

ENGLAND IN INDIA.

THE North American Review for February contains an article from the pen of Sir Edwin Arnold. It is entitled "The duty and destiny of England in India." It is deeply interesting for several reasons—the high literary standing of the author, the important character of the subject, and the ability of the writer to handle the subject from a well-informed standpoint. He has long been associated with the part of the British Empire on which he treats, and is therefore familiar with India and all questions bearing upon it.

The article is lengthy and it is not our purpose to elaborately review it, but to specially refer to and exhibit the views of the gifted writer in relation to one feature of the subject—the effects that would ensue if Russia should be successful in wresting India from the grasp of Great Britain. In the pursuit of this object we cannot do better than introduce the following quotation:

"I have read during the recent talk about India, in connection with the temporary trouble in the Pamir, articles in American papers, lightly and carelessly—but, of course, cleverly—penned, as if it were an indifferent matter to civilization generally, and to Americans in particular, whether Russia should ever seriously challenge the British possession in India and perhaps even some day succeed in ousting us from the peninsula. In reality, such an event, could it befall, would prove the direst occurrence for human progress—and indirectly for the United States themselves—since the overthrow of the Roman empire by the barbarians. It would be the triumph of the Slav over the Saxon, and would set back the development of Asia, and the advancement of the human race generally, at least a thousand years. I can imagine some of the clever young newspaper men, whom I have been everywhere glad to meet, responding in familiar local phrase to this: 'Well, but it would not be our funeral!' In this respect they would find out their mistake if they should live long enough. The loss of India to England would mean the breaking-up and decay of our ancient empire; the eventual spread of Slavonic and Mongolian hordes all over the vacant places and open markets of the world; the world's peace gone; again, as in days of Bismarck, the march of sciences, arts, religions, arrested as when Omar burned the Alexandrian Library; and history once more put back to the beginning of a new effort, under novel and gloomy auspices, to effect that which is the perpetual object of its course and its combinations—the final amalgamation of all the peoples of the globe under one law and one common faith and culture."

It would be difficult to imagine how a more potential reason in favor of the position that Great Britain is entitled to the sympathy of the whole civilized world in her resistance of the encroachments of Russia to gain possession of India could be embodied in language. The result of the success of the designs of the Muscovite empire in that great scheme is, as perceptibly stated by

Sir Edwin, so clear as to be almost self-evident. It would place incalculable prestige and power in the hands of semi-barbarous races that would practically demolish the development toward a higher civilization in every part of the globe, and the march of mankind toward total emancipation from grinding despotism would be turned back indefinitely.

The writer of the paper anticipates the raising of objections on the ground of the methods by which Great Britain acquired her Indian possessions, and ingeniously forestalls them by insisting that there must, in relation to such matters, be some statute of limitations, otherwise the whole world would have to be "remodelled from pole to pole." If not, he contends, it would not only be Clive, Warren Hastings and Dalhousie who would be arraigned and condemned by the bar of international equity, but the "Pilgrim Fathers, Penn, the apostle, and Columbus himself.

Sir Edwin then enters into a lengthy explanation of the manner in which England came into possession of India, showing, by facts of history, that it was virtually forced upon her; he dwells upon the beneficent character of the British administration, the sacred nature of the charge committed to the care of the empire, the character and condition of the natives, and then refers to the objects of Russia in her advances toward the seizure of that part of the globe. On this latter point he says:

"If a country like Russia challenges this long and faithful protectorate, it certainly is not and never has been upon the pretence that she could administer the country better, or be more in honest and useful sympathy with its people. Although the Muscovites have learned to treat with policy and consideration their vanquished Mohammedan races in Samarcand, Bokharah, Khiva, Merv, Kashgar, and elsewhere, they are not a tolerant race, as has been only too sadly shown by their conduct of late towards the Jews. In fact, Russia makes no affectation of political beneficence in approaching the gateways of India; she obeys two imperative impulses of national yearning and state necessity—one of them being the over-pressing instinct to get down from her icy isolation to the sunshine and the sea; the other the never-forgotten mandate of Peter the Great not to rest till Constantinople is possessed. So obvious is the force of these two motives that the patriotic and sagacious Turkish statesman, Fuad Pasha, was wont to say: 'Were I a Russian, I would shake the world down to gain Stamboul!'"

The gifted writer has no fears of the success of the Muscovite designs, and on this part of his theme, thus forcibly delivers himself:

"The invader who means earnestly to dispute India with the British must come by different roads and in a less furtive manner. If ever Russia has the will and the power to knock in serious purpose at the northern gates of India, she will come

by Merv and Herat; and the great battle outside the frontiers of Hindustan will take place at Girishk upon the river Helmund. We must not lose that battle, and we shall not lose it, for all India will be watching at our backs; and we owe to them, as the first guarantee of our fitness to be their rulers and protectors, the spectacle of our fearless and sufficing might. But if we lost it, we should be far, very far indeed, from losing India. The command of the sea, the guardianship of Egypt, the possession of those important sea stations, Malta and Gibraltar and Aden, are what really give us power to hold India against the world. And while we are masters of the sea, India will never be forced to change her allegiance."

THE EXECUTION OF M'ILVAINE.

If those who have all along upheld electrocution as a means of inflicting the death penalty because of the claim that it is more in accord with civilized and enlightened methods, will read and carefully consider the details of M'Ilvaine's taking off at Sing Sing on Monday last, we doubt not their conclusions to that end will undergo revision.

We all understand that, for the protection of society by means of removing the dangerous classes and by the example thus afforded, lives and liberty must at times be taken; but the authorization to do so, which is found primarily in Holy Writ and immediately in the local law, does not either in express terms or by implication command or justify inhuman or unusual practices to effect such ends. We can properly go no further than cut off a forfeit life and in doing so assume the full limit of authority reposed in us; to go further and add torture to the victim as well as repulsiveness to the spectacle, is at once to place ourselves outside the law for want of authority and justification. Such an act does more—it turns backward the wheel of progress and makes us once more appear as if we partook of the spirit of barbarism which actuated man in his dealings with an enemy or an outlaw in the dark ages; that is, we seem to add to punishment revenge and gratification of a morbidly vicious appetite. This is not an evidence of civilization, as claimed, but the reverse.

The fact is, the age is given to sensationalism, to the encouragement of novelty and the fostering of experimentalism. This is well enough, perhaps, when confined to legitimate channels, but as bad as can be when applied to so profound and dangerous a subject as the taking of human life by the methods of law. Such occasions should call for all the conservatism in our nature, for the complete absence of even the semblance of passion, and above all, freedom from juggling and