

## S U M M A R Y,

*&c. &c.*

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THE solicitude which every one of just feelings must experience to prove his having adequately fulfilled an important trust, ought in my case to be increased by the peculiar nature of the office which I have held. The extent and multiplicity of its functions are little understood at home; and still less are those circumstances comprehended, which called upon me for exertions beyond the ordinary demands of my situation. If those unusual efforts were not necessary, they either risked improvidently the welfare of the Honourable Company, or they were illicit aggressions on weak, unoffending native Powers. It

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thence behoves me to justify the principle and the prosecution of the measures alluded to. The exposition will be short, because it aims not at submitting any detail of operations. A statement of the ground on which each material determination rested, will enable every one to decide on the equity, as well as prudence of the course adopted; while the general result may answer whether the main object of the Honourable Company's financial prosperity was duly kept in sight, during those complicated transactions. The facts asserted are so supported as not to admit of controversy. Proofs of them are for the most part in the hands of the Court. Where that is not the case, the official vouchers will be found in the Appendix: and it is hoped it will appear, that whatsoever were the advantages attained for the Honourable Company, the interests of our country at large have been simultaneously promoted; the comforts of the Indian population being at the same time signally consulted.

I entered upon the management of affairs at Calcutta, in October 1813. My first view of them was by no means pleasing. The treasuries of the

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three Presidencies were in so unfurnished a condition, that the insufficiency of funds in them to meet any unusual charges, (and many such menaced us) excited considerable uneasiness. At that period the low credit of the bonds, which had at different times been issued as the securities for monies borrowed, made eventual recourse to a loan seriously discouraging in contemplation. As twelve per cent. discount on the above securities was the regularly calculable rate in the market, when no immediate exigency pressed upon us, the grievous terms to which we must have subscribed for a new supply of that nature, in an hour of alarm could not be disguised to any foresight. Under this embarrassment, an attempt had been made by the preceding government to provide in a partial degree for the anticipated difficulties, by curtailing the annual disbursement, so as to leave a surplus of receipt. What are called the military charges, the provision for all warlike objects, offensive or defensive, had appeared the only head of expenditure in which a saving of efficacious magnitude could be made. The paring knife was thence applied with rather an indiscriminating

hand to many of the articles of the military establishment which had till then been deemed indispensable towards a tranquil tenure of the country. As it was matter of simple arithmetical measurement the contemplated surplus was produced ; but it was attended with circumstances which had not been taken into reckoning. Let it not be supposed that I am insinuating a censure on an expedient to which the Government was pressingly urged by financial difficulties. The limit within which a reduction of disbursement in the military branch would not entail mischief, was perhaps not to be computed without trial. As it was, experience shewed that hazard had been incurred in a degree quite unapprehended. The saving had principally arisen from a great diminution of our armed force. The operation of such a measure was not confined to the question of sufficiency for eventual defence ; nothing would mislead the judgment more than a parallel between the employment of the Indian army, and that of our military at home. The native troops are, in fact, the police of India ; the Burkendauzes, or armed attendants of the magistrates, being totally in-

adequate, if not supported by the regulars. Hence the complication of duties resting upon the soldiery is so great, as that it is rare for even half of a battalion to be found at its head-quarters. Occupation of dependant stations ; detachments with treasure, which is in constant transit ; escort of stores periodically despatched from Calcutta to the several provinces ; charge of convicts working on the roads ; custody of prisoners transmitted from different parts for trial before the courts of circuit, and guards over gaols, form a mass of demand which our fullest military complement could barely answer. A great number of those among whom such duties had been divided, could not be dismissed without causing the service to be oppressive to the remainder ; but there was a further consequence which rendered the burthen intolerable to the native soldier. This incompetence of strength involved nearly an extinction of those leaves which it had been the custom to grant annually, for a proportion of the men in each regiment to visit their villages : the privation of hope to see his connections occasionally, was insuperably irksome to the Bengal sepoy,

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usually of high caste. In consequence, very many in each corps solicited discharge from the service. Unless when in the field this indulgence had been uniformly conceded on application, as the individual had received no bounty on entrance; of course there was an awkwardness in refusing what had from practice assumed a color of right, when contest was only secretly anticipated by Government from particulars which it wished not to divulge. So many of those who thus petitioned to quit the service, were veterans approaching the periods of claim to the invalid pension (the great object of the native soldier), that the sacrifice which they desired to make, exhibited unequivocally the deep discontent of the army. I therefore found Government convinced that perseverance in the experiment was too dangerous; and the re-adoption of those military provisions which had been stricken off, would have taken place, even had not another consideration pressed its being done with the utmost speed. The disgust of our native troops was so loudly expressed in all quarters, that the causes of it were universally canvassed, and as such an extraordinary lessening of our

military means was ascribed to uncontrollable necessity, the same inferences of our debility were drawn by all the surrounding states. As might have been expected, a tone and procedure altogether novel, had been assumed towards the British Government. There were made over to me, when the reins were placed in my hands, no less than six hostile discussions with native powers, each capable of entailing resort to arms. It was thence obvious, that a beneficial alteration in our pecuniary condition was not to be effected by parting with the sinews of our strength; but by striving to cultivate and render more productive those sources of revenue which we possessed. In the abovementioned number of angry controversies, no advertence is made to the Pindarries. Communication could not be held with those execrable spoilers; yet the atrocity of their character, though it forbade the degradation of negotiating with them, could not disparage their inherent force, so as to prevent my regarding them, even at that juncture, as the most serious of the difficulties with which I had to deal. Could the moral call, for suppressing one of the most dreadful scourges

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that ever afflicted humanity, be set aside, still the task of dispersing an association, whose existence was irreconcilable to our ultimate security, as well as to our more immediate interests, seemed to me not capable of being long postponed. At the same time, I saw the intimacy of connexion between the Pindarries and the Mahrattas, so distinctly, as to be certain that an attempt to destroy the former, must infallibly engage us in war with the whole body of the latter. While the extreme effort was delayed, which our entanglements in other quarters made unavoidable, it was desirable to impose some check upon the plunderers. The year before my arrival, they had ravaged part of our territories ; they had carried off an immense booty, with impunity ; and they were professedly meditating another invasion. Every military man well comprehends, that defensive frontier stations, though heavily expensive to the state, were absolutely nugatory against a mounted enemy without baggage, following at will, through a vast expanse of country, any line, which the information of the moment might recommend. There was a chance that interposition from Gwalior might cause the



Pindarries to suspend their inroads. It was inappreciable to us, to stop if possible the projected devastation, while we were to be occupied elsewhere; on which account, I proposed a remonstrance to that Court, on the score of the Pindarries being permitted to arrange within the Maharajah's dominions, the preparations for assailing the Honourable Company's provinces. The present unreserved acknowledgement of our supremacy throughout India, will scarcely leave credible the then existence of a relative position, which could occasion my being met in council, by a representation, that a remonstrance of the above nature might be offensive to Scindiah, and that nothing ought to be ventured which could give him umbrage. Such, however, was at that period on either side the estimate of British power.

This introduction, though longer than I could have wished, was necessary to render our circumstances at that crisis accurately intelligible. There was especially a necessity to explain why, when a surplus of revenue had been actually exhibited, it had no permanence. The delusiveness of the principle on which such a surplus had for the

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moment been obtained, has been disclosed ; and it will be understood that we were to seek other supplies, should contests not be avoidable. A large sum is always required to be kept in hand by Government for current purposes ; because the revenue from land (the chief article in our income) is not receivable at periods corresponding with the regular disbursements, and is moreover liable to defalcation from the remission allowed in case of bad seasons. Therefore a sum deemed simply adequate to this object cannot be relied upon as a provision for a further contingency. Of the six disputes which I have noticed, four were amicably adjusted ; one, in the instance of Rewah, was speedily settled by the storm of a principal fortress, with the menace of a siege to its capital ; and the sixth (the contention with Nipaul) remained for decision by arms. A struggle with the latter was unpromising. We were strangely ignorant of the country or its resources ; so that, overlooking the augmented abilities latterly furnished by science to a regular army, for surmounting local obstacles, it was a received persuasion that the nature of the mountainous