation of that Being who is full of pleasure. Accidentally a hole small as a line is observed in the field, and immediately that most pleasant bank falls down into the stream. How very sorrowful ! The Basu family of Svaropur is destroyed by Indigo, the great destroyer of honour. How very terrible are the arms of Indigo !

The Cobra decapello, like the Indigo Planters, with mouths full of poison, threw all happiness into the flame of fire. The father, through injustice, died in the prison ; the elder brother in the Indigo-field, and the mother, being insane, through grief for her husband and son murdered with her own hands a most honest woman. Getting her understanding again, and observing my sorrow, the ocean of grief again swelled in her. With that disease of sorrow came the poison of want ; and thus without attending to consolation, she also departed this life. Cessantly do I call : Where is my father ? Where is my father ? Embrace me once more with a smiling face. Crying out, Oh mother ! Oh mother ! I look on all sides ; but that countenance of joy do I find nowhere. When I used to call, *ma, ma*, she immediately took me on her breast, and rubbed my mouth. Who knows the greatness of maternal affection ? The cry of *ma, ma, ma, ma*, do I make in the battle fields and the wilderness whenever fear arises in the

mind. Oh my brother, dear unto the heart, in the place of whom there is not one as a friend in this world. Thy Bindu Madhab is come ! Open thine eyes once more and see. Ah ! ah ! it bursts my heart, not to know where my heart's Sarala is gone to. The most beautiful, wise and entirely devoted to me—she walked as the swan, and her eyes were handsome as those of the deer. With a smiling face and with the sweetest voice thou didst read to me the Betal. The mind was charmed by thy sweet reading which was as the singing of the bird in the forest. Thou, Sarala, hadst a most beauteous face, and didst brighten the lake of my heart. Who did take away my lotus with a cruel heart ? The beautiful lake become dark. The world, I look upon, is as a desert full of corpses, while I have lost my father, my mother, my brother, and my wife."

Ah ! Where are they gone to in search of the dead body of my brother ? I am to prepare for going to the Ganges as soon as they come. Ah ! how very terrible, the last scene of the drama of the lion-like Nobin Madhab is ?
(*Sits down, taking hold of Sabitri's feet*).

(*The Curtain Falls Down*)

HERE END THE DRAMA NAMED NIL DURPAN

TRIAL
OF THE
Rev. James Long
OF THE
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY FOR LIBEL

Dated, Calcutta Supreme Court, 19, 20 & 24 July, 1861

Friday, the 19th instant, having been fixed for the trial of the case of the Queen Vs. Long, for publication of certain libels in the celebrated pamphlet called Nil Durpan, the Court was crowded with Europeans of every class. Civilians of every grade from Secretaries of Government and Special Commissioners, down to the "unfledged eagles" of the Service, were there ; a number of the missionaries too, to countenance their confrere in his "hour of trial" ; and such numbers of the merchants, bankers, and traders of all classes, with here and there a stray Indigo Planter, that the remark was made that there could be nobody left to carry on the business of Calcutta. It was universally felt that not only the Reverend James Long, but the Government of Bengal, was on its trial ; and the leaders on both sides were watching a struggle of fierce political action under the rigid forms of the Law. The late Secretary for Bengal was on the bench, almost beside a leading member of the Landholders' Association, at the Bar table the son of the Lieutenant Governor was opposite to the protesting member of the Indigo Commission ; whilst Mr. Montresor, the late Special Commissioner to Nuddea, was surrounded by men of the Indigo Deputation, whose statements he had so broadly discredited ; and the crowd was diversified by the stout figures of numbers of influential Natives. The presiding

Judge was Sir M. L. Wells who entered the Court at 11 o'clock and commenced the first of the State Trials of India under the Empire.

The Rev. James Long was indicted for the publication of various libels in a pamphlet known as the Nil Durpan.

Mr. Peterson and Mr. Cowie prosecuted.

Mr. Eglinton and Mr. Newmarch appeared for the defendant.

On the special jury being sworn, an objection was raised by Mr. Eglinton, on the ground that only seventeen out of twenty-four special jurymen had been summoned. Under his Lordship's direction the summoning officer was examined, and deposed that the absent jurymen were away from Calcutta, in England and elsewhere.

On the Jury being sworn, Mr. R. L. Eglinton, one of the Jury, was challenged by the Counsel for the prosecution, but ultimately objection was withdrawn, and the Jury stood as follows :

S. Apar, Esq., Foreman.

R. L. Eglinton, Esq.	J. Mott, Esq.,
A. G. Avdall,	E. Palmer, Esq.
W. S. Atkinson, Esq.	Manickjee Rustamjee, Esq.
W. B. Bailey, Esq.	J. W. Robert, Esq.
A. Boyle,	J. Stevenson, Esq.
R. Blechynden, Esq.	C. Weskins, Esq.
E. Creighton, Esq.	L. A. D'Souza, Esq.

Mr. Peterson said it was unnecessary for him to tell them that the case was one of great importance, not alone to the particular individual whom he represented, but as affecting the whole Christian community at large. It would be as idle as unnecessary for him to attempt to blind them (the Jury) as to the real prosecutor in this case. His client was Mr. Walter Brett, the Editor and Managing Proprietor of the Englishman Press, and the prosecution had been instituted at the desire and with the entire con-

currence of Landholders' Association of British India and the general body of Indigo Planters. He made these preliminary remarks in order to clear up all doubt which might otherwise exist as to who was responsible for the present prosecution. This admission would save his learned friends on the other side some trouble in enquiring into the motive for instituting these proceedings. With these remarks, he would proceed to comment upon the case generally. Sorry was he to stand in his present position of prosecutor against the defendant, who, whatever his views or position might be, was nevertheless in holy orders ; and no matter to what denomination of religion a man belonged, he (the learned Counsel) naturally felt some compunction and regret at having to prosecute in a case where the defendant was in holy orders. But when that reverend defendant was the propagator of slander of a most dangerous kind, when he used his position and means for the purpose of vilifying and slandering his fellow-men without cause, then any feelings of compunction or regret vanished, and the performance of Public duty due to society at large, gave way to all minor or private feelings in the matter. Slander was a most dangerous thing to use at any time, or under any circumstances but more especially when no reason or cause existed. A man, or any set of men, were not to be held up to public odium without some good and sufficient cause for so doing. Any man is at liberty to think as he likes, or exercise his own judgement, provided that he does not enter into personalities, or attack individuals or particular bodies of men. It was perfectly idle to attempt to deny that a great struggle has for years existed and was still going on between the official and non-official community in India. The different phases of society in India have been, and are daily canvassed by the press of this country, and what sensible man objected to a free and open discussion by means of the press ? But, the defendant had adopted no such course of expressing his views ; he had gone secretly to work. At

the last sessions, the printer Manuel was indicted and pleaded guilty, disclosing the name of his principal, namely, the Rev. James Long. He must first put to them what constituted libel. The man, who publishes slanderous matter calculated to defame and vilify another, must be presumed to have intended to do that which the publication is calculated to bring about, and the onus of proof lay with the defendant that he did not do so. It might be said, why was not a civil action brought instead of a criminal:—his answer was, that a civil action would not lie, because no particular individual was libelled, and hence the present criminal indictment. He regretted for many reasons that the reverend defendant was debarred from an opportunity of justifying his conduct in a civil action. The Act 32 of George III has not been extended to this country, but powers were held by the Judge the same as in England. He thought the malice spoke for itself. Possibly the defendant would say that he was only the translator, and not responsible for the opinion expressed in the pamphlet, but he would be prepared to shew that no Native translated that pamphlet; the errors and misinterpretation were too gross and serious to admit of any doubt on that point. One word he would particularly call their attention to; Soorki was interpreted to mean brickdust-makers, whereas it must have been known to any native to mean spear-men. This was only one of many similar errors. It shewed that no Native could have been the translator. His Lordship would direct them in respect to the case, and the real question for their consideration would be libel or no libel. The connection of the defendant with the publication would be proved beyond doubt; the printer would prove having received the MSS. from the defendant and the corrections in the press proof were in his handwriting. It was difficult to believe that these pamphlets were circulated through the highest office of the Government with a view of mending the morals of the Natives and he mentioned this circum-

tance only to show the way in which the whole thing had been carried out. It proved that the defendant was no mere fanatic, or one holding strong opinions upon any particular subject, and who might have erred by expressing too pointedly those opinions ; nothing of the kind. This pamphlet was not written with a view of setting wrong right, or of mending the existing state of morals ; it was written with a view of setting race against race, the European against the Native. The contents of this pamphlet disclosed a state of things which are shame and disgrace to any Government in the world and he maintained that the Government of the country were on their trial, and that the Advocate-General ought more properly to have been in his position as public prosecutor. Now for the pamphlet itself. It was in the form of a drama, that style of literary production being most congenial to the Native mind, and consequently most likely to draw the attention which was required. Some dramas, particularly the French, dealt with caricature and other harmless production at which no sensible human would think of questioning. But when arson, forgery, fornications, and other cardinal vices, form the subject of the drama, then he maintained the caricature dropped to the ground. He maintained that the press or the drama were at liberty to hold up or demonstrate any particular state of society by way of caricature. Where would our great satirists be unless this liberty were recognized ; and what sensible men would object ? None . Now for the author's preface. He would wish the Court to follow him and correct, if it considered necessary, any comments he might make. He called on the Jury who had no interest whatever on the production of indigo, to consider well the evidence which would be disclosed and in accordance with the oaths which they had taken to render strict and impartial justice. He would direct their attention specially with reference to the first court in the indictment to the following portion of the preface to this pamphlet :-

“ The editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What a surprising power of attraction silver has ! The detestable Judas gave the great preacher of the Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of Odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder then, if the proprietor of two newspapers, becoming enslaved by the hope of gaining one thousand rupees, throw the poor helpless people of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths.”

Having in view the publisher and his calling, could there be anything more offensive from a teacher of Christianity to a Christian mind than the comparison with Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Saviour ? And leaving the Christian element out of view, could anything be more offensive to all honourable feeling than the comparison of the sale of political freedom with the sale by the traitor for those thirty pieces of silver ? Could anything be, to men of high feeling and sensitive honour, more likely to lead to parties taking the law into their own hands, when they were thus maligned as selling for so paltry a bribe, the cause of the weak, and singing the praises of those Indigo Planters, who if this preface were anything but a libel, had cast an everlasting stain on the English name. But he must pass to the recital from pamphlet, of the more prominent passages in which his clients were libelled by wholesale under the second count. Although he would occupy their time no longer than was necessary with the repulsive details of the charges brought directly, or insinuated, against the whole body of Indigo Planters, he must necessarily refer to numerous passages upon the various points included in the indictment. The learned Counsel read from the Nil Durpan itself a large number of passages in which, as he showed, most serious and disgraceful, libels were perpetrated against a particular class, who, as he would prove by the evidence he should lay before them,

could be none other in intention of their reverend traducer than the Indigo Planters. He read numerous passages, appealed not to their feeling, but to their reason on the libellous matters which he thus read to them, charging upon the Indigo planters every variety of crime held most abhorred amongst all civilised men, and which he had already detailed to them. The avowed object of the Nil Durpan was to describe certain states of society. Was it nothing with such an avowed object to represent, under the fictitious names of Wood and Rose, the whole body of planters? The story of the book commenced with the picture of a once happy valley,—happy in the production of rice, grain, pulse, seeds, oil, and fish. The women, simple-minded and happy in their allegiance to their husbands; the ryots happy, no evil to complain of; the ryots' daughters virtuous and therefore happy. But alas, a change came over the spirit of their dream; the Indigo monster arrives. In the short period of three years, indebtedness, starvation, neglected fields, imprisonment, forgery, attempted violation, murder, sudden death, and suicide came on the scene. The virtue of the Bengalee, his women, and his ryots, remain unchanged until the closing scene, when death, in some shape or another, puts an end to all their sufferings. But how is this brought about; by swarms of Mahratta horsemen? By hordes of Tartars? By locusts? By fire or flood, or some like calamity? No, but by means of the introduction of the Indigo monsters, represented by the dramatist persons, Wood and Rose. Bengalee dewans, once pure, are converted into demons; ameens, once harmless, become tigers; magistrates, supposed to be just, are converted into oppressors. The planter's wife—and here he felt that he was no longer the mere Counsel—he was the Englishman pursuing with a righteous indignation the libeller who had dared to cast the deepest stain upon the fair fame of his country women, whom before the world he had assiduously represented as the means of satisfying

the lust of the Justice, for the purpose of making him the tool of the planter. The ever-virtuous sweetmeat-seller, Podi Moyrani, who had fallen a victim to the older Sahib, who has no longer the power to continue his vile practices, is made the tool for satisfying the lust of the Chota (younger) Sahib ; but even she has some reluctance, bad as she is, but neither of the sahibs have any. The virtuous ryots all die or are killed off under the oppression of triumphant vice, and the sole cause of all these misfortunes is the Indigo Planter ! If such be indeed the state of society, where was the Government that was powerless alike to restrain such vice, or to see the effects of such pictures of it ? If such be not the state of society, what right had any mischief-maker, under any guise—religious, fanatic, political, partizan, or what they would—to make it appear to be so ?

The learned Counsel thought he had cited sufficient passages from the drama, to show its general purport ; he would not detain the Jury much longer, but must make a few remarks on the leading points of the case, though the libel spoke for itself. He would ask the Jury if they believed that the state of society among the European Indigo planters was such as represented in that drama. If such was not the state of society then what right, he would ask, had a libellous mischief-maker to give utterance to calumnious slanders, and thereby set caste against caste, and race against race. But if the jury did believe that such was actually the state of society, their belief must be grounded on good and unimpeachable evidence, they must further be satisfied that the intention of the publisher was an honest one, and if they did believe so, they would also have to believe the unfounded suggestion of a person of authority, and cast to the winds that which had been written 40 years ago by Lord William Bentinck, Lord Metcalfe, and many other eminent men to an entirely different effect. It was of no use to blink the question, they would believe the Indigo planters as a body, guilty of arson, rape, torturing and

forcibly expelling and driving ryots and their families from their home. They would believe that the small body of Indigo planters were striving to effect, nay, were actually effecting the extinction of a race, which numbered thousands, wherever they (the planters) could shew one individual alone. If the Jury should be satisfied that the defendant was the publisher, they would also find by the evidence which he, learned Counsel, would call, that the publication was carried on in secret, and that when printed, the copies was sent in secret to the Bengal Secretariat. The mode of publication alone was sufficient to destroy the strongest conviction of the existence of an honest or rightful intention on the part of the writer. The very engine by which the libel was propagated, itself prevented the possibility of entertaining for a moment the thought that an honest intention could have existed in the mind of its promulgator. No, there was some hidden and invisible agent at work to libel the Christian population of this country, (and it was not to enlist the sympathies of the jury that he said so, for he saw among them a gentleman of another creed) and it was to vindicate their character that his clients had brought this matter into Court. He would prove the secret manner of the publication, and that the intention was worse than malicious. That invisible agent had caused a respectable community to be attacked in a manner that gave them no other opportunity of protecting their character from the imputations cast upon it by a gross and calumnious slander. He did not care if that invisible agent was in Court, nor if he was listening. He must know if that drama was propagated in England in the quarters where it was wished to be distributed, before it was known here, and if so, he must know if the Indigo planters were informed of the existence of such a production before notice was received from Lahore in the shape of an envelop enclosing a copy of this production. Whether such copy was sent by a Government servant or not, he would not now enquire ; that formed the subject for another trial

which he hoped would be instituted. If such secrecy had been maintained, he must assert that the intention of the writer of that drama could not have been to bring to light the truth, but must have been to calumniate a community without giving them an opportunity of vindication, or in other words, "to stab in the dark." He did not address the jury on behalf of his clients only, but on behalf of the whole Christian community. It was for the whole Christian of British India that he stood there to accuse the defendant of being the writer and publisher of a gross and calumnious slander. Perhaps, too, he felt that he was one of that population and so might seem to sink the counsel in the client. From what could they find that the intention of the writer was a praiseworthy one? Did anything that could be gathered from the preface lead to such a conviction? No! But there was one great fact which, he insisted, argued against the honesty of the writer's intention;—that great fact was the secrecy of its publication. None but a favoured few had been able to get a copy of it in this country, and he doubted if persons, even in England, but those intended to be the receptacles of the writer's calumnies, had been able to obtain an example of that precious production. How its existence became known in Calcutta, he had already stated, but he would ask why it had not propagated in the districts inhabited by the parties attacked, that they at least might have had an opportunity of clearing their character from imputations which, if true, lowered them below the brute creation, disgraced the country they belonged to, and the Government which had not ere this checked with a strong hand such a fearful state of iniquity and evil.

He warned the Jury against being led away by assertions which would doubtless be made, for there were able men on the other side of the question, that the production was published with the view of promoting the public good, but they must consider the evidence, and see if there was anything in the defendant's conduct in regard

to the publication of that production that would corroborate such an assertion. He knew that there were members of that jury who were men of strong religious feelings, he felt sorry to attack a body of men of such high calling, but he could not refrain from saying that the word missionary had become synonymous with mischief-maker, for wherever mischief was in any colonial community, some missionary was sure to be found connected with it. The Jury would probably remember the case of the missionary Smith who suffered the extreme penalty of the law at Demarara for inciting the Negroes to insurrection, mutiny and rapine. The troubles at the Cape must still be fresh in their recollections, and he need go no further then the sister colony New Zealand, where insurrections and bloodshed are now raging, attributable to missionaries alone. He entertained a sincere and profound respect for true religion. But its messenger had a holy calling, namely, to promote peace on earth and good will to all men, and not to act as the harbourers of calumny and the originators of evil. These were strong words, but he would consider him justified in using them, if he could bring home to the reverend gentleman, the defendant, the fact of the publication of the Nil Durpan. He felt certain that the jury would agree with him that such a publication was not the method best calculated to promote the spread of the Gospel, nor to ensure the safety of the lives of those Europeans who resided alone among thousands of natives without any hope of assistance in the hour of need. The fault was not the less grave, let it arise from what it may, even if from a misplaced overzeal to promote Christianity.

Had we not seen by what a tender thread we hang ? Have not the late mutinies taught us how unsafe is our position ? Can we permit persons, impelled by over-zeal, to endanger our safety and induce the belief among people in England, already too prone to believe evil of their countrymen at a distance, that Englishmen in India are guilty of

the wrong and disgraceful conduct imputed to them? Was this publication carried out, as it was, calculated to promote Christianity? Was it calculated to "turn the wicked from his wickedness" and do that which is lawful and right? The late Right Reverend Bishop of Calcutta frequently denounced individual, and spoke to them from the pulpit. Such a proceeding might not be in accordance with the usages of society, but it was the proof of an honest intention, there was no concealment about it, and the bold man was the good man. How different was his proceeding to that of the publisher of that Bengali document! Was that the act of a kind and Christian adviser? No, to say the least of it, it was rather to act of a fanatic. It was the duty of a missionary to regard the white and black population with the same kindly feelings; it was the duty of a missionary to be the propagator of the Light and Truth, and not the propagator of slander. Christian love itself would incline the Gospel preacher to speak kindly to his Christian brethren. If his intention was to do good, why did he not send information to the heads of mercantile houses here, who have large capital at stake, of the atrocious proceedings of which he accused the Indigo planters? This he did not do, but contented himself with publishing the calumnies contained in a Bengalee play. For even if the translator be a Native, he, by the fact of publishing the play, adopted it. Why did he not send a copy to the parties concerned, to the Landholders' and Commercial Association, and to the Indigo planters? The learned Counsel would not deny that there were bad men among the Indigo planteas, no such large community could exist without containing a portion of the bad element as well as the good. He could not shut his eyes to fact that Indigo planters had been attacked by more person than one belonging to the defendant's cloth, but such attacks had been made openly in the

public press, and had been answered in the same public way by planter's who had not hesitated to append their names. But how defferently was this attack made, not publicly and openly, but with strict injunction as to secrecy! The book was printed by Manuel, the copies sent to Mr. Sandys' and from him to the Bengal Secreteriat. The motive that induced this publication was a secret there, and whether it was a political conspiracy or not, of which the Revd. Mr. Long was the working agent, was question which would doubtless be answered some day.

Granting even that the publication was a drama having no paticular object, political or otherwise, still if it was likely to create among the Natives a false impression regarding the character and conduct of their Eurupean brethern it was the duty of the Revd. Mr. Long, whose occupation was to convert the Heathen to Christianity, to destroy the copies that gave rise to the false impression. That was a much more chritable office than to disseminate slander, and one more conducive by far to the avoued end he had in view, the propagation of Gospel. How could he expect to make a single convert while the calumnies in that drama were allowed to exist, and painted in the blackest dye the characters of men brought up in that faith of which he was professedly the promoter among the Heathen? Had the conduct of any planters been half as oppressive as made against them? He wold not say that there were not some amoug their body, whose conduct required reprobation, but he utterly denied that any body of civilised men, men moreover whose interest it was to treat the Natives well, could be guilty of the atrocities, could reval in such a glut of vice as depicted in that libellous drama, the Nil Durpan. When the publicatioa had gone forth no definite information could be obtained concerning it, and the Indigo planters' only resource was to select the person who by an act of Parliament was compelled

to put his name to everything issuing from his press. They did so, acting on the principle that if you get the cub, the dam will soon be caught. They indicted the printer, and thereby obtained the admision that Mr. Long was the publisher. Had his clients been vindictive they could have pressed for the punishment of the printer, it was suffitient to say they did not do so. The learned Counsel would be the last person in the world to press for conviction in ordinary abuses of the press ; such were not dangerous, for the press had its uses in which the abuses found their antidote. But there was no antidote to charges made without giving any opportunity of promulgating the truth. The only means of vindicting their character left upon to his clients was to come into that Court to obtain the Verdict of the Jury who would not, he hoped, become parties to the propagation of a libel. The question of justification could not arise. It was impossible for the defendant to justify himself according to law, though he acted under the belief that the libel was true, though he acted on information he had received, even though he produced parties who had seen acts of oppression committed. But the libel contained within itself the proof of malice, and if the jury did not believe the existence of the state of society therein depicted, they must admit it to be a libel ; if they did not consider it a libel they must believe in the truth of the charges made, not as against any planter, but as against the general body of European Indigo Planters ; they would believe them to be men placed beyond the pale of civilisation, and deserving of all they had got because guilty of the most horrid atrocities. They would believe that virtue existed among the Natives alone and some few officials. They would believe that on leaving England their countrymen forget all principles of Christianity, and that offence abhorred at home could be perpetrated with impunity here. They would believe magistrates, non-officials, the whole Christian community

of British India, except a favoured few, regardless of all principles of honour and felling. They would believe that not a European in India was more fit for the changing in Norfolk island than to govern here. They would believe that officials, acting under the fascinations of imaginary planters, wives permitted injustice to be committed which resulted in wholesale destruction, ruin and death to the ryots.

The Jury had been carefully selected, there was no taint of the Indigo dye among them, there was not one of them, interested in its cultivation, their sympathies would not therefore be enlisted on the side of his clients yet he felt confident that they could come to no other conclusion than that the defendant was the publisher and promulgator of a gross and calumnious libel, and the learned Counsel would be content to leave him to the mercy which was a well-known attribute of that Court.

He was sorry that he could go no further into the subject; he was but faintly doing his duty, he felt that no words of his could sufficiently portray the consequences of that libel if allowed to remain unheeded and uncontradicted. If that reckless slander had been promulgated among the warlike tribes of the North-West, it must have inevitably led to the extermination of the Europeans. It was just and right to attribute the disturbed state of the country to a set of slanderers, who would effect, (if allowed to remain unpunished) by a forced combination of the Natives, what the Bengalees have never been able to effect, the ejection of the Europeans. Would natives come and offer their labour if they believed they would be compelled to take advances ill-treated, ruined and their daughters violated? He shuddered in contemplating the consequences of that libel. If distributed in the bazars, if spread through villages, future generations would point to the rule of the English as more pregnant of evils than the sway of Mahratta horde or Moslem host. These were among

the serious and dangerous consequences of that libel which had been but feebly portrayed. He would sit down in the entire confidence that the Jury would come to no other conclusion than that demanded by Truth and Justice, and necessary for the vindication of the character of his clients.

Clement Henry Manuel, examined by Mr. Cowie, stated that he was proprietor of the Calcutta Printing and Publishing Press, and printed the Nil Durpan in April or May last, under order received from Mr. Long in person. He sent portions of manuscript from time to time. Received direction from defendant to print five hundred copies which are struck off, and sent Mr. Long's house. That was the way he generally did business. He was not a publisher, but only a printer. The manuscripts were returned to the defendant with the proofsheets. He did not know what became the printed copies after he sent them to the defendant. He had charged nearly Rs. 300 for printing, which was paid by Mr. Long. He had been indicated as the printer of the Nil Durpan. The defendant had authorized witness's Counsel to give up his name. Did not know if that authority was given on the day of the trial or before. Had not given any information as to the author or publisher of the pamphlet.

By the Court—Would have felt himself at liberty to give the author's name, if he had been called upon to do so. Could not swear to defendant's handwriting, but believed the proofs to have been passed in his writing. He meant by "passed" that proof sheets, after being corrected, were sent to the author for final approval. The proof sheets were sent to Mr. Long. (Some proof sheets were produced in Court, and the witness pointed out the order for the printing, and some corrections as made in Mr. Long's writing).

By Mr. Eglinton,—Mr. Long came himself to witness's office without any mystery. Had never been pressed to give up his name ; gave it at this trial on

Mr. Long's own authority. Had not seen much of Mr. Long's writing. Did not speak with certainty regarding it.

By the Court—From the opportunities he has had he believed those corrections to have been made in Mr. Long's writing.

Walter Brett, examined by Mr. Cowie; stated that he was Managing Proprietor and, at present Editor of the *Englishman*. Had been Managing Proprietor about two years' and sole Editor since his coadjutor, Mr. Saunders, went home. Previously Mr. Saunuders was the Editor, and witness, Managing Proprietor and Joint Editor. He was aware that there had been much discussion on matters connected with the cultivation of Indigo, and had taken a large part in that discussion. A commission had been appointed by Government to enquire into the rights of ryots and planters. The *Englishman* naturally took a view favourable to the Indigo planters upon the evidence given before the Commission. The Bengal Hurkaru naturally took the same view. He believed the *Englishman* and the Hurkaru to be the two papers stated in the Nil Durpan, 'to have their columns filled with the praises' of the Indigo planters. He first received a copy of this publication (holding the Nil Durpan) on May 27th of the present year; that was to the best of his belief, but he could not swear to a day either way. One of his own peons brought it to him. He had asked officially for a copy, and while waiting for an answer, had received another copy which was sent enclosed simply in a cover and addressed to the Editor of the *Englishman*. He did not know who addressed it. Received the copy he had applied for, immediately afterwards. That was from a source which he was not at liberty to refer to, in this trial. Had since received several copies. He was not acquainted with Mr. Long's handwriting. He concluded that the *Englishman* and the Hurkaru were the papers alluded to in the Nil Durpan, from his knowledge of the line they had taken with

reference to the disputes between the Indigo planters and ryots. He had no doubt his conclusion was correct. There was one other daily paper in Calcutta the *Phoenix*. It took the other line ;—unnaturally of course. He had read the publication called the *Nil Durpan*, and believed the the European Indigo Planters to be the persons pointed at throughout that production.

By Mr. Eglinton,—He was a member of the Landholders' and Commercial Association. The Association prosecuted, not a section of them. Had not heard on authority that any members dissented from the prosecution, but believed it to be the case. Had nothing to do with Indigo. Was certainly not an Indigo planter of Lower Bengal. He saw the first copy of the pamphlet on May 27th, but had seen parts of the libel before them. Could not doubt the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers alluded to in the *Nil Durpan*, because those papers had been constantly written of as the Indigo journals by anti-Indigo papers. They were here not mentioned by name. There were several daily papers in India, some were in favour of the Indigo planters' interest, and some were opposed to it. He knew nothing of native papers properly so called ; he meant papers published in the vernacular. The *Hindoo Patriot* and *Indian Field* were papers under native influence. They took a contrary view to that taken by the *Englishman*. In those papers the planters had been represented as guilty of great cruelties. He was aware that those two papers represented that there existed considerable feeling among the native population regarding the alleged oppression of Indigo planters. He did not know as a fact that there was a strong feeling among ryots against planters, as represented by those papers. To the best of his belief there was a strong prejudice among the ryots against Indigo planters whether justly or not, he could not say, but on the evidence before him the balance was quite against them. The *Enlishman* had a large circulation ; it had not

decreased since the publication of the libel. The question of the respect and deference shown to the Englishman was a question for outside opinion and not for him to determine. He had a number of Indigo planters on his subscription list, but not a large number proportionately to the whole number of subscribers. He did not feel called upon to state the actual number, as he declined to go into the details of his subscription list. Before answering on question regarding any numbers, he would ask the protection of the Court that he might not be asked any further question regarding the numbers, in his subscription list.

The *Court* did not think such a question should be put unless it bore directly upon the facts of the case.

Mr. Eglinton explained that he considered editors as men who write for gain ; hired writers to uphold a certain interest. He thought it requisite to ascertain the number of that interest in order to prove that the view taken by the Englishmen with reference to the Indigo question was calculated to bring additional subscribers.

Cross examination by Mr. Eglinton continued :—He was not prepared to say how many subscribers he had among the Indigo planters, but did not believe his subscription list as regards them had increased by one since publication of the Nil Durpan. He explained that there were constant changes in the constituency of a paper, but that he did not believe that there was any virtual difference. The subscription list of the Englishman had been increasing steadily on a stated average for the last two years. He most certainly declined to answer whether or not he received more than Rs. 1000 yearly from his subscribers among the planters.

Mr. Eglinton would press the question. The Court in that case would direct Mr. Brett to answer, but must say, it considered the question quite irrelevant.

Cross-examined by Mr. Eglinton,..... He did receive more than Rs. 1000 per annum from subscribers' among

the Indigo planters. He knew newspapers advocated particular interests and opinion all over the world.

Re-examined by Mr. Cowie,.....He did not advocate the Indigo interest or any other interest, with the view of gaining Rs. 1000 or any other sum. He believed that he was charged in the passage read out of the introduction to the Nil Durpan by Mr. Peterson with being bribed to advocate the interests of Indigo planters.

Alexander Forbes, examined by Mr. Peterson,.....Was present editor of the Bengal Hurkaru. Had been so for the last eighteen months. Had read part of the Nil Durpan. Believed the Englishman and Hurkaru were the papers alluded to in the passage regarding the praising of Indigo planters because those papers had advocated the indigo interests. Had no doubt that Mr. Brett and himself were referred to. He had rightly or wrongly advocated the cause of Indigo planters. He had not liked Judas Iscariot taken thirty rupees and sold the 'ryots' cause. Had been directly concerned in the cultivation of Indigo fifteen years and indirectly, three or four years. A planter could not manage his business if he stuck a single ryot. The duties of a factory Ameen were to make advances to ryots, and to superintendent generally the cultivation of the Indigo. It was his province to mark out the land for Indigo within his division. There were Ameens in all factories, generally one to every 200 bighas. A passage read from the Nil Durpan about a ryot being made to drink the water of seven factories meant a threat of confinement in the factory godown; another passage meant compulsory cultivation; another meant compelling ryots to give false evidence by confining them. Another passage meant that the Ameen was taking his youngest daughter to the Sahib's room for bad purposes. The drama was a favourite mode of representing the state of society among Bengalees. That mode was adopted in villages and other places as truly representing states and phases of society.

To the Court :—These dramas are looked upon as fictions with a great deal of truth in them.

To Mr. Peterson :—Thought this drama would be believed by natives not acquainted with Indigo planters as a true representation of their conduct. Believed it was so accepted in Calcutta. He knew Mr Long's handwriting. The order for the printing and some of the corrections in the proofsheets he held were in Mr. Long's hand, but written rather plainer than he usually writes.

To Mr. Newmarch :—He could not say if the Hurkaru was the most strenuous advocate of Indigo interest, but hoped so. He did not know it upheld that interest before he joined, as he did not read it for many years. Had never looked at the subscription list, but knew that many planters become subscribers when he become editor. Had not the least idea whether or not the circulation of the Hurkaru among the Indigo planters afforded a yearly sum of Rs. 1000. There were several daily papers in India. He believed there were six.

To Mr. Newmarch :—There is much difference in opinion as to whether ryottee cultivation is beneficial or not.

Mr. Newmarch :—Have not some of those papers taken an opposite view of the question from that taken by you ?

Mr. Forbes :—In Bengal, with the exception of one daily paper, the others advocated the cause of the planters.

Mr. Newmarch :—Don't you believe that those who entertained different opinions from you, did so conscientiously ?

Mr. Forbes :—When it arose from ignorance of the subject. I believe there are no conscientious men who know anything about the subject who hold a different opinion from myself as to Indigo planters. There are many conscientious men who believe so, but I don't

think they are a large body. I know a great deal of Native society. There is a large body of Natives who have a strong feeling against the Europeans.

Mr. Peterson :—That being your feeling, do you think the publication of Nil Durpan would bring about a good feeling ?

Mr. Forbes :—Certainly not ; I think the feeling against the European will be greatly increased by it !

Mr. Peterson :—Do you know where the original of the Nil Durpan had been published ?

Mr. Forbes :—I have been told, in Dacca.

Mr. Peterson :—Do you know that the drama has been represented there ?

Mr. Forbes :—Yes, I have heard so. I received the information by a letter from Dacca, that the drama was represented there.

By Mr. Peterson :—No conscientious person would write that pamphlet. I have never seen any publication written in opposition to the Nil Durpan.

By the Court :—I don't think my paper has been injured by the pamphlet, I cannot say what effect it may have in England.

Mr. Brett recalled :—The first intimation he had of the publication was a letter from Lahore containing an envelope, which he produced. That was the first intimation. He received it from the editor of the Lahore Chronicle. This was two days before he got a copy of the pamphlet.

By the Court :—Beyond any personal annoyance I may have felt, I believe, from communications which I have received, that the pamphlet has been the means of creating certain prejudice against the Englishman among the more educated Natives.

Thomas Jones, examined by Mr. Cowie :—I am Registrar of the Bengal Secreteriat, and have been so for four and a half years. A large number of these pamphlet were circulated under my frank.

Mr. Cowie :—Who were they sent by ?

Mr. Eglinton :—I object to that question being put. You have a right to ask the witness any question as to what become of the numbers, but you have no right to trace them to the party from whom the witness had received them.

The Judge :—Indeed I think it a very legitimate and proper question.

Mr. Cowie :—Perhaps my learned friend is apprehensive that we might entrap the witness into making certain admissions. But that is not our intention ; we want to find out the mode of its publication.

The Judge :—I have the evidence before me that Mr. Long had paid 300 rupees for the printing of 500 copies. Therefore, I don't think that question matters much.

Mr. Englinton :—I say it is an improper question, because you have no right to trace the publication to the person from whom the witness got it. You have the fact of copies having come into the possession of the witness.

The Judge :—If Mr. Long parted possession of the books he must stand the consequence of its distribution in the same way as a person who entrusted a publication to a printer. I shall take care that not an atom of evidence which would affect Mr. Long would be taken down by me unless it was legal evidence.

Mr. Thomas Jones resumed :—These copies were circulated under my frank as Registrar of the Bengal Office. No communication was made to me on the subject by the Government. I believe they were sent by the Revd. Mr. Long. I believe the copies were sent for distribution. He had not asked me to distribute them. The distribution list was sent afterwards. About 500 copies were sent to the Bengal Office. I believe the list was partly in the handwriting of Mr. Long. I think the copies were sent in early part of May. I believe the envelope produced originally contained a copy of the

pamphlet. The distribution occupied two or three days. The larger portion was distributed by me. Some copies were sent home to England previous to my receiving the list. I don't think any copies were sent to England after my receiving the list. I can't at present recollect the name of any person to whom they were to be sent.

The Judge :—I want to explain to the Jury why copies were sent to a Government Department ?

Mr. Jones :—I can't my Lord.

The Judge :—Do you know that any communication had been made to the Bengal Office before these papers were sent ?

Mr. Jones :—I am not aware of any in the present case.

Mr. Judge :—Why do you draw the distinction ? Were you in the habit of receiving such papers before ?

Mr. Jones :—I have been in habit of distributing such papers, but always under the authority of the Secretary.

The Judge :—Are papers received in the office without the knowledge of the Secretary, and circulated without his knowledge ?

Mr. Jones :—Certainly not, my Lord.

The Judge :—Were these papers sent in such a manner as the people would understand that they were circulated and directed from the Bengal Office ?

Mr. Jones :—They were, my Lord.

The Judge :—Was there any thing in the envelope to show or to make any person suppose that the papers were not sent by the Government.

Mr. Jones :—None, my Lord.

The Judge :—I wish to know whether the course adopted in the Bengal office in the case as to the circulation of the papers, had ever been followed before ?

Mr. Jones :—I have frequently circulated Native publications indicating Native feeling, and education, and improvement.

The Judge :—Have you read this publication ?

Mr. Jones :—I have not read half page of it, my Lord.

The Judge :—Have you been in Court the whole day ? And have you heard the passages read by the learned Counsel for the prosecution ?

Mr. Jones :—I have, my Lord; for first time this I knew its contents.

The Judge :—Have you seen similar productions to this before ?

Mr. Jones :—Within the range of my recollection I don't believe I have seen a similar one.

William Frederick Fergusson, examined :—This prosecution is instituted by the Landholders' Association of British India. The prosecution was instituted by the unanimous resolution of the members. I have perused the pamphlet, and have no doubt that it applies to the planters in Bengal. I think it would create much ill feeling.

By Mr. Eglinton :—No objection has been made by any member of the Association to proceed with this prosecution. I only heard one adverse opinion in respect to prosecuting Mr. Long ; and that was an objection to prosecuting a poor tool when there was a chance of flying at much higher game.

Simon de Cruz' examined :—I saw the distribution list a fortnight or a month ago ; it was in my department of the Bengal Office. Mr. Jones sent for it. An assistant took it away.

Mr. Jones, recalled :—I don't recollect receiving any list, I have been away a month. It could only be removed by the Secretary.

Mr. Cowie applied that the case for the prosecution might stand over until the document was searched for, and the Court having concurred, the case was adjourned until 11 o'clock of the following day.

SATURDAY, JULY 20th.

At the opening of the Court, a minor official of the Bengal Office was called for with a view to produce the missing distribution list; but on an intimation from the Counsel for the defence, Mr Cowie called, and proceeded with the examination of.

E. Lushington, Esq. C. S., Secretary to the Government of Bengal. He produced the list of names of persons to whom the Nil Durpan was to be distributed. The list written in two different hands; one was that of a clerk in his office, the other was unknown to him. He did not know Mr. Long's handwriting. There was nothing written on the list to show that it was connected with the Nil Durpan. He found the list in his drawer where it had been kept ever since, except for a short period when it was borrowed by Mr. Seton-Karr. He could not say if Mr. Long had seen it since he had come in possession of it. The distribution of Nil Durpan took place before he took office.

Mr. Eglinton here admitted part of the list to be in the defendant's handwriting.

Cross-examined by Mr. Eglinton:—Had a great number of copies of the Nil Durpan in his possession, probably 200. When he took office, he took those copies into his own particular custody.

By the Court:—The copies were not distributed, but kept back on account of the proceedings taken in this Court. Did not believe that the persons, named in the small list in his hand, were those to whom Government were in the habit of sending books in the Native languages and of Native composition, to show the style of literature and state of feeling among the Natives.

Cross-exam. by Mr. Eglinton, continued:—There have been several distributions of books since he had held office.

Mr. Peterson:—Would put into Court a proof copy of the Nil Durpan, marked A, and a corrected copy marked

A₁ and two exhibits marked C and C₁ being the distribution lists.

This closed the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Eglinton rose and said that, on whatever points he might disagree with Mr. Peterson, he must agree with him as to the importance of the decision of the Jury, not only as it regarded Mr. Long, but also as it concerned Freedom of discussion and the public welfare. He could not forget what great interests would be affected by the decision of the Jury, nor could he forget that this case was topic of conversation throughout the country, and created the most intense interest; he therefore addressed the Jury with great diffidence, but not with the slightest misgiving as to their verdict, for he felt that he could so disprove the charges made against his client that no Jury would be justified in finding him guilty. In cases of this sort, semi-political in their nature, it was not uncommon for the Counsel to call upon a Jury to dismiss from their minds any political bias that might make them lean towards either side. In this case it was peculiarly necessary that the Jury should not entertain an idea favourable to either the defendant or his accusers. The subject of this action had been discussed *usque ad nauseam* in the papers, and it was impossible that any Juryman would be perfectly void of some private feeling on this subject. But he felt convinced that they would judge the case on its merits; that is, on the evidence as it supported or failed to support the terms of the indictment. Perhaps it was unnecessary for him to refer to the status, high position, and calling of the defendant. He had been known for many years past as a man of high honour, a gentleman whose character was blameless and without reproach. For this reason the learned Counsel addressed the Jury under peculiarly advantageous circumstances. The antecedents of Mr. Long and a view of his past career would prove, notwithstanding the observations of his learned friend, that he did not merit the observation of

his learned friend that he did not merit the obloquy of any one, and that he was not a likely person to commit the act, of which he stood charged, with any malicious intention. Mr. Long's position and status denied such an accusation; and the learned Counsel, in corroboration, would call attention to the name of the gentlemen who want bail for him. They were Mr. Hutton, a chaplain and Bishop's commissary, and Mr. Stuart, also a clergyman and Secretary to the Church Mission Society. When the defendant was supported by men of such rank and standing the Jury might be sure that his antecedent would bear the minutest test. Having made these prefatory remarks, the learned Counsel would proceed to consider the case itself. But before entering into the charge itself, he would bring to the notice of the Jury the mode of procedure adopted against him. His learned friend, Mr. Peterson, appeared to have been labouring under a difficulty on that point. There were three courses open to the prosecutors; the first was a civil action, which the learned Counsel on the other side considered himself shut out from, by technical reasons. But there was another fair, open and manly mode of procedure, much more so than the one adopted, which was the harshest known in the English law. Though the prosecutors were not able to institute a civil action for technical reasons, they could at all events have applied for a criminal information. The Jury might not be acquainted with the nature of that proceeding; he would therefore give some explanation regarding it. It was a mode of proceeding which did not close the defendant's mouth. The cases were fully investigated by a Full Bench before they came to a Jury. A rule *nisi* was applied for; and either made absolute, or discharged. In the case of a rule being made absolute the case was considered fit for the investigation of a Jury. The prosecutors had thrown this matter before a Jury without giving Mr. Long a chance of opening his mouth on his own behalf. The mode of

procedure would win for the defendant the sympathy of the Jury, as in this country he was debarred from certifying or disavowing his connection with the pamphlet. This was not the state of the law in Westminster Hall ; for, sixteen or seventeen years ago an Act was passed to enable a defendant to enter into the question of the truth of the charge. The learned Counsel was sorry to say, the Act had not been extended to this country, but that state of things now existed here, which existed in England at the close of the last century when political animus ran high, and held great sway. The learned Counsel would call attention to 6th and 7th of Victoria and Lord Campbell's remarks thereon, which approved of those Acts as salutary measures, and considered it necessary for a defendant to be able to enter into the truth of allegations cast on him. The learned Counsel would argue that there was no publication of the alleged libel. He would then enter into the question of the truth of the innuendoes, and subsequently as to whether the publication was a libel generally. His learned friend Mr. Peterson had indulged in a very long address, and had made remarks which he considered quite foreign to the case between the Crown and the defendant. He had entered into a long disquisition on the subject of advance made for cultivation of Indigo. Had the learned Counsel thought it was necessary for the just performance of his duties to be acquainted with the relations between planter and ryot, he would not have accepted the case, as his Lordship knew he had only accepted the conduct of the defence when assured it had nothing to do with the cultivation of Indigo. A great fallacy, in his opinion, pervaded his learned friend's speech—he had assumed that the Native mind was greatly exasperated by this publication ; this was the crying evil complained of throughout Mr. Peterson's address. It would have been a very proper complaint if the pamphlet had been published in the Native language, but not without. Then Mr. Peterson spoke of its wonderful

circulation. He expected that he would produce evidence of the ryot being seen sitting each under his own banyan-tree reading the publication to their wives and children. His learned friend had also stated that this drama was a libel on the Government, and the Civil Service as well as the Indigo planters. If this were the case, why had not the parties presented their own indictment? This question seemed to have puzzled his learned friend. He could not answer it. It was perhaps because those persons had taken competent legal advice, and found that the matter was not libellous. He did not assert that this had been the case, it might or it might not have been so. There was another point which greatly affected Mr. Long's position. It was said that he skulked behind others, and he had been termed an anonymous libeller. At Manuel's trial, Mr. Long was most anxious to have his name given up as having ordered the printing of that pamphlet. There had not been the slightest attempt on the part of Mr. Long to shield himself; on the contrary, he had put himself forward as much as any man could do, and most certainly did not deserve the reflections cast upon him. The Jury might remember that Manuel on his trial said he had not been pressed to give up Mr. Long's name. Did Mr. Peterson expect Manuel to come forward and make gratuitous statement? There was no concealment, the case was all the other way, add if there was a libel, Mr. Long had certainly not hesitated to acknowledge the share he had taken in it. His learned friend had said a great deal about the author and translator. Mr. Long was neither the one nor the other, but that was quite immaterial. If he was the publisher, that would be sufficient for the Law if the publication was a libel. If there was any necessity, Mr. Long would at the proper time divulge the names of both author and translator provided his Counsel should consider it to have a bearing on the verdict. Before entering into the gist of the question, he would do what might be considered

presumption on his part, namely, to tell them what in his opinion were their duties in this case. First, they had to decide whether or not Mr. Long is the publisher. On that point he thought the evidence clear and conclusive. That fact is sufficiently established by the order given to Manuel for the printing, and the portion of the list admitted to be in his hand. Mr. Peterson had indulged in some remarks on this point with a mysterious commencement, a mysterious end, and a mysterious middle, which he had not been able to understand. A simple fact, the giving of the manuscripts to the printer was not denied, and if that was not sufficient to establish the question of the publication, the list clinched the matter. The next question was the truth of the innuendoes set out in the indictment which involved a question, the solution of which he considered, the most important duty of the Jury; that question was as to the truth of the matter in the indictment. He did not think so, and held Mr. Peterson's views to be incorrect. The third question was as to whether it was libel or not. This was more within the province of a Jury to decide. In the last century, when political animus ran high, the Jury decided the first and second questions only, and the third was left to the Judge. This course was to give the Judge too much power, and it was altered so as to enable the Jury to decide the question of libel and to allow the Judge to express his opinion on their decision.

The learned Counsel would not trespass much longer on their time, and would now consider the counts in the indictment without entering into the preliminary points. In the first count, the preface to the drama is set out and a small portion of it treated as a libel on Mr. Brett, the editor of the *Englishman*. He would read the passage, and answer that it was no libel, and he hoped to be able to convince the Jury so. He did not intend to cast the slightest reflection on Mr. Brett, or the *Englishman* newspaper. Mr. Brett was a most respectable man, a man

of high honour, so far as the learned Counsel knew, and far be it from the learned Counsel to question his honesty and integrity. Still the learned Counsel thought that editors and managers of newspapers should be the last persons to come into a Court and prefer complaints about public books, pamphlets or prints. Nowhere are criticisms so freely made on public acts, and perhaps on private character, as by the press of India. That press had deservedly a high character, yet he must say that there had been and still were, writings in that press, which were much stronger than they should be. For this reason an editor should be the last person to come into the Court so thin-skinned and prefer a complaint of a libel; yet if himself aggrieved, he certainly had a right to ask for justice at the hands of that Court. The learned Counsel would dissect this alleged libellous matter. He read the passage, and observed that he really thought it amounted at most to an insinuation, that editors wrote up the interest of the Indigo planters for fee and reward, and certainly if it implied nothing further, it was no libel. Mr. Peterson had given the Jury his interpretation of the passage, but they must not on those grounds take it as a libel. They must judge for themselves. If they thought it implied no more than he had said, it was not a libel, because every day there were newspapers, books and pamphlets written to advance a particular interest, as Mr. Brett had himself allowed in his evidence. Was it not a fact that every section of the community had its particular organ in London, from the highest conservative to the lowest radical! Some among them favoured the interests not only of the Established Church but of a hundred other sects. Some advocated the interests of the law, some those of the Government, some those of the merchants, in short, every phase of life was represented by men who advocated it for money, and not for money alone, but for a livelihood, and the learned Counsel considered it a fair, legitimate, and honourable profession.

It was this that was implied by the passage he had read and nothing more. The learned Counsel did not know if Mr. Peterson meant to compare editors with Judge Iscariot and if the Jury believed his argument. They would see that this reference to Judge Iscariot was an illustration and not a comparison, which were very different. He would thus leave that portion of the case to them, first stating that if Mr. Brett thought that passage reflected on him, he was quite justified in bringing the matter into Court, but they must be quite satisfied on the question of libel or no libel before they gave a verdict.

Before proceeding to the consideration of Indigo planters, the learned Counsel must observe that it was a most unusual thing of a case to connect a private individual with one of a large body of men like the Indigo planters, and this method was calculated to embarrass Mr. Long in his defence. He would now consider the second count in the indictment. It alleged a libel upon the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal, and he must say that his learned friend Mr. Peterson had delivered himself of a good deal of indignation on the subject of those grievances. And more so than the planters themselves. Several friend of his connected with the Indigo interest were in Court, and he thought they looked very cheerful, and not at all like men suffering from the sting of injurious calumnies. He did not think that there was a single planter who cared one farthing about the publication of the Nil Durpan. They were too well aware of their position. He believed that there was another motive for the prosecution, and not the one alleged of unmerited aspersions. Another observation suggested itself to him, viz. that if the planters had really felt themselves hurt, they would long ago have taken proceedings against the publishers of the Native copies promulgated, through the Indigo interst. If any copies did harm, surely they were the Native ones. As no proceedings had been taken, as they had waited so long, and judging from their placid

demeanour, he felt satisfied that they did not feel themselves aggrieved. Yet that was no reason they should not complain if there had been a libel. He would argue there had not been, on four separate points. The first reason was that the parties maligned were not a definite body, and it was utterly opposed to the rule in cases of libel that such a body could prefer an indictment. His learned friend seemed to have anticipated such an objection being raised, and he did raise it, and insisted strongly on it. Mr. Peterson referred the Jury to three cases; he would not trouble them with a long legal disquisition, but would briefly show how different those cases were from the present one. He did not deny that great public bodies had a right to prefer an indictment, but what a difference there was between a corporate body like the Directors of the East India Company, or the clergymen of the diocese of Durham, and a body like that of the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. They were met with here and there at intervals of 20 or 40 miles! They had no connection with each others, no identity, no corporate existence, no association properly so called, not a single interest in common as was the case in the examples referred to by his learned friend. Mr. Peterson had been compelled to go so far back as of George II, 1732. There was a case of some Portuguese Jews lately come from Portugal. A criminal information prayed for regarding the murder of a Jewish woman. These Jews were represented to have lately come from Portugal and to be living in Broad Street. This at once established a connection between them, which did not exist among the Indigo planters. The case against the clergymen of the diocese of Durham was likewise dissimilar, for they all belonged to the Established Church, and that formed a bond of union between them. The case against the Directors of the East India Company was also different, for they were a corporate body, and any individual member might take to himself the libel on

them all. A corporate body was entirely different from a body like the Indigo planters who had no collective existence, and if the Jury decided that a libel would lie in this case they would carry the Law further than it ever had been done before. Suppose now the policy-holders of Lower Bengal should prefer a complaint, the question would naturally arise who are they? As another illustration he would say, suppose the lawyers of Bengal were to prefer an indictment, would that term include Judges? He would be too sorry to say the Judges were no lawyers, which they were, and admirable ones. Would it include Barristers, Vakeels and Pleaders of the Small Cause Court? It would be most unsafe to sanction the preferring of a complaint by such a body. Further, he would ask why the Indigo planters of Upper Bengal had not been included as well as those of Lower Bengal. By the preferment of this indictment the Jury had been asked to do what no Jury had ever been asked to do before. Supposing the doors to be thus thrown open to litigation, why should not the ryots subscribe together and indict any editor or writer whom they might consider to have libelled them? A corporate body having a common interest had a right to come into the Court and prefer a complaint if they felt themselves aggrieved; but the learned Counsel entirely denied that right where parties were concerned who had no corporate existence.

His second ground for opposing the charge of libel was that the publication was a drama, and not a pamphlet, and by every principle of propriety, usage, and custom no other character but that of a fiction could be assigned to a drama. He could not deny that there were atrocious characters such a Wood and Rose, represented in the play, but the Jury's dramatical experience would teach them that every play had its evil genius. Because a certain barrister, clergyman or merchant is a scoundrel of the deepest dye, is that a reason that all barristers, clergymen, and merchants are of the same stamp? It could not be denied

that personages embodying half-a-dozen vices were introduced ; but because one possesses vices is he to be considered a representative of his class ? No, certainly not, and therefore the monstrosities, Wood and Rose, are not to be taken as types of their class. If this was a libel the finest literature of ancient and modern times must be shut out. Look at Moliere's works ; they are but a series of venomous caricatures of the clergy and medical profession. But he need not go to foreign literature ; he would refer to works of the present day. It was a very common and growing practice to illustrate in books the state of society. 'Oliver Twist' ; for example, which was written with the sole intent and purpose of doing away with the work-house system as formerly carried out ; it had been successful. Another work by the same author 'Nicholas Nickleby' was intended to expose and crush the abuses in Yorkshire schools. Were any legal proceedings instituted against Mr. Dickens ? No, though many Yorkshire school masters would have liked to do so had they dared, but they knew no Jury would support them.

The same difficulty occurred in defining Yorkshire school masters, as in the case of the Indigo planters. There was another work to which he would call the attention of the Jury, namely, 'The Confession of Maria Monk.' That book was devoted solely to expose malpractices alleged to have been carried on in convents and nunneries. There were no steps taken in the matter because the good sense of the parties avoided it. Mr. Harriet Becher Stowe's work "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was another instance. If the prosecutors in this case had cause to complain, surely the slave-holders had greater cause of complaint. The American law allowed actions for libel, yet none had been instituted, because Legree was not accepted as a type of the slave-holding populations ; so also Wood and Rose could not have been meant by the author as an embodiment and type of the Indigo planters. Another work in the Hindustani language

had excited considerable attention here; he referred to 'Panchkowie Khan', a work on the system of the Mofussil Courts. Many gentlemen might have been annoyed at it, yet no legal exception was taken to it, and why? Because it was not a case for indictment. He thus left that portion of the case to the Jury. As to whether the matter was libellous or not, he would say that no general accusation could be charged on account of the atrocities committed by Wood and Rose, who must be looked upon as the Legree of "Uncle Tom's Cabin". The learned Counsel proceeded to read extracts from the Nil Durpan, and to comment thereon. He pointed out passages in which Indigo planters were well spoken of, in order to show that if this pamphlet fell into the hands of the ryots they would know that there was a bright side to the picture as well as a dark one. His learned friend had observed that there were other parties maligned in the Nil Durpan besides the Indigo planters. It was self-evident that strong remarks were made in that publication with reference to missionaries and civil service, but those remarks were quite different from such as would constitute a libel or justify the Jury in returning a verdict of guilty against the defendant. The learned Counsel's fourth reason for denying the libel was the question of malice. In Law, if a person was found guilty of a libel, that was *prima facie* evidence of a malicious intention. If, notwithstanding Mr. Peterson's observations, the Jury were of opinion that Mr. Long had no cause of complaint against the Indigo planters, or any motive to traduce or injure them, there had been no malice proved. He submitted with perfect confidence the fact that Mr. Long approached his subject with a perfectly unbiased mind, and had done merely what he had been doing for many years in this country. He had had much to do with the native community commenting on their publications as a proof of their style of literature and thoughts. He preferred

to leave this part of the case to the work itself, and probably Mr. Long's feelings were best conveyed in the Preface, which is expressive of a desire for conciliation between planter and ryot. His learned friend had made some very severe remarks which were not justified by the evidence. Mr. Long repudiated several notions contained in that pamphlet, he had only become the publisher of that work with a view of illustrating the Native opinion. The learned Counsel felt strongly on this case, and must say that if the Jury gave a verdict of guilty, they would be carrying the law further than it had ever been done. This was a case of the least importance to Mr. Long; it was likely to interfere with his prospects as a clergyman, nor was it a less important case for the country generally. Therefore he hoped the Jury would not be led away by any remarks, but give the subject their calm and temperate consideration with regard to the evidence and the work itself. Thus he left the case in the hands of the Jury in the full confidence that they would give a verdict compatible with truth and justice.

Mr. Eglinton asked permission for Long to read a statement, to which *Mr. Peterson* objected.

The Court considered it irregular to allow it to be read, but recommended *Mr. Eglinton* to read it as part of his speech. *Mr. Peterson* was quite willing that it should be read, but if it contained any new facts he should consider himself entitled to a reply.

Mr. Eglinton then declined to read it.

No witness were produced for the defence.

His Lordship then addressed the Jury, telling them that now the case for the defendant had closed, it remained for them to determine the question of guilty or not guilty. He had never felt deeper anxiety in the discharge of his judicial duties because a question was involved in the consideration of this case, which had been but faintly glanced at by the learned Counsel on either side. The question he alluded to was a great

constitutional one, being of the liberty of the press and the freedom of discussion in public writing; and the remarks he would make on that subject would not have been left unsaid by a single Judge in England, and he felt convinced, would meet the views of the learned Chief Justice of that Court. It was the first time such a question had been submitted to a Jury in India, for this was the first prosecution of the kind, as he believed, that had taken place in India, and it therefore behoved the Jury to consider not the history of India but that of England, to see how the Juries had dealt with this all-important question; important to the body of men who alleged that they had been most cruelly slandered, important to the reverend defendant, important to every human being throughout the length and breadth of this country, because it concerned every man; a question that it would never be said, had been lightly passed over by the presiding Judge of this Court. He would not rely on his own personal opinions, but those which had been well established and accepted as authorities at Westminster Hall. The Indictment contained two counts. He would first deal with the first count, and then come to the all-important question involved in the second. The first count deserved the most serious attention, and His Lordship could not agree with Mr. Eglinton in dismissing it so abruptly from their notice. How far it was wise for those respectable gentlemen who conducted public journal to enter into a question of libel was not for the Jury to determine. That was beyond their province and beyond his. They had to consider the proprietor of a newspaper as an ordinary individual, for though an editor was necessarily possessed of great power and influence, yet every individual had the same right to freedom of discussion; and, on the other hand, if an editor was maligned he had as perfect a right to seek redress from the courts of justice as any other person. His Lordship would give no opinion, nor would he

invite the Jury to do so, as to how far it was wise in those who should place themselves in the foremost ranks to contend for the liberty of the press to come into that court as prosecutors in a case of libel. The only question for their consideration was whether the publication was a libel or not. There was no disguise in the fact that the first count stood on quite a different footing to the second; and His Lordship must say that this mode of indictment, so far as it related to the second count, did not entirely meet with his approbation, because a personal wrong and injury was, to a certain extent, mixed up with a public one. If the gentleman who conducted the *Englishman* felt himself agrieved, his redress might have been a civil action; but if he preferred, instead of putting damages in his pocket, to vindicate his character by a criminal prosecution, he had a perfect legal right to do so. The first count referred to a libel or supposed libel on the two leading journals of the city of Calcutta. He did not wish unduly to influence the Jury in giving their verdict, but it remained for them to say if those two papers were meant by the allusions in the Preface to the pamphlet. There was at present, that is to say, as regards the first count, only one part of the book relied on by Mr. Peterson, viz. the authour's Preface. There had been no observation made on the first part, and he would read the passage complained of. (His Lordship here read the Preface). The Jury had to deliberate if that was a libel. They must first consider if the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers alluded to. How did the evidence bear on this point? Mr. Brett had stated in his evidence that he had been for two years managing proprietor, and was formerly joint editor, and is now sole editor of the *Englishman* newspaper, and that he believed, from the views he had naturally adopted and expressed upon the evidence given before the Government Commission to enquire into the unhappy disputes between the planters and ryots, that

it was to his paper that the libel pointed. The Jury must not look at this question in a quibbling manner, but as they would view the ordinary affairs of life. They must exercise their common sense, and he would ask if there could be any doubt on the evidence that the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were the papers pointed at. That was one question which had been raised for the defence for other considerations. The Counsel for the defence had examined Mr. Brett as to whether there were other daily papers in India, and he had answered that certainly there were others at Bombay and Madras, but the contents of the pamphlet showed that they could not have been referred to. Had newspapers in Madras and Bombay nothing of more immediate interest to their local interests and constituency to write about than the cultivation of Indigo in Lower Bengal? In His Lordship's opinion it was trifling with their understanding to say that the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* were not the papers pointed at. Then, if that question were answered in the affirmative, it remained to be seen whether or not the language adopted amounted to a libel. They must judge if it cast a doubt on the honour and integrity of those who had the important duty of conducting the journals, whether they were men likely to be attracted by filthy lucre to advocate any side of any opinion, whether or not they were men capable, for the sake of gain, of being corrupted to advocate any set of views, to the injury of others, and to abstain from giving vent to the honest opinions which their conscience might dictate. It was important to the interests of public liberty that rights of the Press should be amply shielded.

The second part of the passage ran as follows:—(It was here read by His Lordship.)

Did that mean, or did it not mean that those respectable gentlemen who conduct newspapers in Calcutta would sell the best interests of society for Rs. 1000, that they would sacrifice the welfare of society to the promotion

for a corrupt purpose of private interests? If it meant that, would it not be a libel! That the Jury had to determine. His Lordship had a right, according to the law, to express his opinion, as a matter of advice to them in deciding that question; but he would rather leave it entirely to them. If those gentlemen had not belonged to the press but had been private individuals, how would the case have stood if such persons had been charged with taking bribes to vilify the character of a neighbour for £100? Would they not lay themselves open to such disgrace that they could never again hope to hold up their heads among their fellow-men?

It seems to be perfectly settled that any reflection on a man's character calculated to bring him into ridicule and contempt, or to expose him to public hatred, amounts to a libel in the indictable sense of the word. Therefore, it remained for the Jury to decide whether that passage did or did not reflect on Mr. Brett as managing proprietor and editor of the *Englishman* newspaper.

The first count might be important to Mr. Brett, but the second count concerned the interests of society at large, and his Lordship hoped the Jury would anxiously realize the importance of the question involved in the second count. He hoped every one of the Jury would apply his utmost intelligence to the solution of that question, and maintain an earnest and strong guard over his sympathies, for unless they kept their sympathies under control they might commit an injury on society at large. The second count was the alleged libel on that portion of the community designated as the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. Mr. Eglinton contended that a libel would not lie against a class, and that this count was too general, and not sufficiently pointed; but His Lordship was sure the Jury would defer to his opinion, and he entertained no short of doubt an indictment would lie, though no particular individual was referred to. This question had long been decided in Westminster Hall, that general imputa-

tions upon a body of men are indictable. Though no individual can be pointed out, it is not necessary they should reflect upon the character of any particular individual. In the case of *Rex V. Osborne*, 2, *Bernhardiston*, 138, an information was prayed against the defendant for publishing a paper containing an account of a murder committed upon a Jewish woman and her child by certain Jews lately arrived from Portugal, and it was objected that no information could be granted because it did not appear in particular who the persons reflected upon were, but the Court granted the information, because many Jews in many parts of the city had been threatened with death. In case of *Rex V. Williams*, 5 *B. and A.* 597, when a publication stated that upon the death of Her late Majesty none of the bells of the several churches in Durham were tolled, and ascribed this omission to the clergy, and then proceeded to make some very severe observations on that body, a criminal information was granted; and in *Rex V. Burdett*, 4 *B. and A.* it was held that it was a libel to impute crime to any of the King's troops, though it did not define what troops in particular were referred to, and that the innuendo of "the said troops" meant the undefined part of those troops. In *Rex. V. Jenour* 7 *Mod.* 400 *Lec. C. J.* observed:—"When a paper is published equally reflecting upon a number of people it reflects upon all readers according to their different opinions may apply it so, and other decisions in which classes of the public had sought redress for calumnious charges." The Jury would, therefore, accept from him the principle that a libel might be levelled against a class as against an individual. He would now ask them to decide whether or not the libel pointed to the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal. This, and all circumstances connected with the pamphlet, the Jury would have to decide.

A criminal intention in the essence of the offence of libel, and this question the Jury would have to decide.

Lord Mansfield in delivering the judgement of the Court in *Rex V. Woodfall*, 5 Burr, 2661, observed: "When an act, in itself indifferent, becomes criminal when done with a particular intent, then the intent must be proved and found. But when the act in itself is unlawful, as in the case of a libel, the proof of justification or excuse lies on the defendant, and in failure thereof the law implies a criminal intent." Lord Mansfield, in the same case, expresses himself further: "There may be cases where the publication may justified or excused as lawful or innocent, for no act which is not criminal, though the paper be a libel, can amount to such a publication of which a defendant ought to be found guilty." The doctrine, thus clearly expressed, has always been considered as a settled principle of Law. In *Rex V. Crecevy*, I. M. and T., 272, Lord Ellenborough stated: "The only question is whether the occasion of the publication rebuts the inference of malice arising from it." Mr. Justice Le Blanc says: "Where the publication is defamatory, the law infers malice, unless anything can be drawn from the circumstances of the publication to rebut that inference." In *Rex V. Harvey* Mr. Justice Bayley says: "Assuming malice to be necessary in all cases to constitute a libel, malice ought to be inferred from the publication of defamatory matter, unless some excuse for the publication be shewn." In the same case Mr. Justice Best says, "Malice is the gist of this prosecution. Malice in law relative to libel means legal malice". Whatever your opinion may be as regards to the contents of the book; however much you may condemn the filthy and immoral allusions in different parts of this pamphlet, still you would not be justified in finding a verdict of guilty, unless you are clearly of opinion that the manner of the publication and circulation does not rebut the inference of malice. That decision was given in a State prosecution, and meant that if there was an absence of circumstances showing that the defendant was actuated by an honest and conscientious belief that he

was promoting the interests of society, it remained for the Jury to consider how far the conduct of the defendant was libel to the charge of criminal intention. That was entirely a matter for their determination. Until the passing of Fox's Act, (which had been occasioned by repeated differences between Judges and Juries, and was immediately caused by a dispute between Mr. Erskine and Mr. Justice Buller in the well-known case of *Rex V. Dean of St. Asaph*) the Jury and Judge pulled in different directions, the Court endeavouring to annihilate altogether the province of the Jury, and Juries often times receiving with disgust and alienation the direction of the Judge, until the Act was passed, which was stated to be declaratory of the law. This Act, the 32 Geo, III, C 50, gave the Jury full power to determine the question of libel, and there was afterwards no attempt on the parts of the Judges to dictate that question. The Judge was still at liberty to state his opinion as to the question of libel or no libel. He would read extracts from cases to show the extent of freedom of discussion and the liberty of the press. (These extracts were read.) It is the undoubted right of every member of the community to publish his own opinion, on all subjects of public and common interest; and so long as he exercises this inestimable privilege candidly, honestly, and conscientiously, he is not amenable as a criminal. The people have a right to discuss any grievance that they have to complain of. In *Rex V. Thomas Packe*, Mr. Erskine in his celebrated speech, on behalf of the defendant, contended, "that every man not intending to mislead but seeking to enlighten others with what his own reason and conscience, however erroneously, have dictated to him as truth, may exert his whole faculties in pointing out the most advantageous changes in establishments which he considers to be radically defective or sliding from their object of this country, has a right to do, if he contemplates only what he thinks would be for its

advantage, and but seeks to change the public mind by the conviction which flows from reasonings dictated by conscience." In the same case Mr. Erskine uttered these remarkable words—"As infallibility and perfection belong neither to human individuals nor to human establishments, except to be the policy of all free nations, as is most peculiarly the principle of our own, to permit the most unbounded freedom of discussion." I believe in the present day the opinions so expressed by this truly great and good man, are recognised as sound and constitutional principles, and which I unhesitatingly put forth for your consideration and guidance in determining the all important question of libel or no libel.

In a recent case, *Rex V. Collins* Mr. Justice Littledale (in summing up) says, "every man has a right to give every public matter a candid, full, and free discussion. The people have a right to discuss any grievances that they have to complain of." Many other cases establish the same doctrine. Supposing the pamphlet in question was a libel in their opinion, it remained to be seen whether Mr. Long had been actuated by an honest and conscientious conviction that he was acting for best interest of society, not merely reflecting the opinion of the Native community, as had been suggested on his behalf; for, this, he was bound to say, would not afford a shadow of an excuse. The question was whether or not the act of Mr. Long in publishing and circulating the book would negative the legal inference of malice. If Mr. Long had acted as the tool of a native community, that would be no justification whatever, unless he had a conscientious belief at the time that he was forwarding the interests of society by publishing that pamphlet. How were corruptions to be attacked if the liberty of the press were not to exist? Did not the press fairly claim the privilege of attacking men in authority, men of high station in the Church, and in the profession to which His Lordship has the honour to belong? When there existed abuses

there the press had a right to comment upon them, and rightly too ; and it is perfectly lawful to discuss the merits of the decisions of a Judge, provided it be done with candour and decency. If the press were right, the Judge, was wrong, and if the press attacked unjustly, the judge, aided by that public opinion to which even the press must bow, could live it down. The Jury should not approach that great constitutional question, the liberty of the press, without being fully warned. It should never be said that he as presiding Judge in that Court, failed to put these doctrines fully before the Jury, in a case which concerned the freedom of the press and of public discussion. He therefore did not hesitate to say that if the defendant, in publishing the pamphlet in question, were actuated solely by an honest and conscientious desire to inform the public of abuses, which he thereby hoped to ameliorate, and by no other motive, he would be within the pale of that privilege which the law afforded to every man who acted with good faith in the discharge of a public duty. And especially as a minister of religion would he be entitled to every protection in his efforts to suppress vice and ameliorate the public morals, even although he might in the warmth of feeling and language, express sentiments which should not be otherwise than painful to individuals addressed. The question for the Jury, therefore, would be whether or not upon a consideration of the whole contents of the pamphlet, which formed the subject of this prosecution, there was on the part of the defendant solely a desire, honestly and conscientiously, to benefit motives. That could only be determined by a perusal of the document in question, and the passages which had been complained of in the opening speech of the learned Counsel for the prosecution.

It is perfectly true, as stated by Mr. Eglinton in his very able speech, that in an indictment for a libel the defendant cannot plead that the contents are true. In England under 6 and 7 Vict. c. 96 known as Lord

Campbell's Act, the defendant may, by way of defence, allege the truth of the matters charged; and further, that it was for the public benefit. If the learned Counsel meant to suggest that Mr. Long is injuriously deprived of the privilege of proving the contents of the publication to be true, the question must be asked, could he under any state of circumstances, have adduced such proof. And as regards the question, how far it was for the public benefit, I shall emphatically, and I hope distinctly, state that you may take the whole matter into your consideration as to the real motive of Mr. Long, in publishing and circulating this Native drama. I think it right to make this observation, that, in my opinion. Mr. Long has difficulties to contend with in a criminal prosecution, which would not have been the case in a civil action.

His Lordship then proceeded to read seriatim the various passages referred to, commenting on them as bearing on the question of the absence of any other motive than the *bona fide* desire to enlighten and influence the public on a controversy in which he honestly believed the statements put forward. Adverting to that part of the pamphlet in which in the course of a dialogue in the drama, one of the parties is represented as saying of the wife of an Indigo planter, "She has no shame," &c., and to a passage in which the Magistrate of the district is suggested to be under the influence of the planter's wife in the decisions given by him in his Court. His Lordship said he approached the subject, as every man must, with sorrow and disgust. For although the defendant may not be criminally responsible for the publication of the book, the insinuation contained in this passage was one that ought not to have been published by a clergyman. After reading and commenting on the passage, he said it was for the Jury to say whether it could bear any other interpretation than that suggested by Mr. Peterson, that the wives of the Indigo

planters, of which the type was propounded in the drama, were persons who were in the habit of debasing themselves in the manner suggested for the purpose of forwarding the worldly interests of their husbands. It was urged that it only related to some exceptional instance, but the Jury would consider from the whole tenor of the pamphlet whether such were the case. Regarding some of the passages in this book and the following passage in the author's Preface : "I present the Indigo Planting Mirror to the Indigo planters' hands ; now let everyone of them having observed his face, erase the freckle of the stain of selfishness from his forehead." It was impossible to speak of them otherwise than as filthy insinuation against a society of helpless ladies who, under the mask of a general type were cruelly stabbed in the dark. If it meant anything it was not merely a slander against the wives of planters, but also against the Magistrates and the planters. The Jury, the civilians, the soldiers, the merchants in this country alike had their common origin from that middle class whose daughters were here so shamefully maligned. Those ladies came to this country to share a life of toil and hardship with their husbands, far from the friendship and protection of their friends and were entitled to be respected and protected. He had been told that, that publication was an expression of the Native feeling. If so, every intelligent and respectable Native in that Court must have been ashamed to hear such a statement. He had many personal friends among both civilians and Indigo planters, and he must say that he could not help feeling that it was most cowardly to attack the planters through their wives, and their wives through the Magistrates. Would they believe that those women were in the habit of debasing themselves in order to gain the decision of Magistrates who were bound by oath to administer the law with strict impartiality would they believe that these Magistrates were in the habit of violating the solemn obligations of

their duty and conscience in the manner suggested? He wished the Jury distinctly to understand that, however much they may condemn these allusions to the wives of the planters, unless they believed Mr. Long translated, published, and circulated such expressions he is not criminally responsible unless actuated by a malicious motive. Then, as bearing on the question of *bonafides* in making this publication for the benefit of society; it has been contended by the learned Counsel representing the Crown that such slanders could not have been published by a clergyman of the Established Church of England with a *bonafide* and conscientious belief that it would forward the interests of society? It might have been fitting in him to raise the charge of oppression, extortion and cruelty against planters. But what public good would it subserve to publish these filthy allusions to the prostitution of the Native women to the planters when he (the learned Judge) read these passages he blushed to think a clergyman of the Established Church of England could have lent himself to the propagation of such obscene language and thoughts. It might have been urged that he disavowed those sentiments, and he (the learned Judge) had fully expected to hear some disavowal of them at the outset of the trial some explanation, possible that they had been overlooked in the hurry of publication; but the case had gone on and had come to close without an apology or retraction of the insinuations against English women on the part of the defendant or his Counsel. He would read another passage, and ask the Jury what was meant but an improper influence on the part of the wives of the Indigo planters over the Magistrate, who allowed himself to be influenced in his decisions by what might be the conduct of the Indigo planter's wife towards him. If any other construction could be put upon that passage, no one would rejoice more than His Lordship and it was for the Jury, and the Jury alone, to decide any question of fact involved in the case. That statement was sent to England:

without a word of explanation or caution ; and every civilian, merchant, and he hoped every clergyman, would agree that such a statement should never have been sent to England for circulation.

Then, again, as bearing on the question of *bona fides* in the publication and circulation, the Jury would take into consideration the evidence as to the lists which had been produced that morning. His Lordship had asked Mr. Lushington whether the persons mentioned in the smaller list were those to whom the Government of Bengal were in the habit of sending copies of works to shew the style of Native literature and the state of Native society. His Lordship here read out the small list printed below. :

*List No. 1. Revd. J. Long's
Distribution*

Secretaries of Aborigines
Protection Society.
Secy. Peace Society,
New Broad St.
Earl of Albemarle.
Revd. W. Arthur, Wesleyen
Mission House.
E. B. Underhill, Secy.
Baptist Missionary Soc.
J. Bright, Esq., M. P.
R. Cobden, Esq., M. P.
Marquis of Clanricarde.
R. H. B. D'Israeli.
D. Forbes, Professor K. C.
E. Gladstone.
Hon. A. Kinnaired,
35, Hyde Park.
Respective Members,
Council of India
J. C. Marshman,
Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel.

List No. 2. Bengal Office

Secy. of State. 20 copies.
Earl of Elenborough.
Earl de Grey and Ripon.
Viscount Raynham.
Hon. J. Wald Grave
Roundell Palmer.
Col. Sykes.
Sir Culling Eardly.
C. Newdegate.
Sir James Colville
J. W. Dalrymple.
H. Ricketts.
Hodgson Pratt.
J. W. Kaye.
J. F. Hawkins,
J. Dickenson, Secy, to the
Indian Reform Association.
M. Townsend.
Sir Erskine Perry.

*List No. 1. Revd. J. Long's
Distribution*

D. Masson, 16, Regent Villas
Avenue Road.
Digby Seymour, M. P.
Secy. Social Science,
Pall Mall
Earl of Shaftesbury.
A. Dunlop, M. P.
Lord Blandford.
C. Buxton.
J. Muir, Esq. 16, Regent
Terrace, Edinburgh.
Rev. H. Penn, 11, Highbury,
Crescent.
Secy. Branch Education
Society.
J. Dickenson, Secy. of India,
Reform Association.
Lord Stanley, M. P.
J. Horsman, M. P.
J. Layard, M. P.
Sir S. M. Peto, M. P.
Church Mission Society.
Revd. John Sale.
Revd. A. Schurr.

List No. 2. Bengal Office

D. Vansittart, Esq.
J. G. Craig, Esq
Lord Auckland.
Sir C. Trevelyan.
J. G. Phillimore, M. P.
H. D. Seymour, Esq. M. P.
R. W. Crawford, M. P. .
Lord Cranworth.
Dr. Lushington.
Sir J. Herschel.
S. Walpen, Esq.
Sir J. Packington.
Sir A. Buller.
H. M. Parker.
Sir S. Fergusson.
Sir Lawrence Peel

English Editors

Daily News.
Economist.
Saturday Review.

Indian Editors

Bombay Times.
Lahore Chronicle.
Madras Spectator.
Mofussilite.

It commenced with the Secretary of the Aborigines Society, and the Peace Societies, and included the names of the Earl of Albemarle, Messrs. Bright and Cobden, the members of Council of India, Mr. Marshman, and Mr. Layard. Those names included members of Parliament, clergymen, and religious societies, and these were the parties that were to receive copies of the Nil Durpan according to the reverend defendant's own desire. A man

had a perfect right to send privately any document to Government which tended to ameliorate the state of society, but not to publish to the world charges which he cannot substantiate or does not honestly and conscientiously believe. Whatever might be the decision of the Jury regarding a criminal intention on the part of the Rev. Mr. Long, he had the satisfaction of feeling that that all-important question, the liberty of the press and freedom of discussion had been fully ventilated by him. It should never be said that, that great constitutional question had been frittered away on that bench. Not a single withdrawal had been made by Mr. Long. It was fitting for him to have disavowed his belief in the statements regarding the wives of Indigo planters before his defence had closed. The Jury had a great question to decide, and he begged them, for the sake of the great interests that were at stake, to consider well and anxiously their verdict. They had read the history of England, and could not be ignorant of the priceless value of the liberty of the press. Should they come to the conclusion that there was no criminal intention on the part of Mr. Long to degrade or bring into contempt and hatred the Indigo planters ; if they thought, moreover, that he asked honestly and conscientiously and that he published the book solely for the benefit of society and religion, and for no other purpose, or that in the warmth of feeling he had incautiously adopted expressions without a criminal intention, they would give a verdict of 'not guilty'. If, on the other hand, they should find that with a disregard of the feelings of others, Mr. Long had become the willing instrument to express the feelings of the Native community, or was actuated by other than pure motives they would give a verdict of 'guilty'. His Lordship would now leave the case in the hands of the Jury, confident they would give such a verdict as truth and justice demanded.

His Lordship concluded, summing up the evidence at a little before 2 O'clock, and the Jury retired to

consider their verdict. After an absence of about an hour and a half they returned to Court to enquire of the presiding judge whether assuming that the defendant did not believe all the statements in the pamphlet to be true, it would be necessary to be shewn that he was actuated by malice in the publication before he could be found guilty.

His Lordship said that even supposing Mr. Long did not credit all the statements in the book, still if they believed that the defendant had published and circulated the book in question for the interest of society and that he conscientiously believed that the publication of such a book would tend to bring about a reform of the Indigo system and was acting in a *bonafide* manner, he would be entitled to a verdict of acquittal. If, on the other hand, they were satisfied from the contents of the book and the manner of publication and circulation, that the defendant had been actuated by a feeling of animosity towards the planters of Lower Bengal, with the view of degrading, injuring, and bringing this class into contempt and ridicule—for, in that case, the law would infer malice on the part of the defendant—the verdict must be ‘guilty’.

The Jury thereupon retired again, and in about ten minutes brought in a verdict of ‘guilty’ on both counts. Mr. Eglinton required that judgment might not be given until the expiration of the four days, within which a new trial might be moved for, as the defendant might be desirous of moving an arrest of judgment.

His Lordship said it was usual to assign some ground at the time in respect of which judgment was to be arrested. What was the suggestion on which the motion was made?

Mr. Eglinton said he was not prepared with any ground, and did not know that such motion would be made, but he merely asked for the time to consider the matter.

His Lordship said he had not intended to pass sentence at once. He saw no reason for allowing a delay of four days, but would reserve the sentence until Monday morning, when any application might be brought forward.

. 24th July, 1861
BEFORE THE FULL BENCH

The Court sat shortly after eleven O'clock, when the rule movd for on Monday last, for arrest of Judgment in the case of *The Queen V. James Long*, was proceeded with.

Mr. Eglinton, in support of the rule, argued that the indictment disclosed on legal offence on the face of it, and contended that both counts of the indictment were bad in law. He contended that the first count in the indictment, which charged the defendant with libelling Mr. Walter Brett, was not established, and read that portion of the Preface to the *Nil Durpan*, which describes the part taken by the editors of the two daily papers. He took it that no suggestion of libel was implied against Mr. Brett in that passage, and upon that passage alone, he believed, the prosecution in the present case relied. That constituted his objection to the first count. He held that nothing was implied which, in point of law, would constitute libel. He apprehended that it would be quite unnecessary to cite any of the numerous authorities to prove what does or does not constitute libel, because he relied upon the Court being guided in their opinion by the decisions which the authorities had laid down with respect to libel, and he thought that the present case would not come within the meaning of any of those decided cases. The learned Counsel cited, in support, the case of *Digby v. Thompson*, P. 821, "Pleas of the Crown". In that case no particular innuendo was implied and it was a case in some respects similar to the present. His friends on the othe side relied upon the construction or meaning to be implied from that one sentence ; but the broad question was, would the sentence bear the meaning of construction which the prosecution contended, if read by a disinterested individual in the ordinary sense ? Would it, if read in the ordinary way of everyday life, amount in Law to a

libel? He contended that it would not. It would be necessary for him to dissect the passage, in order to shew the Court that the sentence could not be construed in the sense implied by the prosecution. At most it only implied that Mr. Brett had written up the cause of the indigo planters for money; and he contended that could not be construed into bribery and corruption, and would not tend to turn him into contempt or ridicule among his fellowmen. And he thought that if he could shew to their Lordships that the passage in question was not susceptible of the construction put upon it by the prosecution, he would be entitled to have the first count on the indictment set aside as not borne out by the evidence. He would further contend that if the Court should be of opinion that the passage in the question was susceptible of double meaning or construction then the defendant was clearly entitled to any doubt. He would divide the passage into two portions; the first commencing:

"The editor of two daily newspapers are feeling their columns with your praises; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What surprising power of attraction silver has."

Now, if this passage were taken in its ordinary meaning, what does it prove? What does it amount to? Why, to this—that the editors of those two daily papers of which Mr. Brett is allowed to be one, wrote up the cause of the Indigo planters for the purpose of reward. It says that the planters enjoy no pleasure from the praises sung by these papers; this being meant to imply that a sort of reciprocal feeling existed, and they were playing for the support afforded to them. He submitted that the meaning could not be stretched further. It must be read in the ordinary way—in the way that a stranger, having no previous knowledge of the circumstance, would read it; and he believed that any one so reading it, would put that construction upon it. He contended that it was

entitled to one higher interpretation than that. With regard to the second portion of the passage, commencing :

“The detestable Judas gave the great Preacher of Christian religion, Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder, then, if the proprietors of two newspapers, becoming enslaved by hope of gaining one thousand rupees, threw the poor helpless people of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths ;”

Now, the imputation in this portion of the passage, upon which the prosecution relies, is the comparison made between Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Saviour, and Mr. Brett, but he contended that it was not open to the construction put upon it by his learned friend. It was unfair to construe it into that meaning. Although this did not appear in the indictment, still he thought that was the interpretation made by the prosecution. He apprehended this was the libellous matter, and after the suggestion which he had offered, he thought the Court would be extremely chary in upholding the correctness of the first count if they had any doubt as to its meaning. They would rather lean in favour of the defendant than against him. He thought it was only by way of illustration, and not by comparison, that the words were made use of. Upon the question as to whether a libel in law had been proved he would refer their Lordships to the cases of *Robinson V. Jermyn*, “*Price’s Reports*,” P. 11 to a case reported in “*Dowlings’ Practice cases*” and to “*Holt on the Law of Libel*” P. 118. The case reported in *Holt* was similar to the present. No evidence was shewn which attached blame or impropriety to Mr. Brett in his private or public capacity ; he was merely charged with doing what in England and elsewhere was an everyday occurrence, namely, that he for fee or reward undertook to support, by means of his newspaper, the cause of the Indigo planters. Every man must obtain his livelihood in some way or another ; and it was an honourable and

recognised way of gaining his living. Every large party or sect throughout the world had some organ to convey and espouse their particular cause. If the fact of upholding the cause of any particular party by means of newspaper writing were to constitute a libel, there would be no end to litigation. These were all the remarks he had to make upon the first count. He might add that the sum of one thousand rupees mentioned as the bribe was in itself so utterly absurd, that no one could attach the meaning to it which the prosecution did ; but the entire wording was very obscure and doubtful. With respect to the count in the indictment he would submit this broad objection— The count was preferred by the planters of Lower Bengal, and he contended that they could not, as a body, collectively prefer an indictment ; and he was prepared to cite several authorities in support of that view. He objected to the generality of the presentment, and held that they (Indigo Planters) were not enabled, as a body, to institute an action for libel. He was nevertheless prepared to admit that some particular classes might, but that Indigo Planters did not, constitute such a class.

The Chief Justice : Do you mean to imply from your argument that the Queen has not the power of prosecuting any libel committed against any particular section or class of her subjects ?

Mr. Eglinton admitted that such a right undoubtedly existed, but he was prepared to show that the Indigo planters did not come within the meaning of a corporate body. He cited in support the case of *The King V. Osborn*, Vol. II Barnardiston, P. 166. In that case a particular section of the community was mentioned. But in the present case the Indigo Planters had no corporate connection which would enable them to come in as a body. A material difference existed between the two cases. That was an old case, and it was questionable whether their Lordships would be inclined to receive it as an

absolute authority. There had been only four or five authorities which bore directly on this point for many years, that is to say, bodies of individuals coming in and preferring indictments for libel. Some difference of opinion existed as to the way in which the case of *The King V. Osborn* was reported in "*Swanston's Cases*" but the general principle was the same. Again, in the *King V. Williams* reported in "*Baker's Abridgement*," the principle was clearly laid down. In that case the parties were described to the Jury as unknown, and he apprehended that, in this case, the Indigo Planters, as a body, were equally unknown; for what really constituted an Indigo Planter? It might be any man who cultivated a square inch of ground and sowed it with Indigo. No number was mentioned, and he alleged there was nothing to show what or who Indigo planters were. Another case in point was *The King V. Evans*, Vol. III "*Stark's Nisi Prius Reports*."

Mr. Justice Wells asked if he (the learned Counsel) considered that if the Indigo planters were a corporate body with a seal, etc., they would be in a better position to come into Court.

Mr. Eglinton apprehended that would materially alter the case, proceeded to cite other cases, including *King V. Janner*, *King V. Burdett*, reported in "*Crown Cases*." He submitted that the passage in the pamphlet which made mention of the wife of the Planter could not be construed to men what the prosecution suggested. It was intended by the author to convey an idea of the Native feeling, and although not congenial to European tastes, still it showed the Native character. The Native idea of female etiquette was very different to ours; and he contended that the innuendo raised by the prosecution would not suggest itself to the ordinary reader, or to one who was a stranger to the enmity and dislike which existed between the Indigo Planters and the ryots. He submitted, generally, that the indictment were not

liable to the construction put upon them.

The Chief Justice ; But, would English society adopt the same view as the learned Counsel in estimating the bearing of the contents of that pamphlet ?

Mr. Eglinton had nothing further to urge, and would ask their Lordships to consider the point which he had already raised.

Mr. Newmarch, on the same side, addressed their Lordships. Some doubt having been expressed by the Chief Justice as to whether it was usual for the Court to hear two counsels on the same side, on a motion for a rule *nisi*. Eventually, Mr. Newmarch was allowed to address the Court on the understanding that it should not form a precedent. The learned Counsel had only a few words to add to the remarks of his learned friend. He contended that if the principle were once conceded, a libel would not be too general if described as committed upon mankind at large. He also contended that the innuendoes were vague and undefined. The Indigo Planters were only mentioned as a body without any reference to number. He thought that they did not exist in such a defined way as to allow of the present libel, if libel at all, being applied to them.

The Chief justice was inclined to consider that the status of Indigo Planters, as laid down in the indictment, was sufficiently distinct.

Mr. Newmarch differed from their Lordships, and thought that a libel on mankind in general would lie equally as well. Suppose, it were said that the inhabitants of Lower Bengal had been libelled, he apprehended that no prosecution for a libel of so general a character could take place, because no one individual could fix the imputation upon himself. On these grounds he maintained that the class must be clearly defined to whom the libel is intended to apply. There was no allegation in the indictment which described the class that could feel themselves aggrieved by the libel.

There was a short consultation.

The Chief Justice proceeded to deliver the judgment of the Court, observing that the motion before the Court was in arrest of judgment, and the Court were called on to say that no indictable offence had been committed ; but the Jury before whom the case was tried had found the defendant guilty upon both counts in the indictment, and they also found that the libel was published maliciously, which he understood to mean the law considered as inexcusable. The correctness of that verdict was not now the question before the Court. If it had been set up by the defence that the defendant had endeavoured to reform abuses, which in his belief existed, that would be ground for shewing that no criminal intention existed, but that question was not raised. The Jury found upon the two counts, and it was not for the Court to interfere with their province. The Chief Justice then went through each case cited by the Counsel from the authorities in detail, and showed that they bore no such interpretation in this case as was endeavoured to be put on them in support of the rule. He then proceeded to remark upon the indictment and Counsel's objection to it. Now, as regards the first count, it is contended that no libel was proved as against Mr. Brett. He thought it might be laid down that it was libellous to publish any matter intended to bring any individual or individuals into disrepute, and the question was whether that publication would convey such a meaning. Was it libellous to say that an editor received money for the purpose of espousing the cause or writing up any particular party, for that was the imputation contained in the Preface, which he would read—

“I present ‘The Indigo Planting Mirror’ to the Indigo Planters’ hands ; now, let every one of them, having observed his face, erase the freckle of the stain of selfishness from his forehead, and, in its stead, place on it the sandal powder of beneficence ; then shall I think my labour successful, good fortune for the helpless class of ryots, and

preservation of England's honour. Oh ! ye Indigo planters ! Your malevolent conduct has brought a stain upon the English nation which was so graced by the ever memorable names of Sydney, Howard, Hall, and other great men. Is your desire for money so very powerful, that through the instigation of that vain wealth, you are engaged in making holes like rust in the long-acquired and pure fame of the British people ? Abstain now from that unjust conduct through which you are raising immense sums as your profits ; and then the poor people, with their families, will be able to spend their days in ease. You are now-a-days purchasing things worth a hundred rupees by expending only ten ; and you well know what great trouble the ryots are suffering from that. Still you are not willing to make that known, being entirely given up to the acquisition of money. You say that some amongst you give donations to schools, and also medicine in time of need—but the Planters' donations to schools are more odious than the application of the shoe for the destruction of a milch cow, and their grants of medicine are like unto mixing the inspissated milk in the cup of poison. If the application of a little turpentine, after being beat by *shamchand*, be forming a dispensary, then it may be said that in every factory there is a dispensary. The editors of two daily newspapers are filling their columns with your praises ; and whatever other people may think, you never enjoy pleasure from it, since you know fully the reason of their so doing. What a surprising power of attraction silver has ? The detestable Judas gave the great preacher of the Christian religion. Jesus, into the hands of odious Pilate for the sake of thirty rupees ; what wonder, then, if the proprietors of two newspapers becoming enslaved by the hope of gaining one thousand rupees, throw the poor helpless people of this land into the terrible grasp of your mouths."

Now, it certainly appeared to him that each Indigo Planter would, by looking at this mirror, find his own

reflection ; and although it was said to apply to a class, still each one of that class would find himself represented. He held that if it was not an imputation it would not be carrying out the sense intended to be conveyed to ordinary minds. It appeared to him to be a very grave charge, and he was unable to come to any other conclusion than that they were libellous. As regards the second count, it was contended that no libel had been committed, because it was published against a class, and that class was not sufficiently described with respect to numbers ; but it appeared to him wholly unnecessary to describe them more fully than the indictment had done. Suppose, for instance in the case of libel against the army, it would be only necessary to define the army which existed at a particular time, without reference to numbers. But the indictment in this case did specify the class, and could any unprejudiced person say that this class did not really mean the Indigo Planters of Lower Bengal ? It appeared to him perfectly clear, and he believed it to be generally known that the two classes were in existence viz. the Indigo planters and the ryots. His Lordship proceeded to consider the various cases cited by the Counsel for the defence, but held that none of them applied to the case then before the Court. After commenting at considerable length upon the various passages in the pamphlet, he proceeded to quote the following :

*"Darogah :—*Did not the Magistrate say he will come here this day ?

*Jamadar :—*No, Sir, he has four days more to come. At Sachigunge on Saturday, they have a champagne-party and ladies' dance. Mrs. Wood can never dance with any other but our Saheb, and I saw that when I was a bearer. Mrs. Wood is very kind : through the influence of one letter, she got me the Jamadary of the Jail."

Again :

"The cobra-de-capello, like the Indigo Planters, with mouths full of poison, threw all happiness into the flame

of fire. The father, through injustice, died in prison; the elder brother died in the indigo-field, and the mother, being insane through grief for her husband and son, murdered with her own hands a most honest woman. Getting her understanding again and observing my sorrow, the ocean of grief again swelled in her."

Now, we are asked to say that this passage does not bear the construction which the Jury have found that it does bear. This passage of itself had been quoted, and had been found by the Jury to have been published in the sense imputed that would have been sufficient to have supported the conviction.

The Court disallowed the rule.

Mr. Justice Wells, addressing the defendant, asked him if he had anything to urge in mitigation of punishment.

The defendant proceeded to read the written statement, and had proceeded to some length, when he was stopped by the Chief Justice, who expressed himself to opinion that the defendant was alluding to matters altogether irrelevant to the case. The defendant shortly after concluded.

JUDGEMENT

JAMES LONG,—after a careful and patient investigation of the charge preferred against you, the Jury returned a verdict of 'guilty' on both counts, and the Court having refused to arrest the judgment on the motion of your learned Counsel, it is now my painful duty to award the punishment called for by the verdict of the Jury. And after an anxious consideration of all the circumstances of the case, you have been convicted of the offence of wilfully and maliciously libelling the proprietors of the *Englishman* and *Hurkaru* news-papers, and under the second count, of libelling, with the same intent, a class of persons designated as the Indigo Planters of Lower Bengal. I most earnestly, I may say most strongly and pointedly, called upon the Jury to uphold and vindicate, if necessary, by their verdict the right of free

discussion, and to be careful, lest by their verdict the right of liberty of the press might be endangered. In summing up the case, over and over again I recognised and maintained the right of every man to instruct his fellow-subjects by every sincere and conscientious communication which may promote the public happiness ; and I stated distinctly and emphatically the privilege possessed by every man, of pointing out those defects and corruptions which exist in all human institutions. The Jury pronounced a verdict which, I have the satisfaction of feeling, rests upon a constitutional basis and cannot be used hereafter against the liberty of the press. There is not a person who would have rejoiced more than myself if the Jury had returned a verdict of 'not guilty' on the ground that they believed you had acted conscientiously and for the interest of society in publishing this book. I grieve to say that verdict could not have been given without those twelve gentlemen believing that you have been actuated by a felling of animosity towards the Indigo planters in publishing and circulating such a gross and scandalous libel. Partly through your instrumentality nearly three hundred libels have been circulated, and according to the evidence of Mr. Jones who gave his evidence most properly, with the apparent sanction of the Bengal Secretariat, at the public expense. I am bound to say that such a proceeding is without parallel in the history of Government department in England ; and as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court it is my duty to state, and I do so most sincerely, that I trust such a transaction may never occur again in this country, as such a proceeding must necessarily undermine that feeling of respect and confidence which ought to exist on the part of the Government towards those who are placed in authority over them. I did at the trial, as I now do, scrupulously abstain from expressing any opinion directly or indirectly, as regards the personal motives or feelings which actuated the officers of Government in sanctioning

the circulation of this book. It is the safest plan in life always to assume that public men act from pure and just motives until the contrary is established ; and it does not follow by any means that the officials, who allowed the paper to be circulated, acted in the slightest degree illegally. The pamphlet was sent forth unaccompanied by a single word of caution or explanation, and the Indigo planters of Lower Bengal have no means of tracing the extent of the injury inflicted upon them by the circulation of the libel ; but is there not reason for apprehending certain persons in England may have been induced to bring forward serious but groundless charges against the Indigo Planters ? It is quite impossible to realize fully the irreparable mischief you have occasioned by causing this libel to be circulated in England. There is one feature in the case I cannot pass over without special notice. I mean the position you hold in society as a clergyman of the Church of England. I am certain the Bishop of Calcutta, of whom it may be said that he is respected and beloved by the entire Christian community, will deeply lament the circumstance of one of his clergy being convicted of libelling a large and influential body of gentlemen scattered over a portion of his extensive diocese ; and I am well assured that the great body of the clergy, with few exceptions, will sympathize with their Diocesan on the present occasion. The fact of your being a clergyman is an aggravation of your offence ; and when you state publicly in Court that the advance of Christianity is impeded by the irreligious conduct of many Europeans, I think such an expression of opinion on your part, when called upon to receive the sentence of this Court for libelling many of your countrymen, is rather out of place. And perhaps the great majority of the Europeans may think that your conduct has not done much to promote real practical Christianity. You of all men ought to have inculcated and stood forth as the teacher of that inestimable precept : "Do unto all men as you would they should

do unto you". My duty is a distressing one, but I must not shrink from the performance of it. The sentence of the Court is that you pay a fine of Rs. 1000 to our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and that you be imprisoned in the common Jail for the period of one calendar month, and that you be further imprisoned until the fine is paid.

ADDRESS OF THE REVEREND J. LONG
TO THE COURT
(BEFORE SENTENCE WAS PASSED).

My Lord,—As the result of this trial involves consequence extending far beyond sphere of Calcutta, or even of India, I beg to submit, for your Lordship's consideration, the following points referring mainly to the motives which actuated me in publishing the Nil Durpan :

Tried by the mode of a criminal prosecution in Court, I had no opportunity to make a personal statement to the Jury, I can only, previous to your passing sentence, mention what is personal to myself as to the motives which actuated me to publish the Nil Durpan, on the grounds of my being a Missionary, and expounder of Native feeling as expressed in the Native press, a friend to securing peace for Europeans in the country—and a friend to the social elevation of the Natives.

My Lord, it is now more than twenty years since I came to India. During that period I have never appeared in a Court of justice as plaintiff or defendant ; my occupations have been of a very different character, and my time has been spent chiefly among Natives, engaged in Vernacular teaching, in the charge of a body of Native Christians, and in the promotion of Christian Vernacular literature. These pursuits, along with my interest in the rural population, called my attention to the Vernacular press of India, its uses and defects, as well as its being an exponent of the Native mind and feeling. It is in connection with the latter branch of my labours that I appear

here today as publisher of the Nil Durpan, which I edited with the view of informing Europeans of influence of its contents as giving Native popular opinion on the Indigo question. This work (the English translation), was not got up at the suggestion of Natives, or even with their knowledge, and was not circulated among them. It was commenced at the request of others. Many of the remarks of Mr. Peterson, the Counsel for the prosecution, are strongly in my favour because if, as he stated, he work was so injurious in its Vernacular dress, was I not doing a public service by making such a work known in English? Not in Calcutta, where it might only lead to more bitter controversy, and where men's interests are so concerned that all representations would have been useless, producing irritation, not conviction: I circulated it chiefly among men of influence and those connected with the British legislature which, to the oppressed of whatever colour or country, has always afforded sympathy and redress. I have aimed for the last ten years in my leisure hours to be an exponent of Native opinion in its bearing on spiritual, social, and intellectual welfare of Natives, of this land; as for instance, when applied to, on the part of the Court of Directors, seven years ago, to procure for their Library copies of all original works in Bengali, or as when lately, I sent to Oxford by request copies of all Bengali translation from Sanskrit; or when I have procured for missionaries, Government, Rajas &c., Vernacular books of all kinds I should have been a strange person indeed, had my opinion harmonised with all the chaos of opinion in those various publications. Why! at the request of missionaries I have procured anti-Christian works for them, as they wished to know what was written against Christianity.

I am charged with slandering English women in the Nil Durpan. Now, waiving the point that it is only planters' wives the Native authors refers to, I myself believe planters' wives are as chaste as any other females of

English Society in India, and it was my impression that the author only referred to some exceptional cases, not giving them as specimens of a class of females. The view that I and others, who know Oriental life, have taken of this part relating to females is, it gives the Eastern notion of the high indelicacy of any woman who exposes her face in public, or rides out in company with a gentleman. I have heard such remarks made of my own wife; but I treated them as a specimen of villge ignorance. Sir F. Shore in his "Notes on Indian Affairs" states instances of a similar kind, and Lieutenant Burton, who went disguised as a pilgrim to Mecca, mentions the greatest reproach the pilgrims there made against the English was, that they shook hands with their neighbours' wives; I regret, however I did not append a note of explanation to this part.

I hold in my hand the first drama ever translated, and that by an illustrious Judge of this Court—Sir W. Jones—in order to give a view of Hindu Society. Similar service was rendered by Horace H. Wilson, by Dr. Taylor and various other persons.

I beg to say I was far from wishing to vilify planters generally, though from sincere conviction and enquiry opposed to the system. Thus, when summoned before the Indigo Commission, my evidence there was considered even by the planters' friends as moderate and free from inactive. I was elected a member of a sub-committee of the Calcutta Missionary Conference to watch the progress of the Indigo controversy, and it was never objected then that any of my actions in connection with this Conference on this subject were for the purpose of vilifying. I have never lived near planters, nor have I had any personal altercation with them that would lead me to a vindictive course.

I ask when hundreds—yea, thousands—of Bengali books were submitted by me during the last ten years to the notice of Europeans of influence, was the Nil Durpan to be the only exception? And wherefore? The ryot was

a dumb animal who did not know his ruler's language. And at the time of this Nil Durpan appearing, matters on the Indigo cotroversy were assuming a threatening aspect ; so it was important that men of influence should know that the wound was not a surface one, but required deep probing. Could I as a clergyman have withheld a work of this sort which indicated some of the causes of the deep-seated aversion of ryots to Indigo cultivation ? This work, the Nil Durpan, was sent to me as hundreds of Vernacular books have been, because it is known in many quarters that I take a deep interest in Vernacular literature. Here is an illustration : these two Vernacular books were sent to me a few days ago from Benares—one Robinson Crusoe in Hindi, the other a Choral Book in Urdu. Almost every week I receive new Vernacular books, and I make a point bringing them to the notice of Europeans on various grounds. Sir F. Halliday honoured my "Reports on the Vernacular Press" by publishing them ; so did the present Government in the case of publishing my Sketch of Vernacular Literature ; so did the Vernacular Literature Religious Tract Society, Christian Tract and Book Society, shew their confidence in publishing various works of mine.

I will now state the grounds why as a clergyman opposed to war I published the Nil Durpan. My Lord, four years only have elapsed since Calcutta was waiting in trembling anxiety for the result of the mutiny. Few could look with calmness on the future, while watch and ward were kept all night by the citizens. Many felt then, as I had long felt before, how unsafe it was for the English to reside in India in ignorance of and indifference to the current of Native feeling. The mutiny, in common with the Afghan war, has showed that the English in India were generally unacquainted with it, so a short time previous to the mutiny the Santhal war burst but unexpectedly to the public. For a long period Thuggee and torture were prevailing in India, without the English knowing anything

of them. Had I, as a missionary, previous to the mutiny, been able to submit to men of influence a Native drama which would have thrown light on the views of sepoys and Native chiefs, how valuable might the circulation of such a drama have proved, although it might have ensured severely the treatment of Natives by Europeans; the indifference of sepoy officers generally towards their men; and the policy of Government to Native States. Such a drama might have help to save millions of money and torrents of human blood. In Cabul, the authorities, through a false security founded on ignorance of Native opinion, entailed a loss of fifteen millions sterling on the State and the damage of England's prestige. Has Calcutta forgot the lessons taught by the mutiny? I ask was it very malicious to reveal to the governing race the latent current of Native thought and feeling on the subject of Indigo, which was convulsing the whole country, and threatening it with anarchy, incendiarism, and assassination? Would I have been justified to withhold contributing my mite at such a crisis to the great object of rousing men of influence by shewing them, from a Native source, that the dissatisfaction was deep-seated, and that the wound must be thoroughly probed before healing measures could be efficacious.

My Lord, the mutiny has passed away; who knows what is in the future? As a clergyman and a friend to the peaceable residence of my countrymen in India, I beg to state the following as motive for my editing such works as the Nil Durpan. I for years have not been able to shut my eyes to what many able men see looming in the distance. It may be distant, or it may be near; but Russia and Russian influence are rapidly approaching the frontiers of India. Her influence so manifest in Cabul 20 years ago, as shewn in a recent Parliamentary Blue Book, was beginning to be felt in India during the last mutiny; now she goes on the principle of *divide et impera*; previous to invasion she gains over the Native population

in various countries to her side. Could I, then, as a clergyman have watched with apathy measures like those in connection with the Indigo system which were furthering this Russian policy, and which might lead to war and dissensions that would retard for a long period the progress of religion, education and peaceful commerce. I now speak merely my own honest convictions on this point, and I ask if this conviction has any foundation in reality; as also if there be any ground for another as deeply rooted in my mind that mere armies can no more secure the English in India than they established the Austrians in Italy. Was it not my duty as a clergyman to help the good cause of peace, by showing that the great work of peace in India could be best secured by the contentment of the Native population, obtainable only by listening to their complaints as made known by the Native press and by other channels. I pass over French views in the East, but I say forearmed is forewarned, and even to the expense of wounding their feelings in order to secure their safety, I wish to see the attention of my countrymen directed to this important subject.

As a missionary, I have deep interest in seeing the faults of my countrymen corrected; for after a residence of my 20 years in India, I must bear this testimony—that, of all the obstacles of the spread of Christianity in India, one of the greatest is the irreligious conduct of many of my own countrymen. Thousands of Natives have said to me, “We judge of the Christian religion by what your countrymen do, not by what they say; by the life, not by the Doctrine.”

For 20 years I have, as a missionary, been in close and confidential intercourse with Natives of all classes. Often and often has my spirit been harrowed and almost crushed by a close view of the condition of the ryot, his wants and his sufferings; shut out from that ability to read, without which the pages of inspiration are looked up to him. I can see in the improvement of his social condition a means

of enabling him to enjoy the light of knowledge. I have circulated many pamphlets in England on "The ryot, his teachers, and torturers" and on the evils resulting from the ryots not having a sound Vernacular education. When I have not shrunk from exposing many social evils to which the ryot is subject, I beg to submit, could I have avoided, in my position, exposing his suffering from the Indigo system.

(The Chief Justice here stopped Mr. Long, stating that the Court were willing to hear anything that he had to address to them in his defence. That it was not the length of the matter he was now reading but its substance they objected to as irrelevant. The remainder we give as from the MS. prepared by Mr. Long.)

Influential men in England have deeply sympathised with me on these points, and have said "You and others that expose those recesses of human suffering and degradation must let us know the results, "and I have been, my Lord, amongst those masses for years, and hope, as long as I live, have a brain to think and a pen to write, to advocate the social elevation of the masses as incidental with the progress of mental and moral light. Should I not have been a traitor to the religion I professed, whose great founder's motto is, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them," had I not availed myself of all legitimate opportunity to bring the wants and sufferings of the ryots, and the feelings and views of Natives generally to the notice of men who had the power of remedying them? It may be called too political a course, as some now unduly restrict that term; but Christianity itself is political in the extended sense; for the early ages it assailed the slavery of the Roman Empire; in the middle ages it afforded an asylum to the serfs against the oppressions of the fudal chiefs; at the period of the Reformation it brought freedom to the peasants' home; and in modern days it has abolished slavery in the West Indies. It has protested against American slavery, and is now throwing

its mantle of protection round the aboriginal tribes throughout the world. In 1856 I delivered an address in Calcutta to the friends of Missions on "Peasant degradation, an obstacle to Gospel propagation." No one then objected to that address on the ground of its being political.

My Lord, I am sustained in this course by the conviction of, I trust, an enlightened conscience, and confidently on the continued sympathy of many friends both among the European and Native community, and of all in India and Great Britain, who desire to see India governed not merely for the advantage of its fluctuating population from Europe, but for the benefit of, and with considerate regard for, the feelings and interest of the 180,000,000 Natives over whom stretches the aegis of the Queen and Parliament. I know I shall have the sympathy of good men, the friends of the Natives, in India and in England and of all those throughout the world who believe in the indissoluble connection of spiritual and intellectual improvement.

My Lord, a Court of law has decided that the work is a libel and it is my duty to submit to that verdict and to act accordingly. My conscience convicts me however of no moral offence or of any offence deserving the language used in the charge to the Jury. But I dread the effects of this precedent. This work being a libel, then the exposure of any social evil of caste, of polygamy, or Kulin Brahminism, of the opium trade and of any other evils which are supported by the interest of men, may be treated as libels too, and thus the great work of moral, social, and religious reformation may be checked.

My remarks are ended, my Lord, I beg to hand in an affidavit.

(The affidavit put in was the printed "statement" which had appeared, pending the trial, in the columns of the Friend of India.)

STATEMENT OF W.S. SETON-KARR. ESQ., C.S.,
IN REGARD TO THE NIL DURPAN

As, in the late trial of the Revd. J. Long, mention has been made, in evidence, of the Bengal Office, as some allusion to my order as Secretary has also been made in connection with the Nil Durpan, I think it now right to give some explanation of the matters referred to.

I should have broken silence on this subject at a much earlier period, had it not been for the utter uncertainty I have been in as to the exact course which the gentlemen who are aggrieved by the publication in question intended to pursue, and what kind of proceedings they were resolved to institute, and against what person or persons.

I must observe further that I was summoned as a witness both for the prosecution and for the defence, at the late trial, and expected that I would have an opportunity of stating in the witness-box some of the facts, or giving some explanation of the matter, so far as it affected myself.

But the Counsel for the prosecution did not require my evidence, though I was in attendance under my subpoena, while for the defence no witness were summoned at all; I had, therefore, no opportunity of explaining anything.

This being the case, I take the earliest opportunity of putting on record the chief points of my connection with the Nil Durpan, because an explanation seems due to the Association of Landholders, (who represent the gentlemen aggrieved by the publication) and to myself.

First as to the way in which the work in question was brought to light to the public.

About the month of October or November last the Reverend Mr. Long brought to my notice the existence of this drama in the original Bengali, and a Native hawker, who was commissioned by the Native author to sell the book, brought me a copy, which I purchased. Until that time I had never heard of the work.

The drama bore the mark of a Dacca printing press, and the date of its publication was the 2nd of Assin, corresponding to the middle of September. From conversation with Mr. Long and with the Native hawker, I felt quite satisfied that the drama was the genuine production of a Native resident in the Mofussil. On dipping into the original I was struck with the thorough knowledge of village life which it displayed, with the pointedness of the Bengali proverbs, some of which were new, while others were familiar to me, and with its colloquial style and vernacular idiom.

After this the drama was translated by a Native with my sanction and knowledge, as some persons were desirous of seeing it in an English form, and 500 copies were printed and sent to the Bengal Office. I may here state what I have always avowed to personal friends, that I set no value whatever on the Nil Durpan, except as an ebullition of popular feeling on a subject which had for sometime agitated the Native and English Public. I well knew that the Hindoos from time immemorial were in the habit of adopting the drama as an exponent of their feelings; but I never for one instant contemplated the application of the matters therein represented to any two particular planters or to any persons as representatives of the whole class. The names of men and of places were not traceable to any one district; they were entirely fictitious; and the whole thing in my eyes, was a popular drama—and no more. Neither did I for a moment intend to express or to imply that the view of the indigo system taken by the Native author was a correct view of the general system as carried on by Englishmen in any part of Bengal. It seemed to me, as it has done to others who have read the work, that it contained exaggerated statement of the conduct not only of two fictitious individual (Rose and Wood) but of their servants, of the class of mookhtiar or attornis who practise in our Courts, and of the English Magistrates who administer justice.

The strictures on the imaginary members of my own service were certainly, in some respects, as sharp as any directed against any other class of men. Consequently, remembering how little is known to the authorities and to Europeans generally of the under-currents of Native society; how constantly men of the greatest Indian experience, the widest benevolence, and the largest sympathies, had lamented their utter inability to penetrate the recesses of Native thought and feeling; how repeatedly Government itself had been blamed during and before the mutiny, for paying no heed to cheap publication from the Native press and indicative of popular feeling; I thought the work was one to which attention ought to be called, and to this opinion I must still adhere, however erroneous the mode of calling attention to the drama may have been. It was not that the Native author uttered opinion which I accepted, or depicted scenes which I wished to be understood as of common occurrence; or that his view of Indigo planting was my view; but it was that he had his own thoughts and opinions on the systems of Indigo planting, and that he had the boldness to avow these in his own fashion and language and by his own illustrations which however one-sided and exaggerated, or satirical, seemed to me to merit some attention.

The list given in at the trial contains the number of copies issued, on 202, being not one-half of those printed, and circulation took place with my knowledge, but owing to a misconception on my part not with that of the Lieutenant Governor.

The said list is one of a class of papers not usually brought on record, and it might with ease have been torn up, without blame being imputed to any one, and without its existence being known out of the office. I have taken care that it should be preserved, not from any spirit of defiance, but because, however erroneous my judgment may have been, I felt that it would ill become me to attempt to suppress or conceal anything

which shewed the real extent of what had been done.

A great deal of censure has been passed upon the secrecy with which this book was circulated. I contend that the very fact of circulation under official frank shews that no secrecy was attempted or intended beyond the unavoidable secrecy of the Post Office. Had it been intended, as has been stated, to stab reputations in the dark, it would have been comfortably easy to have circulated a number of copies by the ordinary book postage, which mode could have afforded no clue whatever as to the sender.

After all, the whole Indian circulation amounts to 14 copies, and most of those have been recalled or destroyed. No copies were sent to any newspaper or public body in Calcutta because it was considered that to make selections would be invidious, and that, on the whole, those who had taken one side or the other in the Indigo crisis, were hardly in the position to form a fair estimate of any such popular representation of Native feeling. Any large local circulation would probably have done no good. As a bare fact, the impress of the Government frank must, I contend, disprove the charge of a wish to calumniate in secret, and of any underhand proceeding. Indeed, it will hardly be contended with seriousness that anyone wishing to produce irritation, or to hurt the feelings of others without detection, and in safety from any possible consequences, would choose such a mode of circulation as the sending to four papers in four different parts of India, and the conductors of the English press remote from the scene of controversy, might take some little interest in a genuine expression, however exaggerated, of native feeling by Native authors.

The copies sent home were addressed to gentlemen holding different political opinions, and these gentlemen had, several of them, been furnished with copies of published documents, relating to the Indigo question. But

while I contend that my conduct has been straightforward and honest, I have no hesitation in expressing my most sincere regret that any such publication should at all have taken place. It has excited great irritation ; it has given rise to much misconstruction both as to the Government of Bengal and to individuals ; it has seriously offended a very respectable and influential body of men for whose difficulties I have every sympathy, and whom, officially and unofficially I have always desired to assist, even when I differed from their views and opinions ; and it has resulted in the successful prosecution of a very excellent Missionary of the Church of England. At the same time, while fully acknowledging the error committed in this instance, my earnest conviction is that, putting aside the heat which the indigo question has excited, and looking to ordinary times, it is not the transmission of such publication to editors and to official and unofficial Englishmen that is likely to do mischief, but their circulation among the Native public unnoticed by the Government and unknown to the European community. Under this conviction I acted without (as I must on reflection admit) sufficiently considering at the time, the peculiar circumstances which rendered the publication of this work unwise.

I must now offer a few remarks on some part of the publication itself. With some of the great questions to which the late trial has given rise, I shall not attempt to deal.

I leave the question of including purely dramatic fictions or satires amongst libellous publications, exposed to the penalties of criminal laws as well as the vital question of discussion any of the liberty of the press, to be dealt with by those within whose province such question should strictly come ; I will only state, on this head, that a play representing fictitious characters, and treating the subject in the style of dramatic exaggeration put into the mouth of these characters, being looked upon as

a serious attack upon any entire class of persons never crossed my mind. But there are two points in the work, as published, which involve somewhat consideration from those under which the work, as a drama, may be looked at and these latter I must not let pass without some explanation.

In the preface by the Native author a passage occurs which apparently reflects on the conduct of two English newspapers and which, whatever may be its technical definition in the eye of the Law, and however clear it may be that no English reader will attach importance to such importation, or treat them otherwise than as contemptible, is certainly open to very grave objection and calculated to give great and just offence. Had my attention been attracted to the passage, or had I read it carefully, I certainly would not have allowed the book to go forth with that passage in it. As it is, the matter is past help. In fact, my attention had been directed to the drama rather than to the prefatory notices, and the passage escaped me. I can only express my sincere regret that it should have appeared in its place, and that I should have been instrumental in circulating it. In this avowal I adopt the course rightly followed in social intercourse whenever offence is unwillingly given; and it would not require the influence of a powerful Association to lead me to express my regret to any one person who might deem himself offended by any act originating in any inadvertence or carelessness of mine; nor on the other hand shall either the fear of misconstruction of its being supposed that the avowal proceeds from unworthy motives or a dread of consequences, prevent me from making it.

But, for reasons stated at the head of this explanation, I have not, except in a short interview with Mr. Brett, the editor of the *Englishman*, on the 25th May, in which I did express my sincere regret that the passage should have appeared, had any opportunity of making any explanation of the kind.

I can only repeat that I deeply regret that this passage was ever translated and published.

The second point is the alleged imputation on the virtue of English women in portions of the drama itself. I can conscientiously say that until the point was strictly insisted on, I did not think there were any passages capable of any such construction, and a close inspection of a work consisting of 120 pages has not discovered to me more than two or at most three passages in which English ladies are mentioned at all.

The first passage occurs in a conversation between two poor Bengali women in a village. One woman says, "The lady has no shame at all, and when the Magistrate of the Zillah rides about through the villages, the lady also rides on horseback with him." The speaker then goes on to say, "The bou (or married woman) riding about on a horse!" The other woman has just before said, "The wife of the planter, in order to make her husband's case strong, has sent a letter to the Magistrate it is said that the Magistrate hears her word most attentively." To say that these words impute want of virtues to a lady because she writes a letter about a case in court to a judicial officer, or that to go on to argue that it ascribes unchastity to a whole class of English women, does not seem to me to be fair or reasonable. No doubt, it may be injudicious for ladies to write private letter to Magistrates and other judicial officers in order to get situations for servants, or for applicants whom they wish to befriend, and the fact of such an officer receiving and answering in Court a letter from a lady, the wife of an actual or possible litigant, on whatever subject it may be, may convey impressions to the very suspicious mind of an ignorant Native; but it never entered into my thoughts to conceive that an allusion to this practice would warrant general charge of even indelicacy in thought or deed, against women. As regards the statement that a lady riding about the village "must

have no shame," I do most emphatically contend that this expression in the mouth of either a Hindoo or Mussalman woman expresses nothing but the regular innate idea generated by Oriental seclusion. The very words, which in Hindusthani would be *iska kuch sharm nehi hai*, and in Bengali *tanr kichchu lajja nahe*, are familiar expressions in the mouth of every Native speaking of any act which he thinks offensive or in bad taste, done by any one who does not please him. A Native woman brought up in seclusion, with the ideas she has received from childhood, generally speaking, can no more understand or appreciate propriety in the unrestrained, liberal, enlightened, and virtuous intercourse of men and women in our society than we can understand or appreciate the social policy which marries girls in their childhood and consigns them through married life or through premature widowhood to the jealous seclusion of four dull walls. Any Hindoo woman, if she holds to the tenets of her father, is exposed to shame if she sees the face even of her husband's brother, and must then veil her own face, and it would be asking too much that she should be expected to understand that Englishmen and women should sit, walk, ride and mingle together in social intercourse, without shame or embarrassment.

The other passage is put into the mouth of a jemadar, once a bearer, who says that he has obtained his situation by the influence of a planter's wife, "who wrote one letter to the Magistrate and who "never danced with any other person but the Magistrate". I have already explained this appears to me to be merely an allusion to the very common practice of sending letters of recommendation in favour of old servants to official personages who have places at their disposal. I believe honestly that the practice has long existed and will continue to exist. But where I have heard, as I have heard, of any lady sending letters of this kind, it has never occurred to me to see any evil design therein, and as to the asserted partiality of an

Englishman for one particular partner in a dance, it surely would be a far-fetched and uncharitable construction which would attach thereto any hidden or disgraceful meaning.

These are the only two passages which I think it necessary to notice, as they have been much talked of, and misunderstood, and as they relate to points to which society, if not possessed of accurate information, or if not furnished with the actual words used in the drama, is likely to be sensitive. In a third passage a Magistrate is simply described as writing a letter to a lady in the presence of her husband. But I believe that most persons who know India and its people, will read all this as I have done. I still think my reading is the correct one. Should I be mistaken, or even though I be right, should others think differently, my sorrow for this unfortunate publication will be increased by the thought that an offensive meaning (which I should be among the first to reprehend, if applied by others to any of my countrywomen) had been attached to expressions which I believed and, still in my conscience believe, to be free from all such gross imputations. It has been stated in a paper published at Bombay that I have gone about boasting of having misused the influence of Government from my personal hatred of planters. A more unfounded statement was never written. I have never talked about this unfortunate business, except when pressed on the subject, or to intimate friends. I have never uttered a boasting or a defiant word on the subject. It has been ever since I became aware of the very different estimate which others were likely to form of the meaning and tendency of the publication from that which I had myself formed, a source of deep and unmingled pain to me. That pain was increased by the feeling that till now my lips were sealed regarding the publication. The imputation of animosity on my part towards planters personally, or towards their interest, I feel, needs no disclaimer from me. I believe that the planters among whom I have mixed

have ever felt that I have been personally friendly towards them even whilst opposed in some instance to their views ; and I believe and trust that I have still preserved friends among the planters of Jessore who will be surprised and even pained at the charge of personal hostility.

While I fully admit that my course in regard to the publication has been a mistaken one, and that I ought not to shrink from owing my mistake or my deep regret for it, I have nothing to reproach my conscience with, or to be ashamed of, as no act or word or mine has been in the remotest degree influenced by the feeling of personal hostility towards the planters which has been most erroneously imputed to me.

The above statement I have made public with a clear conscience, and at as early a date as was possible, with regard to my peculiar situation and to that of others,

Calcutta, July 27, 1861. - (Sd) W. S. SETON-KARR.

FIFTY YEARS AGO—THE WOES OF A CLASS OF BENGAL PEASANTRY UNDER EUROPEAN INDIGO PLANTERS*

By

Professor H. C. Chakladar.

Only fifty years ago, three or four millions of our countrymen in Bengal were subjected by European Indigo Planters to a system of inhuman oppression in which only finds a parallel in the annals of Negro-slavery in America. Indigo was an industry of the West Indies, and when at the end of the eighteenth century, it was transported into India, it was with the instincts of a slave-owner that the European planter came to raise indigo in our land. Every form of oppression that unrestrained tyranny could devise or the inventive imagination of rapacity could contrive, were put into practice by the Indigo-planters. The criminal records of Bengal, from the time that indigo-cultivation was introduced into the province down to its final banishment, prove clearly and undeniably that 'murder, homicide, riot, arson, dacoity, plunder and kidnapping¹ (Sir Ashley Eden), were some of the means by which the raiyat was forced to take up the cultivation of indigo.

It is strange that the immense fortunes which the European planters realised² by the manufacture of indigo, did not incline them to redress the grievances of the people upon whose labour the success of the industry was solely dependent.

* Appeared in *The Dawn and Dawn Society's Magazine*, Calcutta July, 1905.

1. The Hon'ble (afterwards) Sir Ashley Eden handed into the Indigo Commission an abstract of 49 serious cases and a file of heinous offences in connection with the cultivation of Indigo, *Vide Report of the Indigo Commission*, Answer 3575.

2. One of the most remarkable instances of the immense wealth realised by the indigo nabobs and of the vicissitudes of fortune, was Mr. Williams of the Bengal Civil Service, for a long time the Commercial Resident of the East India Company at Coomerkhali. Almost all the

Indigo had been one of the most flourishing concerns carried on by Europeans in India, and the East India Company which directly supported the indigo industry for 22 years (1780-1802), placed India in the foremost rank among the indigo-producing countries of the world. The cultivation was carried on from Dacca to Delhi and the exportation was nine million pounds; but Bengal indigo was the best of its kind and superseded all other indigo, and from 1815-16 Bengal supplied all the indigo required for the consumption of the world. But from the very first, the indigo system in Lower Bengal was a blot on the British Administration in India. So early as 1810, the licenses granted to four planters to reside in the interior of the country were withdrawn, on account of the severe ill-usage towards the natives proved against them, and all the cruelties and oppressions unearthed by the Indigo Commission, fifty years later, were committed then as afterwards. The defective and partial administration of the law allowed this vicious state of things to exist and continued until half a century later, in 1860, the poor innocent sufferers, the martyrs of avarice and extortion, could bear it no longer and rose in a body to shake off the vampire which had been sucking their life-blood for eighty years. The wonder is that they could submit to this inhuman oppression so long. Since 1860, one by one the indigo factories in Jessore, Nadiya and Krishnagore

indigo-factories in the neighbourhood were built or owned by him, and so rich did he grow that he would not condescend to go home in any ordinary ship, but built one of the finest vessels in other day, the *Zenobia*, to convey to England himself, his family, and his fortune—in the shape of as many chests of indigo as she would carry. Before she was launched, it was whispered that he had used his master's money in the production of his indigo. An inquiry was ordered—the verdict was against him—he was dismissed from the service, and died long afterwards a poor old broken-hearted man at Dacca. The *Zenobia*, however plied her trade, and for a long time carried Cargos of the ill fated dye to London, regardless of him who first drove a copper-nail into her keel—Vide "Indigo and its Enemies", by Delta, P. 7.

have been disappearing, and the thousands of ruined factories now met with in many parts of the country bear testimony to the natural punishment that befell those who either could not, or would not, correct or reform their system of treatment of the raiyats. Indigo crop is still grown over considerable areas in Lower Bengal, but not under the old conditions, and is still the best in the world, but the total output is very small. During the past decade, the indigo industry in India has been steadily on the decline, owing to the great and steadily increasing development of the manufacture of artificial indigo, brought by the application, chiefly in Germany, of scientific processes, and this once important Indian industry is in danger of perishing altogether.

UNPROFITABLENESS OF THE INDIGO CONTRACT

We shall now show how the cultivation of indigo was utterly unprofitable to the raiyat and meant starvation to himself and his family. The object of the planters was to secure the maximum profit at the minimum or no cost ; he wanted the indigo plant without paying nearly the cost of its production to the raiyat and at a nominal price which, even if fully paid, would be ruinously unprofitable. But the deductions from the nominal price were so heavy, the unfairness of weighing so great, the extortions of the factory *amlas* (officials) so excessive, that the nominal price dwindled to little or nothing, so that if they realised from the whole produce of their indigo land, in cash, what paid the rent of the land, they were lucky ; wherefore they lost the whole value of that land to themselves besides all the cost of cultivating it for the planter. Then again, when the prices of all agricultural produce doubled or nearly doubled the price paid or nominally paid for indigo was not raised by a single anna and until the raiyats had, as it were, declared open war, not a single planter had

ever entertained thought of any increase of price. Whilst in all other trades of the world, all parties concerned have been bound together by the usual commercial ties of mutual interest, in this one trade, in this one province, the indigo manufacture has always been a remarkable exception to this natural and healthy state of things.³

As no free cultivator in his senses would take up the cultivation of indigo under such conditions, the planters at first acquired land in permanent tenure at even losing rents and exorbitant prices, from the Zeminders who, when averse to granting land to them in lease or permanency, were obliged against their will to do so, from the fear of consequences of disputes with the planters and from the fear of the Magistrates who threatened them with penal consequences if they refused⁴, then, after the land was secured, the raiyats were coerced, the whole unhappy race of little farmers and tillers of the soil were compelled by force and deception—by imprisonment, by fetters, by cruel whippings—to enter into unprofitable contracts, and take advances which but once touch continued to gall them from generation to generation. “The peasant assented to disadvantageous terms from fear of bludge on men or was tricked into signing some paper which he did not understand.⁵ And these enforced contracts were supposed to descend from father to son, but of course, such an idea would not be allowed in any Court. The planter held such inheritance of liability *in terrorem* over the raiyat”⁶ Yearly, the raiyat was made to affix his name to a *carte blanche*, a blank stamp paper which was not filled up at that date but might be used subsequently, filled up in any way that the planter liked. The planter never

3. Minute by Sir J. P. Grant, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, on the Report of the Indigo Commission—Paras. 7, 66, 67, 20 and 1.

4. Report of the Indigo Commission, Paras—43, 45 and 116.

5. Ibid, Appendix no. 14, Minute by Lord Macaulay in 1835.

6. Evidence of Mr. F. L. Beaufort, C. S., Legal Remembrancer. Answers, 302-303.

sought for an adjustment of the accounts but perpetuated the obligation of the cultivator to sow. The Indigo Commission endeavoured to find out how, exactly, advances were first taken by the raiyat but without success, because no one could be found who had taken, or remembered to have taken an advance himself; the raiyats whom they examined, maintained that the original advances were first taken by their fathers or grandfathers, or were given many years ago, in their youth.⁷

OPPRESSIONS PRACTICED BY THE PLANTERS AND THE RAIYATS' DISLIKE TO CULTIVATE INDIGO

To carry out this system of compulsion, troops of extortionate servants and overseers were retained, licentious clubmen were hired, the police were heavily bribed and gagged⁸, the magistrates, the protectors of the people, were frequently wheeled into sacrificing justice to favour the planters⁹, some of the leading Anglo-Indian papers were persuaded, and perhaps subsidised, to fight for them in the metropolis, and special, one-sided laws were carried through the Legislative Council of the Governor.¹⁰ It was said, "Not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood." The raiyats disinclined to plant indigo were shot down, speared through¹¹ and kidnapped and confined in large numbers in low, filthy, narrow godowns or out-offices of the factories. It was not simple confinement in one godown that was practised, but poor raiyats, substantial farmers and

7. Report of the Indigo Commission. Paras—49, 52 and 7.

8. Sir J. P. Grant's Minute Paras—56 and 47.

9. Answer 3602; Evidence of Sir Ashley Eden.

10. Grant's Minute, Paras. 11-16 and Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, page 187, vol. 1.

11. Answer 3918, Evidence of Mr. E. DeLatour, Magistrate of Faridpur.

even respectable men, were seized and sent about from one factory to another, to escape discovery, and in some cases, they were not always heard of again.¹²

Even women were abducted to the factories and confined.¹³ Seizure of cattle was of as common occurrence as kidnapping. Sir Ashley Eden "released from one of the out-factories about two or three hundred heads of cattle which even when brought to his own house, the raiyats, through fear of the planter, were afraid for several days to come forward and claim."¹⁴ Not content with the usual instruments of torture and punishment, one of the planter invented a novel form of whip or cat-o'-nine-tails, christened *Shamchand* or *Ramkant*,¹⁵ for beating out of the raiyats any lurking disinclination against the cultivation of the plant. Date-gardens which bound in the district of Jessore were uprooted, to make room for indigo and the fields of the raiyats were forcibly ploughed up and indigo sown by force. Respectable men who had eight hundred bighas of land were driven from their homestead, or more families of raiyats with sufficient land were beaten out, whom, their relatives, had to hide in the house of others, while they themselves lived the life of exiles. Their houses were plundered of all furniture and then razed to the ground. Whole villages and bazars were demolished and burnt down, and sometimes fights between the adherents of Zemindar and planter carried desolation, terror and demoralisation into a dozen villages at a time. The hand of the planter was constantly lifted up against the life and property of the raiyat and he

12. Grant's Minute, Para 43.

13. Answer 3135. Rev. J. Long wrote in the *Harkaru*, "Certain planters can make use of *Black Holes* as well as Serajdowala did; while the violation of their daughters will teach raiyats how they complain of the Indigo Saheb."

14. Answer 3576.

15. The authorship of this was ascribed to Mr. Larmour, the leading Planter of Bengal.

recognized neither the existence of a magistrate on earth, nor a God in Heaven.¹⁶

How intense a dislike to the cultivation of indigo had been bred in the minds of the raiyats by ages of such terrible oppression until they abhorred the very name of indigo was reported to the Indigo Commission. In answer to the question of the Commission a raiyat said that even if his throat is cut, he won't sow indigo. He will rather die than cultivate indigo or he will go to a country where the indigo plant was never seen or sown. "Rather than sow indigo I will go to another country; I would rather beg than sow indigo."—"I would sow indigo for nobody, not even for my father and mother."—"No, I would be rather killed with bullets."—"Let the Government cut our throats and send soldiers to kill us with bullets, but we will not sow indigo."¹⁷ Rev. S. J. Hill, a missionary of the L. M. S. Mission, repeated before the Indigo Commission, a verse of a popular song in the Murshidabad district—"The enemy of the soil is indigo; the enemy of work is idleness; so the enemy of caste is Padre Hill."¹⁸

THE EXECUTIVE FAVOUR THE PLANTERS

One might exclaim how could such a state of anarchy, a veritable reign of terror, be possible under the British Raj. Were there no law and no magistrates to bring the despotic planters to reason? Law there was, but it did not reach the people, and the Lieutenant-Governor was forced to admit, "a country where these offences are

16. *Vide* Sir J. P. Grant's Minute, Para, 42. Report of Indigo Commission, Paras. 86-94, 103, 104 and Answers 870 (Rev. J. H. Anderson) 780 (Rev. F. Schurr), 849 (Rev. J. G. Lincke), 3576 (Ashley Eden, Dukhi Sheikh), 3917 (Mr. E. De Latour) etc.

17. *Vide* Answers 1156, 1165, 1180, 1216, 1249, 3214. 782.

18. Answer 1693. জমিনের শত্রু নীল, কন্দের শত্রু চিহ্ন, তেমনি জাতির শত্রু পাদ্রী

committed habitually, and for the most part with impunity is a country, in which the law affords the weak no protection. The fact is a disgrace to the administration. "The police were an organized gang or extortioners and the magistrates were few and far between, and even the few that there were, did not accord the raiyat a due share of protection and support but often pondered to the interest of the planters, and the magistrate of Baraset frankly admitted, "As an young assistant, I confess I have favoured my own countrymen in several instances." The Indigo Commission rightly observed, "It is not too much to say, that had all magistrates held the scales in even balance, a cultivation of the character which we have clearly shown indigo to be, would not have gone on for such a length of time. The bias of the English magistrate has been unconsciously towards his countrymen, whom he asked to his own table or met in the hunting field or whose houses he has personally visited.¹⁹ When the magistrate was right-minded and disposed to do justice between man and man, he was interfered with, censured or removed by Government for alleged bias against planters. There was a gross dereliction of duty on the part of Government and a failure of justice due to the strong bias which was too frequently displayed by men in all positions from the highest officers of Government down to the lowest, in favour of those engaged in this particular cultivation.²⁰ The planters obtained the support of the executive, from the police constable to the head of the province, in their acts of spoliation and oppression."

On the 1st of August, 1859, Sir Frederick Halliday's Government appointed some of the leading planters in the districts of Krishnagore and Murshidabad, to be Honorary Magistrates, and the raiyats declared "যে রক্ষক সেই ভক্ষক"—a Bengali proverb which may be translated,—'Now they

19. Report of the Indigo Commission, Answers para 119

20. Ibid. Answers 3607, 3608, 3579 and 3598.

have made the wolf the shepherd of the flock.' Was it any wonder that the ignorant raiyats, who had been hood-winked by the planters with the idea that Indigo-cultivation was a quasi-Government institution, believed that even the Lieutenant-Governor had a share in some of the concerns ?²¹

RAIYATS DECLARED FREE AGENTS : EDEN'S CIRCULAR

The Magistrate of Baraset (the Hon'ble Ashley Eden) had been censured by the Divisional Commissioner for ordering the police not to allow planters to forcibly plough up the raiyats' land against their will. But in 1859, he issued a vernacular circular stating that it was optional with the raiyats to enter into contracts. This time, Sir J. P. Grant was Lieutenant-Governor, and when the difference of opinion between the Magistrate and the Commissioner was referred to Government, the Lieutenant-Governor held that Eden was right. To these two impartial, sympathetic and broad-minded officers, Bengalees will even remain thankful for banishing this intolerable pest of slavery from their midst. Eden communicated the Government order to his Deputy Magistrate who circulated a Bengali *perwannah* on the terms of the order, and this noble example was followed by the Magistrate of Krishnagore, Mr. W. J. Herschel, grandson of the great astronomer.

21. Questioned by the President of the Indigo Commission why he did not complain to the magistrate, a raiyat said, "Because the planter tells us that whoever goes to the magistrate will have his house pulled down, and be turned out of the village. This year the *amin* and *takidgir* (factory officers) told me that there was a new law passed, called *মুগের আইন* or the law of the mallet, that unless I dug indigo lands sufficiently deep, I should have my head beaten with a mallet and indigo sown in it. They said they had got two laws out of the Company ; the other law was for the breach of contract : both laws are now in force. Answer 1247

RAIYATS SHOW A DISPOSITION TO REVOLT : TWO PATRIOTIC BENGALEES

At last the raiyats were roused from their bondmen's slumber and it looked on their misty minds that they were free agents, and the feelings of discontent which had so long been bottled up, were now ripe and ready to break out into open acts of resistance and violence. Eden's *Perwannah* was the immediate occasion of tapping the reservoir of accumulated discontent—the sudden and unpremeditated stroke of Wat Tyler's hammer.

While the feelings of the raiyats were in a state of the greatest tension, two villagers, Vishnu Charan Biswas and Digumbar Biswas, of Chowgacha in the Nadia district, raised the banner of rebellion against the planters. They were formerly, *Dewans* of indigo concerns, but resigned their offices, in bitterness of mind at the oppressions of the planters. They made up their mind to throw off the yoke of serfdom, and roused the raiyats to take up arms against their sworn enemies. They sent the "fiery cross" of revenge from village to village and even indented clubmen from the district of Backergunge, at their own cost, for any outbreak that might happen. They also financed the raiyats in their law-suits with the planters and infused new hopes in them. The raiyats now began to gather round their standard and break out in open revolt. The Biswases made immense sacrifice for the cause they took up. Their money losses were about seventeen thousand rupees.²² Thousands of indigo raiyats and other Bengalees showed a degree of patriotism, self-sacrifice and a power of combined and united action as had scarcely been witnessed in the annals of the country before.

22. Vide "A story of Patriotism in Bengal" in 'Indian Sketches' by Babu Sisirkumar Ghose, Pp. 102-7 and "History of Indigo Disturbance in Bengal," by Babu Lalit Chandra Mitra, M.A., P. 36 to which the reader is referred for a fuller account of the whole indigo movement,

APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION TO PACIFY THE RAIYATS

When the raiyats, in the Spring of 1860, showed a disposition to revolt in a body, and their complaints and alleged grievances attracted the notice of the district officers, a Commission was appointed to take evidence and report on the whole practice of contract, cultivation and delivery. The Commission was composed of five members, viz. W. S. Seton-Karr Esq., C. S., President, R. Temple Esq. C. S., Rev. J. Sale, W. F. Fergusson Esq. and Babu Chandra Mohan Chatterjee. Two of them belonged to the Civil Service; one was a prominent merchant of Calcutta and a nominee of the Indigo Planters' Association; the fourth was a baptist missionary; and the fifth, an Indian gentleman of high caste and position representing the British Indian Association. After a sitting of four months, (May-August, 1860) and the consideration of a vast mass of oral and documentary evidence, the Commission reported that the system on which indigo had been cultivated was a coercive system of an unrelaxing character and had broken down, because it was, in the long run, unremunerative to the cultivator. He bore all the burden and he reaped few of the advantages. The report of the Commission forms very painful reading, and rare is the man who can help shedding tears, reading the harrowing tales of misery and wretchedness of which the Report is full. "They have ruined me of wealth, life, lands and houses and have made me an outcast from my country"—such is the evidence of almost all the raiyats examined by the Commission. Sir J. P. Grant, in a Minute, explained the whole situation and exposed the entire system of coercion.

A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT TO PACIFY THE PLANTERS

Simultaneously with the appointment of the Commis-

sion, a Bill had been passed, to endure for six months, by which neglect on the raiyat's part to complete his civil contract was to be treated as a criminal offence, punishable with fine or imprisonment in the Magistrate's Court. But the report naturally raised the question whether this temporary, exceptional and onesided enactment should take its place among the permanent statutes of Government.

A fierce controversy arose over the Bill. The claims of the planters and of great mercantile houses in Calcutta were urged with much force in high and influential quarters ; but Sir J. P. Grant stated the objections to the Bill with such force and clearness, that Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, refused to turn the temporary Land Act into a permanent statute. At the end of six months it was allowed to expire. By his action in this controversy, Grant incurred great unpopularity with the unofficial European public, both in India and England, but he received the hearty support and approval of Sir Charles Wood and Lord Canning.²³

RESULTS OF THE COMMISSION : THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW RENDERED MORE EFFECTIVE

The Indigo Commission submitted its report by the end of August, 1860, and the simplicity of the measures that were adopted by Government on the recommendation of the Commission very conspicuously illustrates how unlawfully the system had so long been kept up. No new legislation was found necessary. Only notifications were issued declaring that Government was neither for, nor against, the cultivation of indigo ; the raiyats were assured that they were free agents and all parties were warned against recourse to violent or unlawful proceedings ; the hand of the law was strengthened to secure its good and

23. *Vid.* "Grant of Rothiemarchus" by W. S. Seton Karr. pp. 81-83.

effective execution as it then stood. Strong Magistrates were placed in charge of the indigo districts; new subdivisions were created, measures were adopted for an improved system of Police and Courts of Small Causes were established at the most important places in the indigo districts. The establishment of sub-divisions in the vicinity of their plantations had been violently opposed by the planters on the ground that "an indigo factory and a Police station cannot exist on the same spot,"²⁴ that is, indigo cultivation and law cannot go together. The truth of this statement was varified when the just and equitable distribution of the law to the raiyat and the planter sufficed to banish from Bengal one of the most thriving industries carried on by Europeans in India.

HUGE AGITATION STARTED BY THE PLANTERS

But the strong body of indigo planters who had defied the law so long were not to be foiled with impunity. Baffled in their attempts to continue the unnatural despotism they had so long exercised, they raised a howl, both in this country and in England, against "Messrs, Grant, Eden, Herschel and Seton-Karr" or "Messrs. Grant-Eden and Co.," under which names these benefactors of the raiyats were parodied. They gave vent to their animus in what was at the time, known as the "Factory Press;" they slandered Grant²⁵, calumniated Eden²⁶, they abused

24. Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal. No. XXXIII, Para. 1. Pages 114-132.

25. *Vide* "Brahmins and Pariahs—An appeal by the indigo Manufacturers of Bengal to the British Government, Parliament and People, for protection against the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal."—Sir J. P. Grant was spoken of as "the present high priest of the civil service Juggernaut", (P. 28), as "a man who combined himself every mischievous quality that a man in power can have" (P. 162), a man who "has arrested industry, banished capital, shut up trade, aroused evil passions, excited the populace, and threatened the magistrates, and who has assumed an absolute dominion alike over the commercial dealings of his subjects and over the decisions of their disputes."

26. *Ibid.* page 81, *et seq* and "Indigo and its Enemiss" by Delta (London 1861), pp. 1-6.

the whole people of India, Hindu and Mussulman,²⁷ they petitioned Lord Canning, agitated in Parliament, and we shall now relate, how under the shadow of the Supreme Court, they had the Lieutenant-Governor himself prosecuted and fined, how they troubled the ghost of Harish Chandra Mukherjee, the indefatigable editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, and how they used the celebrated Bengali Drama, the Nil Durpan as a handle to wreck their vengeance on the President of the Indigo Commission, Mr. Seton-Karr and on a representative of the body of missionaries who had rendered great help in bringing their abuses to light.

NIL DURPAN OR THE MIRROR OF INDIGO

Nil Durpan was published by the middle of September, 1860 (more accurately on the second day of Asvin, 1267, according to the Bengali calendar), when the indigo question had reached a crisis, when the galling yoke of tyranny had reached the breaking point and the excitement against the cultivation of the fatal point had become so strong as to lead to acts of violence in some of the indigo districts, and a general rising of the peasantry was apprehended. Said Lord Canning, the Viceroy, "For about a week it caused me more anxiety than I have had since the days of Delhi," (during the mutiny), and, "from that day I felt that a shot fired in anger or fear by one foolish planter, might put every factory in lower Bengal in flames. An idea of the popular excitement will be obtained from the following passage in which the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Peter Grant, describes his experiences of a tour along the rivers, *Kumar* and *Kaliganga*, running through the districts of Nadia and Jessore. "Numerous crowds of raiyats appeared at various places, whose whole prayer was for an order of government

27, "Brahmins and Pariahs," P. 7.

that they should not cultivate indigo. On my return a few days afterwards along the same rivers, from dawn to dusk, as I steamed along the two rivers for some 60 or 70 miles, both banks were literally lined with crowds of villagers, claiming justice in this matter. Even the women of the villages on the banks were collected in groups by themselves; the males who stood at and between the river-side villages in little crowds must have collected from all the villages at a great distance on either side. I do not know that it ever fell to the lot of an Indian officer to steam for 14 hours through a continued double street of suppliants for justice; all were most respectful and orderly, but also were plainly in earnest. It would be folly to suppose that such a display on the part of thousands of people, men, women and children, has no deep meaning. The organization and capacity for combined and simultaneous action in the cause, which this remarkable demonstration over so large an extent of country proved, are subjects worthy of much consideration.”²⁸

The author of *Nil Durpan* was born in an Indigo district himself and had ample opportunities of studying the doings of the planters and their dependants. Not far from the home of his infancy in the district of Nadiya, stood an indigo factory, and the evils attendant on the manufacture of the blue dye, the abuses and oppressions committed by the European planters, their system of forcing the raiyats into unprofitable contracts which, once begun, was bequeathed from groaning sire to bleeding son—were some of the facts that had impressed themselves indelibly on his mind from youth upwards. His heart bled to see the miseries of the defenceless poor, and at last he published this book, his first dramatic work, anonymously, bringing together facts and incidents which had come under his personal observation, and weaving them into the main plot with the skill of a true artist. The

28. Vide *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governor* by C. E. Buckland, I.C.S.

success of the book was as great as it was quick. It did immense service in awakening the mind of all classes of the native population to the gross misery of the people of the Indigo districts, and it helped the cause of the abolition of indigo slavery in Bengal almost as much as Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" did towards the abolition of Negro slavery in America."

PLANTERS' PROSECUTION OF REV. J. LONG UNDER WHOSE SUPERINTENDENCE THE 'NIL DURPAN' TRANSLATED

An English translation of Nil Durpan with a preface by the author, Roy Dinabandhu Mitra Bahadur, having been circulated by the Government of Bengal²⁹ the planters, who had been waiting for an opportunity to 'feed fat their grudge' against the Bengal Government, denounced the drama as infamously obscene and grossly libellous and demanded the names of the parties who had circulated "a foul and malicious libel on indigo planters tending to excite sedition and breaches of the peace." But failing to get any names from the Bengal Government, they prosecuted the printer, Mr. C. H. Manuel, who gave out the name of Rev. James Long at his own request, but was nevertheless fined ten rupees. Propping up Mr. Walter Brett, the Editor of the *Englishman*, who was alleged to have been libelled in the preface, as the plaintiff, they

29. The English translation was made under the superintendence of Rev. James Long, the noble missionary who laid the Bengalis under a lasting debt of gratitude by his labours for the improvement of the vernacular press of Bengal. The actual translation was made by the celebrated author of *Meghanadbadh*, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, and was hurried through in a single night. The translation with an introduction by Mr. Long was published anonymously, and about 202 copies were circulated under the sanction of Mr. Seton-Karr, the former President of the Indigo Commission, and under the official frank of the Government of Bengal of which he was the Secretary.

instituted proceedings against Mr. Long for libelling the Editor of the *Englishman*, and libelling the indigo planters of Lower Bengal in Nil Durpan. The trial that followed roused the greatest interest among both Europeans and Indians. Merchants, traders, bankers, everybody—rich and poor, high and low, flocked to the Courts, so that it was remarked “there could be nobody left to carry on the business of Calcutta.” The richer among the Bengalis were there, ready to unloose their pursestrings if money could have saved the reverend gentleman, and the author of Nil Durpan was there ready to exchange places with Mr. Long if that had been possible.³⁰ On the 24th July, 1861, Sir Mordaunt Wells, the Chief Justice, after making ‘vile, indiscriminate attacks on the character of the natives with an intemperance inconsistent with the calm dignity of the bench,’³¹ sentenced Mr. Long to pay a fine of Rs. 1000 and to suffer imprisonment in the common Jail for one month. Immediately on hearing the verdict, Mr. Long was heard to say, “What I have done now, I will do again”; and the fine was paid, then and there, by Babu Kali Prasanna Sinha, the publisher of the Bengali translation of *The Mahabharata*.

DEPARTMENTAL PUNISHMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE INDIGO COMMISSION

Mr. Seton-Karr was punished departmentally for patronising the publication and helping in the circulation of Nil Durpan. He was censured by the India Government; he had to make lengthy apologies for his share in the work, and had to resign, at the bidding of the Secretary of State, his posts as Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal

30. “English Rule and Native Opinion in India,” by James Routledge, P. 292.

31. From the Resolution passed at a meeting for the recall of Sir Mordaunt Wells.

and as Legislative Member for Bengal in the Governor-General's Council. In consideration of his able and distinguished services, however, he was afterwards made a Judge of the High Court, and subsequently, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

PROSECUTION OF THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF BENGAL

About ten months after the trial of Mr. Long, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir J. P. Grant, was prosecuted in the Supreme Court for having authorised the publication, in a Blue Book containing papers on the indigo cultivation in Bengal,³² of a letter from the Commissioner of the Nadiya Division which was alleged to contain a libel against one John MacArthur, the Superintendent of a factory in Jessore, and the damages were laid at Rs. 10,000. Sir Barnes Peacock who was the Chief Justice, assigned to the plaintiff nominal damages of one rupee.

PROSECUTION OF THE EDITOR OF THE HINDOO PATRIOT

While the case against the Lieutenant Governor was pending, the planters aimed a shot against another sworn enemy of theirs, the Editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, who had waged a regular crusade against the oppression of the planters, and had helped the raiyats both with his pen and purse. A suit for damages valued at Rs. 10,000 was filed against him by one Mr. Archibald Hills, Manager of the Katchikata indigo concern in Nadiya, for having given currency to a story charging Mr. Hills with outraging a peasant girl. Harish Chandra died while the case was still pending but the vindictiveness

³². Selections from the Records of Government of Bengal.
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of the planter continued and the proceedings went on against his widow who had been left in a state of helpless poverty, Harish Chandra having died a pauper for the cause of his country. The widow was compelled to compromise the case, the final decision being to the effect that the claim for damages was dismissed and only Rs. 1000 awarded to the plaintiff as his costs in the suit. In execution of that decree, the dwelling house of Harish Chandra was attached, but the decretal amount was paid off by subscription raised by the British Indian Association.

Thus ended one of the most troublous periods in the history of Bengal. Subsequently, Government enacted measures to help the Indigo-planters, but the indigo interest had long been doomed and could never recover its former position in the districts of Lower Bengal.

SONGS ON INDIGO DISTURBANCES

The appointment of Indigo Planters as Honorary Magistrates, has excited strong feelings of indignation among many natives, and particularly among the raiyats—who say *je rakhak se bhakhak*. ie ; who is appointed our Protector eats us up. These feelings have found vent in the form of verse. The following is the translation of one of the songs :

Chorus

Ye sons of the soil,
Alas ! 'tis to fool ye
These Honorary Magistrates
Are appointed to rule ye !
The Land is going to ruin
Our rulers they see its undoin' !
They love us not—think ye they do, sirs ?
Pray, why then this dire application
Of the knife to the throat of our nation—
Come, answer me, why is it so, sirs ?
Ye sons of the soil, etc.

2

The Planter he sits on the seat, O !
Of Judgement—the Witch whom the meat, O !
Of infants delights—now holds sway
O'er the Nursery doom'd to destruction !
The Ape weilds the Sword of Protection !
• O hapless Bengala ! cry 'Lack !' Lackaday !
Ye sons of the soil, etc.

3

The Planter, who forces e'en our priests, sirs,
To plough—to his mill to bring grist; sirs,
And makes us all slaves—high or low !

O Lady of Albion ! Our Sovereign—our mother,
O save us thy children !

Friends have we no other !

O save us are we sink 'neath the blow !

Ye sons of the soil, etc.

(By courtesy 'Nil Darpan' Hindi edition, ed. Shrikrishna Das, trans. from Bengali to Hindi by Dr. M. P. Saha who has taken it from 'Bengal Harkaru', November 23, 1858.)

A few songs in original Bengali

বিজ্ঞানীর লেখা, রাগিণী আড়ানা বাহার — তাল তিওট ।

॥ ১ ॥

হে নিরদয় নীলকরগণ ॥

আর সহেনা প্রাণে এ নীল দহন ॥
কৃষকের মনে প্রাণে, দহিলে নীল আগুনে,
শুণরাশি কি কুদিনে, কল্লের হেথা পদাপণ ।
দাদনের সুকৌশলে, শ্বেতসমাজের বলে,
লুটেছ সকল ভো হে, কি আর আছে এখন ॥
দীনজনে দুঃখ দিতে, কাহার না লাগে চিতে,
কেবল নীলের হেরি পাষণ সমান মন ।
বুটন স্বভাবে শেষে, কালি দিলে বঙ্গে এসে,
তরিলে জলধিজল, পোড়াতে স্বর্ণভবন ॥

॥ ২ ॥

বিজ্ঞানীকৃত, কবির শ্রব

নীল বানবে সোনার বাংলা কল্লের এবার ছারেখার ॥
অসময়ে হরিশ মলো লংয়ের হলো কারাগার ।

প্রজার আর প্রাণ বাঁচানো ভার ।

রাম সীতার কারণে, স্ত্রীমিতালি করে বধে রাখণে,

যত সওদাগরেরা সহায় এদের... দুটো এডিটার ।

এখন স্পষ্ট লেখা ঘুচে গ্যালো, জজ সাহেব এক অবতার ॥

বত .. রাজত্ব হলো সাধুর পক্ষে গঙ্গাপার ।

॥ ৩ ॥

দীর্ঘজীবন, রাগ হরট মরার—তল আড়াঠেকা ।

নীলদর্পণে লং সাহেব ষথার্থ যা তাই লিখেছে ।

নীলে নিলে সব নিলে প্রজার বল ভাই কি রেখেছে ॥ ১

কারো স্মাংটা কবে, করে তাদের উপর অত্যাচার,

তাই নিয়ে বারবার, লিখে লিখে হরিশ মরেছে ॥ ২

ঈডন্, গ্রান্ট মহামতি, স্ত্রায়বান্ উভয়ে অতি,

করিতে প্রজার গতি, কত চেষ্টা পাইতেছে ॥ ৩

ইণ্ডিগো রিপোর্ট প'ড়ে কে না অস্তুরে পোড়ে,

তবু নীলবা ন'ড়ে চ'ড়ে, পোড়ার মুখ দেখাইতেছে ॥ ৪

বলতে দুঃখে বুক বিদবে, ওয়েল্‌স্‌ অবিচার ক'রে

নির্দোষী লংকে ধরে একটি মাস ম্যাদ দিয়েছে ॥ ৫

ওয়েল্‌স্‌, পিকক, জাকসনে বসিয়া বিচারাসনে,

লংয়ের হাজার টাকা ফাইন করেছে ॥ ৬

নিদাকরণ সেন্‌টেন্স শুনে, সিংহবাবু দয়াশূণ্যে,

হাজার টাকা দিলেন শূণ্যে, ওয়ালটার ব্রেট তাই তাক্ হয়েছে ॥ ৭

ইংলণ্ডেশ্বরী শুন, পিউনির সকল শূণ্য,

আইন যে স্ত্রনিপুণ, এবার তা বেরিয়ে পড়েছে ॥ ৮

যে অবধি কলিকাতা, পাইয়াছে এ বিধাতা,

সেই অবধি দেখি মাতা, রেস হেট্টেড খুব চেগেছে ॥ ৯

বেঞ্চে বাতুলের মত লক্ষ লক্ষ করে কত,

আবার বলে 'আমার মত, কেবা জজ হেথা এসেছে ॥' ১০

কিস্ত পীল, সীটন আদি, এক এক বুদ্ধির কাঁদি,

তাদের লাগি আজো কাঁদি, হায় কি বিচার করে গেছে ॥ ১১

মহারাজী তোমা প্রতি এইক্ষণে এই মিনতি,
ওয়েলস্ পাপে দেও মুক্তি, ধীরাজ এই বলিতেছে ॥ ১২

॥ ৪ ॥

নীলকরের কি অত্যাচার ।

এই নীলে সকল নিলে এদের নিলে বোঝা ভার ॥
ও নিলের দাদন, বিষম বাদন, নাহিক নিস্তার ।
বেচলে ভিটে না যায় মিটে, কিবে মিঠে সদ্যবহার ॥
ও জোর করে বিচ ছড়ায় সাপে, ছড়ায় কন্দ আর ।
হোল না ধান, গেল যে মান, প্রাণ বাঁচান হোল ভার ॥
ও স্তূদে স্তূদে কেবা সোদে তিন পুরুষের ধার ।
বেচলে পাঠা, না যায় লেঠা, কতো বেটা গঙ্গাপার ॥
ছড়র হো, ছড়র হো, ছড়র হো হো হো ।

॥ ৫ ॥

মোল্লাহাটির লম্বা লাঠি, রইল সব ছদোর আটি,
ক'লকাতার বাবু সব ভেয়ে এল বজ্রা চেপে,
লড়াই দেখবে বলে ।
রাইয়তেরা তৈরী এবার—মুখ বুজে মার খাবে না,
লাটিয়ালের সঙ্গে লড়াই, না মেরে জান দেবে না ।

॥ ৬ ॥

তাল মহড়া

কোথা রৈলে মা, ভিক্টোরিয়া মাগো মা, কাতরে কর করুণা ।
মা তোমার ভারতবর্ষে, স্মৃথো আর নাহি স্পর্শে,
প্রজারা নহে হর্ষে সবাই বিমর্ষে—
এমন সোনার বর্ষে, খাসের বর্ষে কেবল বর্ষে যাতনা ।
'আসিয়া' আসিয়া মাগো করুণাময় করুণাচোক্ষে তুমি দেখ না ।
নামেতে নীলের কুঠি, হতেছে কুটি কুটি
দুঃখীলোক প্রাণে মারা যায়, পেটে খেতে নাহি পায় ॥
কুটেলসব সাহেবজাদা, ধপ ধপে বাইরে সাদা
ভিতরে পচা কাদার ভড়ভড়ানি পেক্ষো গন্ধ তার ।

ও মা একে মনসার ফৈস-ফৈসানি, ধুনোর গন্ধ ভায়,
হোলো চোরের কাছে ধর্মকথা, মর্ম কতু বোঝো না।

॥ ৭ ॥

তাল চিতান

হোলো নীলকরেরদের অনারারি মেজেষ্টারি—ভার।

কুইন, মা মা মাগো।

হোলো নীলকরেরদের অনারারি মেজেষ্টারি—ভার।

প'ড়েছে সব পাত্তর বক্ষে, অভাগা প্রজার পক্ষে,
বিচারে বক্ষে নাইকো আর।

নীলকরের হৃদ লোলে, নীলে নিলে সকল নিলে
দেশে উঠেছে এই ভায়।

যত প্রজার সর্বনাশ।

কুটিয়াল বিচারকারী, লাঠিয়াল সহকারী

বানরের হাতে হোল কলের যোস্তা—লোস্তা জলে চাষ।

হোলো ডাইনের কোলে ছেলে সোঁপা, চিলের বাসায় মাছ।

হবে বাঘের হাতে ছাগের রক্ষে, গুনেনি কেউ গুনবে না।

॥ ৮ ॥

তাল অন্তর।

প্রজা ধরছে আর মারছে তারা এককালে,

পিঠেতে মারছে খুব কোড়া।

কাটা ঘায়ে লুণের ছিটে, পোড়ার উপর পোড়া,

যেন গোদের উপর বিষকোড়া।

তাল চিতান

হোলে ভক্ষকেতে রক্ষাকর্তা, ঘটে সর্বনাশ।

কালসাপ কি কোনকালে দয়াতে ভেককে পালে ?

টপাটপ অমনি করে গ্রাস ॥

বাঙালী তোমাব কেনা, এ কথা কে জানে না ?
 হয়েছি চিরকেলে দাস ; করি গুণ্ড অভিলাষ ।
 তুমি মা কল্লতরু, আমরা সব পোষাগরু,
 শিখিনি শিঙ বাঁকানো ।
 কেবল খার খোল, বিচালি, ঘাস ॥
 ঘেন রাক্ষা আমলা তুলে মামলা, গামলা ভেঙ্গে না ।
 আমরা ভুসি পেলেই খুসী হব, ঘুসি খেলে বাঁচবো না ।

॥ ৯ ॥

তাল অন্তরা

জমি চুনবে, দিন গুণবে কেবল বুনবে বীজ,
 দোহাই না শুনবে একটিবার-।
 নীলের দাদন, ঠেঙ্গার গাদন, বাধন চমৎকার ;
 করে ভিটেমাটি চাটি সার ।

তাল চিতান

মা তোমার সাধের বাঙলা, হোলো কাকলা, সয না অত্যাচার ।
 বেগারে হয় রেয়োত যারা, জমিদার পড়ে মা মারা,
 লাটের দিন খাজনা হয় না আর ।
 কাকালী বাঙ্গালী যত, চিরদিন অহুগত,
 জানিনে মন্দ আচরণ, পূজি তোমার শ্রীচরণ ।
 আমাদের বাইরে কালো, ভিতরে বড় ভালো,
 মনেতে রাক্ষা আলো, টুকটুকটুক সিন্দুরবরণ ।
 রাজদ্রোহিতা করে বলে, স্বপ্নে জানি না ;
 কেবল ঈশ্বরের নিকট করি তোমার জয়ের কামনা ।

॥ ১০ ॥

তাল মহড়া

ভাল কার্যটি ধায় কোরে যদি গো,
 এই রাজ্যটি করেছ মা খাস ।

এসে এ দেশেতে বসত কর, অন্নপূর্ণা মূর্তি ধর,

অন্নদানে বাঁচাও প্রজার প্রাণ ।

সব অন্নভূমি কর তুমি, তুলে নিয়ে নীলের চাষ ।

কোথা মা পায়ে ধরি, হয়ে রাজরাজেশ্বরী,

সন্তানের পুরাও অভিনাষ ॥

হোলো রান্নাঘরে কান্নাকাটি, ঘরে ঘরে লাঠালাঠি,

উদরে অন্ন কারও নাই ।

দোহাই মা তোমার দোহাই ।

কেহ রয় নিরাহারে, কেহ রয় নিরাহারে,

যদি বিপদে শ্রীপদে রাখ ওগো মা, তবেই রক্ষা পাই ।

নাই উত্তুন জালা, একি জালা,

জালায় নাইকো জল ।

আবার পোড়া ভাগ্গি, সকল মাগ্গি,

উপবাসে উপবাস ।

তাল চিতান

তুমি বিশ্বমাতা ভিক্টোরিয়া থাকো বিলাতে ।

আমরা মা সব তোমার অধীন, দীন চিরদিন ।

শুভদিন দিন মা ভারতে ॥

কোম্পানি রাজ উঠিয়ে নিলে, কে বুঝে মা তোমার লীলে ?

নিলে মা এই ভারতের ভার, পেয়ে শুভ সমাচার ।

॥ ১১ ॥

মা তোমার হবে ভালো, আশাতে দিলে আলো,

শুখে রেখো সমভাবে সাদাকালো, ভেদ হবে না আর ।

যত নীলের সাদা, ভুলুকচাঁদা, সাদা কেহ নয়,

কোরে নীলের কন্দ, কি অধর্ম

মনে কালো হয় প্রকাশ ।

তাণ অন্তরা

না বুনে নিল মেয়ে কিল “কিল” করে নীলকর ।

দেশের ছোটকর্ত্তা, দিলেন তাদের,

হস্তাকর্তা করে ।

ওরা মারে তারে বেধে আনে ধরে ।

তাল চিতান

। যেমন কাজীয়ে শুধালে বলে, হিন্দুর পরব নাই ।

তেমনি সব নীলকরের আচার, বিষম বিচার,

গোস্বামী ভক্ষণের গৌসাক্রি ।

একেত মাগ্গী গণ্ডা, লুটেল-ভায় কুটেল পণ্ডা

তারা তো ঠাণ্ডা কেহ নয়, লুটে এণ্ডা বাচ্চা লয় ।

গিয়াছে পুঁজিপাটা, ভিটেতে শেঙ্গুল কাঁটা,

আমার ধন গিয়াছে, মান গিয়াছে, এখন মা প্রাণ নিয়ে সংশয় ।

গেল গরু অরু, তুণ তরু, কিছু নাহি আর ।

করে হাকিম হয়ে সাকিন নষ্ট সমান কষ্ট বারোমাস ॥

A few native words of the drama with their English translation

- কারিকং > পাইট বা পরিষ্কার—arranging land for cultivation
 গাছন > জোর করে ঠেসে ভরান—literally cramming (ironically)
 hard beating
 হাবাতে > হাভাতে—greedy, খাবা > খাওয়া > আহার—meal
 না-লায়েক > অতুপযুক্ত (ফারসী শব্দ) unfit (লায়েক শব্দের বিপরীত)
 পরপুরুষ > স্বামী ভিন্ন অত্র পুরুষ—paramour
 নাড়ের > রাড়ের > বিধবার—widow's
 নেয়েৎ > রায়ত > প্রজা—tenant or *raiyyat*
 পত্তনি—estate leased out to a middle man.
 পুটঠাকুর > পুরুষ ঠাকুর—priest নক্ষি > লক্ষ্মী—Lakshmi
 পোচা (হাতের) > করতল—palm
 বছবে > বৎসরের—yearly কোমেট > কমিটি—committee
 বাউ > বাউটি—অলঙ্কার বিশেষ—a bangle type ornament
 বিনেকাটি > কৃষিযন্ত্র বিশেষ—a particular type of agricultural
 implements
 বেঙের সন্ধি—literally) frog's catarrh, used for : One cannot
 go against nature
 বেমো > ব্যাধি—disease ভেমো > বোকা—stupid
 মরদেরা > পুরুষেরা—male members
 লো > রক্ত—blood; অক্ত > বক্ত—blood
 মাইন্দার > মজুর—an agricultural worker
 সাতাত > অবস্থাপন্ন—well-to-do
 হিরভিত্তি > কারচুপি—fraud ফাফা মারে > চীৎকার করে—make noise
 নোনা-ফেনা > নীয়েগ জমি—inferior or unfertile land
 ডব্কা ছেলে > উঠতি বয়সের ছেলে (সাধারণত নবযৌবন-গবিতা কিশোরীর
 প্রতি প্রযোজ্য)—a boy with budding youth
 গাতি > তালুক—guild বারকা > জানালা—window
 বাজারে > বেষ্ঠা—whore কদবি > বেষ্ঠা—prostitute
 নাম লেখান > বেষ্ঠা বলে পরিচয় দেওয়া—become a harlot

- নেটোলা, নেটেলা > লাঠিয়াল—clubman
 নাজা পাকড়ি—Constable with red turban
 মাচেরটক সাহেব > ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেট সাহেব—Magistrate Sahab
 তেরোনাল > তরবারী—sword
 সেমোনুতোন > সীমস্তোত্রয়ন—a female rite observed in connection
 with the first pregnancy in a Hindu family
 গাং পার করার > বদলী করার—transfer
 অন্তেরা > সন্ধান—search
 গারনালি সাহেব—গভর্নর সাহেব,— His Excellency the Governor
 মামির > মারানীর—an abusive word
 আদাখ্যাচরা—half finished
 ব্যাভ্রম > অপমান (সম্মান শব্দের বিপরীত অর্থবহ) dishonour
 নাদনা > মোটা লাঠি—cudgel
 ড্যাকরা > ছুরাআ—rogue
 ভীমরতি > বার্ষিকাজনিত বুদ্ধিব্রংশ—dotage পোয়াতি—pregnant
 বেছাপ্পর > গৃহহীন—homeless
 বেওরাওয়ারি > পীড়াপীড়ি ও অবরোধ—importune
 স্ববৃত্তি > কুকুরের বৃত্তি—doggish inclination
 আটকৌরের দিন—a Hindu rite on the eighth day of the new-
 born (usually observed for a son)
 আন্দুরা > খবর—তথ্য—news
 আজা > মাতামহ—grand-father of mother's side
 আং > রাত > রাত্রি—night, নাত করে > রাত্রি হইলে—at night
 একেছ > রেখেছ—have kept
 ককাতি > কাতরোক্তি—entreaty
 কাং > শোধ—retaliation
 ক্যাণ্ট > বৈবর্ত—a fisherman caste কায়েট > কায়স্থ—Kayastha
 গস্তানি > হীন—vile
 গাতা—এক রায়তের জমিতে একদিনে সকল রায়তের মিলিত চাষ—collective
 cultivation by all raiyats in the land of a single peasant
 ঘরো > কুলবধূ—housewife, চুল গল্লাভা > বেশগুচ্ছ—tress

ছুট > চুলবাঁধা ফিতা (সূত্র থেকে ছুট) tape for dressing the hair

ছোজানি > স্রোত—stream

টিকিরি—a landless peasant

সেদের > সাধুর—virtuous

জোরার বাড়ী > যমের বাড়ী > কসাইখানা—slaughter house

ঝকোতে > শীঘ্র—quickly

পতাই > প্রত্যহই > দৈনিক—daily

তেলপলাডা > তেল তোলার পাত্র—oil-vessel

আই > রাষ্ট্র > প্রচারিত—proclaimed

আঁচড়া পিঁচড়ি > মুক্ত হবার জন্ত নখ ঘষা ও মাটি আঁচড়ান—to make a mark on the mud and to stroke with the nails to get free. It is used here to illustrate anxiety, troubled condition and the helplessness of the womenfolk of Bose family

মাদ্দা > মোকদ্দমা—suit

টাল খাবে > মাথা ঘুরবে—feel giddy

নবীর আত > নবমীর রাত্রি—the night of the ninth day of lunar fortnight (third day's worship of Goddess Durga)

দেয়ালা > শিশু যে ঘুমের ঘোরে হাসে ও কাঁদে, (সংস্কৃত 'দেবলীলা' থেকে)—dreaming playfull laugh and cry of a sleeping child

যবন > বিধর্মী—a non-Hindu, generally used for the Muslim

দাঙ্গন > ঠিকা কাজের জন্ত অগ্রিম—advance for specific job

জইরি > গহনা বিশেষ—a large piece of ornament of the folk women which is usually made of silver and is worn round the waist.

ঘাট > জলাবতরণিকা—The exit and entrance of a pond or a river where villagers do washing, bathing and use that to cross the river etc. as *Kheyaghat*, *Steamerghat*
ডালি > ঢালি—a class of people employed by the landlords for guarding them.

নিদান > চিকিৎসাশাস্ত্র-গ্রন্থ বিশেষ—a treatise on the science of Ayurvedic medicine

B

The text of *Nil Durpan* is used as given in "Dinabandhu Rachanabali" (Sahitya Parishat edition) and its translation as published in the third Indian edition. The name of Madhusudan Dutt as the translator of the book is not utilized because of inaccurate and unrepresentative translation of the brilliant colloquialism of better parts of the original. Not being guided by sentimentalism Sankar Sen Gupta in his "Editor's Preface" examined the opinion of those, one by one, who stand for Michael. He has also substantiated why he has allowed it to go, as in the first Indian edition, "Translated from the Bengali by a Native." His "Introduction by the Editor" furnishes biographical sketches on Dinabandhu and Long. Besides, people's sufferings and distress, role of the play in the drama movement, the ideal of liberty with the reality of middle-class helplessness in the face of a peasant revolt are treated factually. These are supplemented by authentic appendices. It is an expertly edited book for students and teachers alike.

