

**PLAN OF AN IMPROVED INCOME TAX AND
REAL FREE-TRADE, WITH AN EQUITABLE MODE
OF REDEEMING THE NATIONAL DEBT, AND
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE EDUCATION
AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE PEOPLE - ON
SYSTEMATIC COLONIZATION - AND ON THE
WELFARE OF THE LABOURING CLASSES**

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Plan of an Improved Income Tax and Real Free-trade, with an Equitable Mode of redeeming the national debt, and some observations on the education and employment of the people - on systematic colonization - and on the welfare of the labouring classes by James S. Buckingham

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JAMES S. BUCKINGHAM

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BY JAMES S. BUCKINGHAM.



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GENERAL

INTRODUCTORY.

It is no new observation, that each successive period of life has its peculiar gratifications adapted to the years attained.—Those of youth embrace the pleasures of hope, in active and untiring pursuit of some object of desire or ambition; those of manhood consist chiefly in the realization and enjoyment of professional success; those of age are formed mainly of the pleasures of memory, and pleasing retrospect of the past, accompanied now and then with the satisfaction of witnessing the progress of views once deemed visionary, but progressively yielding to the force of circumstances and the necessities which compel their adoption.

I have had my full share of each in their turn:—the ardour of pursuit in youth, the fulness of enjoyment in manhood, and the retrospect of the past in age; and so equally have these been participated, that I know not which has yielded me the greater amount of happiness; but I am equally grateful for all.

Among the latter, however, I may be pardoned for naming the extreme satisfaction I have derived from the progressive adoption of views and

opinions, to which it was my misfortune according to some, and my indiscretion according to others, to have given utterance and publicity long ago, when the period had not yet arrived for their popularity, and when they were accordingly received with distrust, visited with punishment, and either ridiculed and abused, or condemned as impracticable and unjust. It will be sufficient perhaps to name only a few of these; for the catalogue would be too long if all were included.

In the West Indies, forty years ago, I maintained the opinion that the abolition of Slavery would be found perfectly practicable, without blood-shed or revolution; and that the planters themselves would, ultimately, perceive the system of slave labour to be most unproductive as well as unjust. And in London, twenty years ago, before ever the Anti-Slavery Society had entertained the idea of immediate emancipation, I published an article, entitled "On the Justice, Policy, and Safety, of giving Immediate Freedom to every Slave in the West Indies.*" This was denounced by nearly all parties as utterly impracticable, and dangerous even to broach; but in nine years after this, their emancipation was peaceably effected in a single day, on the 1st of August, 1834.

In the East Indies, I drew the attention of the Bengal Government to the practicability of the

* "Oriental Herald," for March, 1825, p. 330.

Overland Route, by Egypt and Suez, in the year 1818; but was regarded by all the then existing members of it as a dreaming visionary, though I had myself surveyed the Isthmus of Suez and the Red Sea, for the Pasha of Egypt, and navigated it throughout its whole extent. In little more than ten years afterwards, this route was adopted, and all parties are now receiving its benefits.

In Bengal, from 1818 to 1823, I advocated, among other changes in the laws, customs, and administration of India, the following:—

1. The Abolition of the Suttee, or Burning of Widows.—2. The Renunciation of the Idol Revenue of Juggernaut.—3. The Colonization of India, by British Settlers.—4. The Extension of Trial by Jury to British Subjects.—5. The Freedom of the Press, subject only to the laws, instead of the caprice of an irresponsible censor.—6. The Right of Settlers to purchase and hold land.—7. The Abolition of the East India Company's Commercial Monopoly.—8. Free Trade to every part of India and China.—9. Extension of Education among the Natives of India, subject to our rule.

There was not one of these which was not declared, at the time, to be not only impracticable, but the mere discussion of them fraught with the utmost danger to the very existence of our Eastern Empire; and for persisting in their advocacy only, I was at length banished from India, without trial of any

kind, and a valuable property, of my own creation, annihilated by the arbitrary power then existing in that country.

I have lived, however, to see not one, or even a few, but *all* these changes peaceably effected, and the parties so effecting them honoured and applauded to the echo for their deeds:—Lord William Bentinck for abolishing the Sutte;—Lord Glenelg for prohibiting the collection of the Idol revenue from Juggernaut; Sir Charles (now Lord) Metcalfe for establishing the Freedom of the Press;—Lord Grey, Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, and their colleagues, for abolishing the Commercial Charter of the East India Company;—Sir Robert Peel and Sir Henry Pottinger for completing the Treaty for Free Trade with China;—and Sir Henry Hardinge for encouraging the Education of the Natives of India. It is quite true, that I still remain a sufferer, from the loss of all my fortune, because of the *advocacy* of these measures, and that some of the very parties who have received both reward and honour, while paying me many compliments on the utility of my early labours, have been themselves the persons to prevent my receiving that justice, to which, by Resolutions of the House of Commons, and the opinions of the Ministers of the Crown, I was declared to be entitled. But, amidst all this, I *have* a great and enduring reward, in seeing all my early views adopted, and the best results arising from them.

To pass, however, from India to England, and to come to the more immediate subject of this Pamphlet, I may name a few of the subjects to which I drew the attention of the House of Commons, while I was a Member of that body, from 1832 to 1837, with pretty nearly the same fate as that which attended my Indian propositions.

And first, the great question of Temperance Reform. When the Committee of Enquiry on this subject was first moved for by me in 1834, there was scarcely a Journal in England that did not make it the subject of ridicule or censure; and in the House itself it was a constant topic of sarcasm and sneer. But the ten years that have since rolled by, have produced, and mainly from the Evidence elicited before that Committee, the greatest revolution in public opinion and public practice, that has been witnessed for centuries on any one particular subject. In England, nearly two millions—in Scotland, more than one million—and in Ireland, upwards of five millions of people have enrolled themselves as members of Temperance Societies, and embraced the views and adopted the practice to which the Report of the Committee, drawn up by myself as its Chairman, gave the first high sanction of Legislative recommendation. I presided at the first meeting held in London to advocate these views, in the year 1832. Father Mathew's labours in Ireland commenced in 1837: and at this period, in 1845, the subject is