

INTRODUCTION TO THE Bengal Appendices to the Fifth Report.

JOHN SHORE, like Warren Hastings, was a member of an ancient family which had attached itself to the Royal cause during the Civil War, and in consequence lost its lands and wealth. The great grand father of the future Governor-General, John Shore, a physician of Derby, was rewarded, at the Restoration, by a knighthood and the gift of a miniature portrait of Charles II, "in recognition of the aid afforded by him in effecting his escape." The Knight's second wife was a daughter of a Derby merchant—John Chambers, and sister to a London merchant, Thomas Chambers.¹ John, the Knight's son, set out for London, and in course of time became "Ships' husband" or owner to the East India Company. In this way the connection of the Shore family with India commences. The three elder sons of the Ships' husband died young—the eldest, John, dying in India. The fourth son, Thomas held the lucrative situation of Supercargo to the East India Company, and by his second marriage to a daughter of Captain Shepherd, of the East India Company's Naval Service, became the father of two sons—John, the future Lord Teignmouth, and Thomas. The death of the Supercargo, we are told, was due to "a paralytic affection occasioned by his having partaken, at the Isle of Ascension, whilst on his voyage from China, of some turtle boiled in a copper vessel."

John Shore, the future Lord Teignmouth, was born in London, on the 5th October, 1751, "at a lodging in St. James' Street, temporarily occupied by his parents: their ordinary residence being Melton Place, near Romford in Essex, where he passed his infancy." From a school, first situated at Tottenham and latterly at Hertford, he was removed to Harrow, where he found himself placed between two boys whose names are known to fame—Nathaniel Halhed and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. A Mr. Pijou—a name perpetuated in the East India Company's China Service—had secured for the lad an appointment as Writer in the Company's Service; and sacrificing the captaincy of Harrow School to the exigencies of his future career, Shore passed to an academy at Hoxton, where book-keeping and merchants' accounts replaced the study of the classics. At "the obscure seminary of Hoxton," Shore was a contemporary with Lord Rawdon afterwards Marquis of Hastings. At the age of seventeen, Shore parted at Gravesend with the mother, whom he was not to see again in this world, and in 1769 "landed in Bengal in such ill health that his ship-master despaired of his recovery." His biographer writes:—

"Calcutta had not yet become what it was destined to be, a city of palaces.' Mr. Shore found it—to borrow his own description, communicated many years after to his

Memoir of the Life and Correspondence of John Lord Teignmouth, by his son Lord Teignmouth, vol. i, chap. 1. This work is in every way disappointing. Thomas Chambers had one other daughter, Hannah Sophia, who married "Brownlow, eighth Earl of Exeter."

son in India—consisting of houses, not two or three of which were furnished with venetian blinds or glass windows: solid shutters being generally used and rattans like thin canes: whilst little provision was made against the heat of the climate. The town was rendered unhealthy by the effluvia from open drains; and to conclude in his own words: ‘I began life without connections and friends; and had scarcely a letter of recommendation or introduction. There was no church in Calcutta although Divine Service was performed in a room in the Old Fort on Sunday mornings only; and there was only one clergyman in Bengal.’

“ Mr. Shore, was appointed, soon after his arrival to the Secret Political Department, and continued in it during a year. Many volumes of its records are in his hand-writing. His annual salary amounted to 96 current rupees, exactly £12, according to the existing value of that money; whilst he paid 125 Arcot rupees, or nearly double that sum, for a miserable, close, and unwholesome dwelling.”

During the early period of his residence in India, Shore felt the pinch which the regulations initiated by Lord Clive had placed on the trading facilities of the Company's civil servants, and in a letter to his mother in 1769, he goes so far as to speak of “ Lord Clive of infamous memory :”¹ we are told, however, that in after life he spoke of Mr. Clive “ in not unfavourable terms.”²

In the year 1770, when the Comptrolling Councils were instituted, Shore was posted as Assistant to the Council at Murshidabad. His biographer writes: “ In consequence of the indolence of the chief of his department, and the absence of the second on a special mission, he suddenly found himself, at the age of nineteen, elevated from the humble drudgery of a writer in a public office to the responsible situation of a Judge, invested with the civil and fiscal jurisdiction of a large district.” This a very careless piece of writing. The Chief of the Council at Murshidabad till 24th December, 1770, was none other than Richard Becher, who so far from being “ indolent,” was perhaps one of the best masters under whom a young civilian at that time could have learned his work. The Murshidabad Comptrolling Council sat for the last time in September, 1772, and after that the revenue work of the district was carried on by the Resident and his assistants in correspondence with the Collectors. It is fatal to the claim made for Shore by his biographer that Shore's name is not to be found in the Index of the Proceedings of the Revenue Board of the whole Council for the years 1772-1774.

In 1772, after the abolition of the Comptrolling Council of Murshidabad, Shore we are told by the biographer, “ was appointed First Assistant to the Resident of the Province of Rajshaha.” The post of Collector at Rajshahi was in fact held by Samuel Middleton in plurality with the posts of Resident at the Durbar (Murshidabad) and chief of Cossimbazar,³ and the new appointment does not seem to have

¹ *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, p. 26.

² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³ The former Collector was C. W. Boughton Rous. *Press List, Bengal Secretariat Record Room*, vol. ii, p. 26.

necessitated a change of residence for Shore. He writes from Moidapore," a suburb of Murshidabad, on the 20th October, 1772 :—

"Every civil cause—that is to say, every dispute where the peace is not broken through—comes under my cognisance, and though you will judge this more properly the province of an able lawyer, yet a tolerable knowledge of the language, and the being somewhat conversant with the religious and political and judicial customs of the people (which are never infringed in our decisions), are sufficient qualifications for exercising this business."

In November, 1773, six Provincial Councils of Revenue¹ were instituted and Indian Amils were appointed to replace the Collectors. On the 20th December, 1774 when new appointments were made by the Supreme Council, the recommendations made by Warren Hastings received very scant attention, and John Shore was brought in by the hostile majority as Fifth Member of the Calcutta Council. It is worthy of note that at the same time the majority threw out the nomination of Henry Palmer as second at Murshidabad, and imported David Anderson as fifth.²

Shore thus owed his first considerable step in advancement to the party of Philip Francis. In November, 1778 he writes: "Mr. Francis is my friend; and will, I believe, give me proofs of it, whenever time shall put it in his power."³ Capt. J. Price tells the story that Warren Hastings having a strong suspicion that Francis' minutes on revenue

1.	At the Presidency	..	Philip Milner Dacres George Vansittart. Henry Cottrell. William Harwood. Edward Golding.	... <i>President.</i>
2.	„ Dacca	...	Richard Barwell Charles Purling. W. M. Thackeray. John Shakespeare. William Hollond.	... <i>Chief.</i>
3.	„ Murshidabad	...	Samuel Middleton Edward Baber. William Maxwell. William Hosea John Hogarth.	... <i>Chief.</i>
4.	„ Patna	...	Thomas Lane George Hurst. Robert Palk. Simeon Droz. Ewan Law.	... <i>Chief.</i>
5.	„ Burdwan	...	John Graham John Bathoe. Alexander Higginson. John Holme. Samuel Lewis.	... <i>Chief.</i>
6.	„ Dinajpur	...	William Lambert Herbert Harris. George Robertson. Anthony B. Goodlad. Francis Gladwin.	... <i>Chief.</i>

¹ Forrest: *Selections from the Letters, Despatches, and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department of the Government of India: 1772-1785*, vol. ii, pp. 16-18.

² *Memoir of the Life*, etc., vol. i, p. 61.

matters represented the pickings of Shore's brains, sent the young civilian away on a brief journey up country, and it was observed that during Shore's absence, Francis excused himself from attendance at Council on the score of ill health.¹ It is indeed most probable that Francis made full use of the assistance his protégé would be only too willing to render, but it is hardly likely that Francis was dependent on Shore for more than illustrative details and the occasional corrections of a kindly editor. It has so often been asserted that Shore is the real author of the revenue policy put forward by Philip Francis that it should be noted that the views of Shore, as they are revealed in after years, in many important points are contrary to those propagated in Francis' minutes. In 1789 Shore was opposed to the policy of declaring the settlement permanent: in February 1775, even before the commencement of the revenue controversy Francis had written: "The lands should be granted to the zemindars, talookdars, or even to the ryots, in many cases, either, in perpetuity or for life with fixed rents, and fixed fines upon the renewal of leases."² In 1789 Shore maintained the duty of government intervening to secure healthy relations between the landlords and tenants: Francis in 1776 argued that if zamindars and ryots were "left to themselves they will come to an agreement in which each party will find his advantage."³

In February 1781, a Supreme Committee of Revenue was appointed at the Presidency and the Provincial Councils abolished. Shore's biographer writes: "To the first post was appointed Mr. David Anderson,⁴ a servant of the Company, distinguished for his integrity and abilities. But, anticipating the need of this gentleman's services on special missions, Mr. Hastings consulted him on filling the second place at the Board which would require qualifications not inferior to his own. Mr. Anderson at once recommended Mr. Shore, as, in his opinion, better fitted for the post than any other member of the service. The Governor-General expressed astonishment at the mention of the individual whom he regarded as one of his most zealous opponents; for Mr. Shore's financial reputation had induced Mr. Hastings to attribute to him a large share in the preparation of Mr. Francis' minutes. Mr. Anderson, intimately acquainted with the character of Mr. Hastings as well as of Mr. Shore, replied in the following terms: 'Appoint Mr. Shore; and in six weeks you and he will have formed a friendship.' The proposal was assented to, and the prediction fulfilled."⁵

¹ See above, vol. i, Introduction, p. cccix. In a letter to his mother, dated 26th March, 1783, Shore refers to Price's statement, and does not repudiate "credit for compiling the Minutes of Council, written by Francis." *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, pp. 86-87. On 15th February, 1789, he writes to one of Francis' most intimate disciples, G. G. Ducarel; "My ideas concur with those of Mr Francis: but the length of time which has elapsed since the proposal of this plan require a modification of it, now necessary." *Ibid*, p. 116.

² Parkes and Merivale: *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis, K. C. B.* (London 1867) vol. ii, p. 28.

³ See above, vol. i, Introduction, p. ccciv. Cornwallis, on the other hand, reposes trust in a policy of *laissez aller, laissez faire*. F. D. Ascoli: *Early Revenue History of Bengal and the Fifth Report* (Oxford, 1917), p. 70. For the failure of the Permanent Settlement to protect the cultivators, see Hunter: *Bengal MSS. Records*, Introduction, chap. vi.

⁴ Grier: *Letters of Warren Hastings to his Wife*, pp. 200-1.

⁵ *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, p. 70.

With the character and constitution of the Committee of Revenue Shore was highly dissatisfied. "They may," he writes, "and must get through business; but to pretend to assert that they really execute it would be folly and falsehood." Of the diwan, Ganga Govind Singh, he writes:—

"This man, in fact, in the Dewan or Executive offices, has all the revenues, paid at the Presidency, at his disposal; and can, if he has any abilities, bring all renters under contribution. It is of little advantage to restrain the committee themselves from bribery or corruption when their executive officer has the power of practising both, undetected. To display the arts employed by a native on such occasions would occupy a volume. He discovers the secret resources of the Zemindars and Renters, their enemies and competitors, and by the engines of hope and fear raised upon these foundations, he can work them to his purposes. The Committee with the best intentions, best abilities, and steadiest application, must, after all, be a tool in the hands of their Dewan."¹

In writing to his mother, Shore in November, 1782, describes his situation; "At this instant I have a levee greater than that of any Prime Minister in Europe, and all the attendants are ready to flatter and deceive me. There are, Natives—two-thirds of the proprietors of the land in Bengal: and as the renters of it form the crowd, and attend my nod, I cannot stir, but twenty and sometimes fifty times that number of petitioners are presented to me."

On February 1st 1785, Warren Hastings made over the keys of the Fort to John Macpherson, and those of the Treasury to the Board: he, however, delayed signing the instrument of resignation till his ship, the *Berrington*, had reached Sandheads. David Anderson and Shore were among Hastings' fellow passengers. In the February of the following year Shore married Charlotte,² "the only daughter of a widow lady named Cornish, of the old and respectable Devonshire family of Floyer, whose husband had held the situation of Collector of the Customs at Teignmonth."

Sir John Macpherson, who succeeded to Warren Hastings, seems to have held only an acting appointment, for the Court elected Lord Macartney on the 10th March, 1785. Lord Macartney, who was actually in Calcutta when the news of his appointment arrived, announced to the Council that he was unable to accept the office. On reaching England, Macartney found that the great post of Governor-General was still open to him, but, it is recorded his pressure for an English peerage, caused offence, and Cornwallis was in consequence appointed instead of Macpherson. Shore writes:—

¹ *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, p. 74. In his evidence at the trial of Warren Hastings, Shore said that his objection was to a diwan in general, and not to Ganga Govind Singh in particular, but he had a very bad opinion of Ram Chandrá Singh, who, on the recommendation of Francis, succeeded Ganga Govind Singh. He held that no native was qualified for the post.

² Shore had, in November 1785, gone on a visit to his brother, but found his brother away from home. "He was received by a lady of great personal attractions, when a snow storm had detained him at the house. In February the lady of the snows became Mrs. John Shore." The biographer relates that the Floyers are representatives by the female line of Nicholas Wadham, founder of Wadham College, Oxford, and through John Wadham of "several kings of England and of France." The name Floyer would have been very familiar to Shore, as there was a Charles Floyer in the Comptrolling Committee of Revenue in 1771.

"I can hardly write with temper, though I will endeavour to do it with impartiality. In private life, he is a good humoured, affable, and obliging man, with many qualities calculated to acquire esteem. Notwithstanding this, I do declare that I have not heard one person speak of his public conduct without contempt and indignation. In England, you only see one side of the medal: here we observe the reverse. We know what is done, what ought to have been done, and what is left undone. Never was there any administration so thoroughly despicable as his: a total want of energy, dignity, and commonsense distinguish it. Evasion was substituted for decision: caution and hesitation, instead of action: and if this has not already been understood in Europe, the inability of his colleagues to expose it, is the cause...Natives and Europeans universally exclaim that Lord Cornwallis's arrival is the salvation of the country.¹

"Mr. Macpherson will, in my opinion, go home, and a successor must be appointed. I hope the Directors will consider the importance of the appointment, and send out a man of abilities, integrity, and application. The situation of affairs requires the first talents, and most approved honesty."²

II.

Whatever may be thought about Shore's condemnation of the Macpherson administration, it has to be admitted that during that period—Feb. 1785-Sept. 1786, some very striking changes, usually spoken of as reforms, had been effected in the organisation of the Revenue Department. On the 7th April, 1786, a scheme of reform was put forward which may be described as a scheme of healthy decentralisation. In 1781 when the Provincial Councils were abolished, Collectors had been appointed to the various districts, but very little confidence or real responsibility had been vested in them. The Committee, over-laden with routine duties, and at the mercy of their Bengali diwan, kept the formation of the settlement in its hands, while native diwans answerable to the Ray Rayan were added as a check—but more probably as a sedative—to the collectors.

On the 7th of April 1786 a more practicable division of the districts assigned to the collectors was introduced, and, with a view to reviving the ancient department of Kanungos, the office of Sherishtadar or Keeper of Records, was constituted. On the 12th of June, the Committee of Revenue was dissolved, and the Board of Revenue was created. In contrast with the Committee, the Board was vested with powers of sanction and control rather than direct local administration.

¹ The biographer states that Macpherson in 1781 inserted in a Minute on the records of the Supreme Council a plan of reform which had been submitted to him by Shore for confidential transmission to Hastings. *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, p. 99. Hicky in one of his satirical "play-bills" introduced Macpherson as "Thane"—"appeared in a Highland dress thrumming on the bag pipe. He was overheard whispering to the Dictator (Hastings), 'Keep all secret, mon, and I'll help thee oot.'" He was created a baronet in 1786. Shore, on the other hand, was hit off by Toone, as "a good man, but as cold, as a grey-hound's nose."

² *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, pp. 126-29.

These changes are of so great importance that it is essential to quote in this place the passage of the letter (dated 22nd December, 1785) from the Court of Directors in accordance with which the changes were made:

Para. 30 :

“Various plans have been devised and carried into execution within these fifteen years for the collection of the revenue. It is no part of our intention at present to enter into a discussion of the merit or demerit of these various plans; but thus far we are clear that the frequent variations of system which have occurred have been attended with much inconvenience and great expense. It is therefore full time to adopt a settled plan, and for that purpose we direct that there be a Board of Revenue to reside in Calcutta, to consist of one of the junior Members of Council, without any addition to his present salary, and four others of the most intelligent of the senior servants of the Company.

Para. 31 :

To this Department is to belong (subject to the control of the Superior Council) the whole Administration, Settlement, Collection and Receipt of every branch of our Revenues, together with the control of the several officers concerned therein; but they are to have no power of issuing any money for any purposes whatever, except in consequence of orders or warrants from the Board of Council in whom this authority is to be exclusively vested.”

The letter from which the preceding extract has been made, concludes with an intimation that the Court had in view “to arrange a final system” for transacting business with the zemindars and other landholders, and would transmit their sentiments in one of the early ships of this season,—an intimation which, as Sir William Hunter has pointed out, shows that “the idea of a permanent arrangement for the revenues was no product of any preconception of Lord Cornwallis in favour of the landlord system in England: and that it had taken shape before Lord Cornwallis arrived upon the scene.”¹

The person appointed to the office of Sheristadar was Mr. James Grant whose writings form so large a part of the present volume. Of his early career it is not at present possible to give any complete account, and there are no ‘published lists of the Company’s Civil Servants during this period to which reference can be made. He himself tells us that in “1178 [1772] the year after the famine I had the opportunity to know (being on the spot [Dacca] and employed partly though not then in the Company’s service, in drawing out the settlement).”² His appointment as a writer is dated 13th May 1778, when his securities were Col. Hugh Grant of Wimpole Street and Major

¹ Hunter: *Bengal MSS. Records, 1782-1807*, vol. i, Introduction, p. 21.

² Below, p. 357. Our James Grant must not be confused with (1) either the James Grant whose doings at Murshidabad caused Hastings so much trouble. The latter J. Grant arrived in Calcutta in 1764, was promoted further in 1775 and left the country in 1777, or (2) the James Grant, who succeeded James Fowke in February 1786 as resident at Benares, and was in 1790 Collector at Bhagalpur.

Lockhart Russell of Great Amard Street. He arrived at Calcutta in the Company's service on 14th July of the same year. On the 2nd July 1781 he was appointed Assistant to the Resident at Hyderabad, and in July 1782 succeeded Mr. Hollond as Resident at that place. On the 22nd April 1784 he resigned the post and was appointed Chief Sheristadar to the Board of Revenue on the 19th July, 1786.

James Grant is often referred to in Mr. Morris' *Life of Charles Grant*. It is clear from Charles Grant's letters that his cousin, "James Grant of Redcastle," in whatever employ he had even, went home to England in 1780.¹ In October, 1785, James visited Charles at Malda, when the latter writes:

"The 25th they took leave of us, to proceed up the country. J. G. leaving with new and greater impressions of the superiority of his political genius and attainments, particularly in the knowledge of the revenue business of the Company's possessions on the Coast and here, on which subject he has written treatises which must set him before all that have yet treated of them, and probably open his way to great distinction at home, whither he proposes going the ensuing season; but he is the same man otherwise, filled with this world and regardless of another."²

In Grant's view the zamindar is merely a state official, the right of property in the soil being absolutely vested in the state. Mr. Ascoli, in his short but invaluable treatise,³ has pointed out that the Committee of Revenue in 1786, "even after the passing of the Regulating Act of 1784, in a letter dated 30th March 1786, describe the status of the zamindar as a conditional office, and for that reason issued instructions to refrain from selling lands, which in our opinion belong to Government." There was then something like a *volte-face* performed by Grant in accepting the office of Sheristadar, which, as Mr. Ascoli puts it,⁴ had "the special object of reconstituting the kanungos' department and thus preparing the way for the great revival of the zamindars."

Had Grant possessed the lucid style of Shore, he would indeed have to be numbered with the great: but his utter inability to express himself intelligibly and to avoid inconsistencies renders his works almost unreadable. Even Shore, who would consult no less than five different texts of the *Ain-i-Akhbari*, in order to make sure of a reference, found that Grant defeated his patience. It is true, however, that the inconsistencies afford presumptive evidence of the genuineness of Grant's materials, for a writer, who does not grind down his facts but leaves them in the rough, has the credit which is due from the general experience that in matters of the kind inconsistency has to be expected. It must be confessed that it is exasperating to have to hunt for subject

¹ H. Morris: *The Life of Charles Grant* (London 1904), p. 37.

² *Ibid.*, p. 83. James was the son of Grant of Shewglie, and on his father's death added "Redcastle" to his family estate. Mr. Morris records that James' proposal to Charles' daughter Maria was refused by the lady on religious grounds. James died near Esher, 22nd October 1808. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

³ Ascoli: *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁴ Ascoli: *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

and object through one of Grant's lengthy sentences only to find that Grant is indulging in elephantine satire.¹

Grant tells us that his figures are based on twenty volumes of Persian accounts "procured through the influence of a light and private purse." A Government which could permit records of so essential an importance to pass into private hands must be a Government which endeavours "to make both ends meet" by "burning the candle at both ends." To the Government of India, being a "government by record," the disappearance of records must be in a special measure a disaster. That at so momentous a time as that of the preparation for a Permanent Settlement, the essential materials should, for the time being only, be recovered "by a light and private purse" is something which even our most efficient statesmen might well ponder over.

III.

Lord Cornwallis arrived in Calcutta on the 12th September 1786, and with him came John Shore, destined to a seat in the Supreme Council. We are told that Shore, from fears of "the pernicious influence of an Indian climate, seconded by the too-successful entreaties of a fond and over-anxious mother, induced Mrs. Shore to remain in England. On the 12th of April, 1786, the *Swallow* Packet set sail from Portsmouth, with its distinguished travellers—Shore "envied John the Painter, whose body he saw hanging in chains at the place of embarkation and amid the mournful images which haunted his mind, was that of Cleveland's² tomb, dark and dismal, ominous perhaps of his own not improbable doom." It was a gloom into which a study of the Company's records could fortunately intersperse some rays of light, while also Shore's melancholy, being of the late eighteenth century kind, could find relief in poetical effusion about the dove whose lot is

"to lament and mourn;
Whilst I with deeper anguish sigh,
In silence weep, and weeping die."

On the 21st January 1787, Shore was appointed a member of the Supreme Council, in succession to John Stables. On the 12th March he issued his first minute of importance in revenue matters—in regard to a plan, which was adopted, for making the district of each Collector more compact, the number being reduced from thirty-five to twenty-three.

From this point the papers contained in the present volume speak for themselves. It will be unnecessary to follow the remainder of Shore's career in this place, but a few facts may be briefly stated. The Bengal Appendix to the *Fifth Report* commences with Shore's minute of 18th June 1789 "respecting the Permanent Settlement of the Lands in the Bengal Provinces." The second minute, dated 18th September deals with the settlement of Bihar. Yet, on the 21st May, 1789 the following paragraph had appeared in the *Calcutta Gazette*:

¹ See above, vol. i, Introduction p. xxix.

² Cleveland (there is only one 'e' in the name) was a connection of Shore's. His tomb in the South Park St. Cemetery is in the bright sunshine,

“ We are happy to hear that the permanent assessment of the revenue is to take place in the Behar Province from the commencement of the ensuing Fussily year, beginning in September next. We are not at liberty to state at large the principles on which the arrangement, in this country called a settlement of the revenues, but in fact involving the most important proprietary rights of the subject, as well as the tax of Government, is to be formed ; but we venture to observe that the main principles admit a positive right of property in the landholders, in opposition to a system which has been maintained by some that the Zemindars and Talookdars of these Provinces are public officers only, and that the Sovereign is the only real proprietor of the lands, which he leases out as landlord instead of levying a tax on them as ruler. The most important benefits may be expected from this decision. The proprietor, stimulated by self interest, will improve his state to the utmost of his ability, without apprehension of losing the fruits of his improvements from an increase in his payments to Government, and without fear of dispossession from the management of another being deemed more likely to augment the produce of his lands to the State.”¹

It may be asked why if in May 1789 a “ permanent assessment ” at least so far as Bihar was concerned had been determined upon, Shore was at the pains to compile his lengthy minutes. The answer is that Shore was writing to meet the eye of the Court of Directors, on the understanding that their approval would be necessary to render the settlement permanent. The regulations for the Decennial Settlement of Bihar issued on the 18th September, 1789, the date of Shore’s second minute: those for Bengal issued on 10th February, 1790. It is, however, important to remember that the settlement had, prior to the issue of the formal regulations, been in course of development in certain districts during the preceding years, or as Sir William Hunter puts it, “ the Decennial Settlement was introduced not *per saltum* throughout the Provinces as a whole, but on a review of the circumstances of each locality, and district by district.”² With Shore’s minutes before them, the Court of Directors, in September 1792, resolved that the Decennial Settlement should be declared permanent.

“ They did so,” writes Sir William Hunter, “ not from any ‘ aristocratical prejudices,’ as Mill informs us, but on the broad economic grounds set forth by Lord Cornwallis. They regarded Bengal, Behar, and Orissa as a vast estate, of which one-third of the cultivable land lay waste. I say distinctly of the cultivable land.³ They could not reclaim the land themselves. They did not believe that any inducement short of a permanent tenure and a fixed assessment would tempt private individuals to reclaim it. After long deliberation, they decided that it was good policy to surrender their claims to any future increase of revenue, whether from such reclamations or from other sources connected with the

¹ Seton-Karr : *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette*, vol. ii. pp. 217-18.

² Hunter : *op. cit.*, p. 81.

³ *Selection of Papers from the Records of the East India House*, (folio, 1820) vol. i, p. 49.

land, in order to encourage the great work of extending and improving the cultivated area of Bengal. They thought that they would find themselves repaid by the general increase of revenue to be derived from the growth of the population and the material development of the country. They were convinced, to use their own striking words, that the magic touch of property would set a certain 'productive principle' in operation, which would abundantly recompense them in the future for the sacrifices then made. If ever there was a great question of administration decided upon what seemed at the time to be sound economic arguments, it was the Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

It would be unfair not to add, that the Court were also guided by considerations of a higher character than enter into ordinary business routine. They believed that the scheme of declaratory leases (*pattas*) would afford the same security to the cultivators which an unalterable land tax could give to the landholders. A fixed rent and a fixed land tax formed equally essential and integral features of their conception of a Permanent Settlement. Nor were they less hopeful of the aid which such a Settlement would render to the better Government of the Province. 'No conviction is stronger in our minds than that of all the generated evil of unsettled principles of administration, none has been more baneful than frequent variations in the assessment. It has reduced everything to temporary expedient, and destroyed all enlarged views of improvement. Impolitic as such a principle must be at all times, it is particularly so with respect to a dependent country, paying a large annual tribute, and deprived of many of its ancient supports. Such a country requires especially the aid of a productive principle of management... Long leases, with a view to the gradual establishment of a permanent system, though recommended upon the ground of safety, we must think would still continue in a certain degree the evils of the former practice; periodical corrections in the assessment would be, in effect, of the nature of a general increase, and would destroy the hope of a permanent system, with the confidence of exertion it is calculated to inspire."¹

On the 24th December, 1789 it was announced that Mr. Shore had resigned the office of President of the Board, and the Hon. C. Stuart had been appointed in his stead. In 1790 he gave evidence of an important nature at the trial of Warren Hastings. In 1792 he was created a baronet. From 28th October 1793 to 12th March, 1798 he was Governor-General of India, and was created Baron Teignmouth in the last named year. After his final return to England he kept alive his Indian interests, serving on the Board of Control from 1807 to 1828. His *Life of Sir William Jones* was published in 1804. He died on the 14th February 1854, and it is characteristic both of the man and his family that in the inscription on the monument to his memory in

¹ Hunter: op. cit., pp. 82-84. The declaratory leases were one of the greatest delusions of the scheme.

Marylebone Church, "President of the British and 'Foreign Bible Society" takes precedence of "Formerly Governor General of India."

IV.

The appendices to the *Fifth Report* are not only of supreme importance to the professional student of India Revenue but form a rich quarry of materials for students of Bengal history and geography. The conclusions derived by Grant from his records do not command confidence, and most students who have given time to the matter will concur with Mr. Ascoli in the view that "the weakest feature of Grant's case is his attempt to show that the assessment in the Mughal period was a practical figure capable of realization."¹ Apart, however, from the conclusions come to by Grant, it is to his treatises every student of Bengal and Bihar history must turn when he undertakes to recover the past history of any given district within those provinces.

V.

In the great revenue debate of 1775-76, Francis had approached the subject from the point of view of abstract political science, enforcing his views by quotations from Stewart, Smith, Montesquieu and the elder Mirabeau. During his stay in India, Francis seems to have taken little or no *direct* interest in the country and its inhabitants. On one occasion he made a journey as far as Krishnagar, where he visited the Rajah in his ruined palace; but usually Francis went no further afield than Hughli, Baraset, or Mr. Croftes' experimental gardens at Sukhsagar. The political outlook of Francis is that of the French School of Physiocrats²—the view that the laws which govern society are eternal and immutable truths, which, whether in India or in England, in Timbuctoo or Paris, it must be folly and ruin to endeavour to amend or to temper. Francis, imbued with an enthusiasm for cosmopolitan or international theories, was thus opposed to minute local inquiries, and inclined to pay but scant regard to opinions based on Indian experience.³ Relying on what we should at the present day describe as doctrinaire theories of social economy, Francis had been

¹ Ascoli: *op. cit.*, 47. Mr. Ascoli says on p. 49 "the methods of settlement did not admit of individual intrigue." Lord Teignmouth's son writes: "The settlement of the Revenue afforded to the Company's servants much scope for corruption; and some had realised vast sums, by receiving bribes from the landlords, in return for under-rating their rents. In this single mission to Dacca, Mr. Shore might easily, as he stated, have added £100,000 to his fortune." *Memoir of the Life*, vol. i, p. 75. There is, however, no evidence available for the assertion "some had realised vast sums."

² Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* appeared in 1776, too late to have influenced Francis' views which were probably derived from French sources—Quesnay, Mirabeau, Turgot, &c.

³ Francis in 1779 wrote: "Mr. Hastings is, literally and exclusively a man of parts. There is not a single principle, moral or political, either in his head or his heart. One natural effect of this character is that, when he means best he begins his building at the top, or with some room with an agreeable prospect, and never thinks of a foundation till the whole edifice falls to pieces for want of it. Another is, that he is uncommonly dexterous at extricating himself out of difficulties, which with a very moderate portion of common sense, and the tenth part of his microscopic sagacity, he might have averted. I am not sure that his vanity is not concerned in preferring the intricacy of a labyrinth to any plain road on which he must travel with the multitude. 'I detest general principles' is a common motto with him." Parkes and Merivale, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 81.

as facile in dealing with historical facts as he had been scornful of provincial experience. He was never tired of repeating that the original Mughal assessment had been a light one, and that it had been levied on persons whom he identified with the zamindars. Mr. Vincent Smith, in his recently published work, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, rightly says that Akbar's revenue settlement was extremely severe. "Akbar asked for one-third, that is to say double the Indian and Persian proportion...Akbar did not recognise the existence of a landlord class. He left the actual cultivator as much of the crops as was considered necessary for tolerable existence, and took the rest for the state."¹

Shore, as a young man, may have been very deeply impressed by the polite learning of the nimble-witted master to whom he had attached himself, but the very nature of his professional work compelled Shore to saturate his mind in Bengal economic life, and, in dealing with Grant, he claims for himself the advantage of professional training and experience over personal ingenuity and abstract argument.

VI.

It may be pardoned if we recall the story of the short-sighted maid servant who came into collision with the cross-eyed butler. "Why don't you look where you are going," exclaimed wounded composity. "Why don't you go where you look?" rebuked the malapert. Grant, with the historical pre-occupation, comes into collision with Shore with the professional pre-occupation. The remarkable thing is that although the two writers come into collision, Grant arguing that Bengal was under-assessed and Shore contending that assessment was high there is a conclusion they both substantiate. Shore's whole argument from experience shows that experience had to confess it was not yet sufficiently ripe to yield decisions. A very considerable advance has been made in any department of thought when the thinker has arrived at the stage when he is able to test his achievements, and confess with candour "I do not know enough yet to be able to make a statement." Brilliant statements usually belong to the infancy, not to the maturity of thought. It is this position which Shore occupies in his great minutes. It was, of course, the maturity of knowledge, which much to the disgust of a Scotch pupil, led Nettleship to declare himself unable to solve a difficult passage in Plato. "You are paid to tell us" exclaimed the indignant pupil: but Nettleship's hesitation was worth more than he was ever paid. Grant, on the other hand, while placing the utmost reliance on the twenty volumes of Persian accounts, "procured through the influence of a light and private purse," in the end has to plead for the institution of a detailed hast-o-bud, and in so doing, he admits that his historical survey had failed to provide an adequate basis on which practical proposals could be based.

As to Grant's contention that during the period of twenty years onward from 1765, there had been systematic defalcations in the

¹ Smith: *Akbar the Great Mogul*, pp. 377-78. "The cultivated area in Akbar's time was very much smaller than it is now, but Akbar's share of the crops estimating the Rupee at 2s. 3d. was worth £20,000,000." *Ibid.*, p. 379. In Kashmir Akbar took half the crop. For the Revenue Regulations of Aurangzib, see an article by Jadunath Sarkar in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. ii, no. 6 (New Series). Consult also Thomas: *The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire*.

revenue collections amounting to ten crores of rupees, we may well remain sceptical. Muhammad Riza Khan had in 1772 been brought to trial on the score of alleged defalcations, and fully acquitted, and it is Muhammad Riza Khan whom Grant describes as the great criminal, charging him explicitly with a misappropriation of Rs. 2,40,00,000.¹ Grant's argument depends on the assumption that the gross amounts of the Mughal assessments were regularly realised in practice—an assumption which can scarcely be maintained in view of what has been already said in chapter 2 of the Introduction to the first volume of the present work. Assuming that Grant's Persian documents are genuine, it seems clear that they are not susceptible of the direct method of analysis to which Grant has submitted them: they may be taken as budgets rather than cash accounts.²

VII.

The student of the *Fifth Report* should also study a work of some considerable importance:—

“*A Sketch of some Late Arrangements, and a View of the Rising Resources in Bengal.* By Thomas Law,³ Esq., Late a Member of the Council of Revenue in Fort William. London. Printed for John Stockdale, Piccadilly. MDCCXCII.”

With all the known financial ability of his distinguished family, Law pleads in this work the cause of an open trade in India, the excellence of the Mukarrari tenures in Bihar, and in a masterly way he exposes the weakness of the then existing system of criminal justice. It is a great merit in this work that the author is able to recognise the contribution of both Hastings and Francis to Indian progress.

The student should also study with great care a work entitled *The Zemindary Settlement of Bengal*, published in two volumes at Calcutta in 1879.

WALTER K. FIRMINGER.

¹ Mr. Ascoli (op. cit., p. 48) points out that in 1788 Muhammad Riza Khan owed Jagat Seth, the banker, Rs. 3,00,000. It may be added that in March, 1788 he mortgaged old Government House to Captain Thomas Burgess for Ct. Rs. 1,07,733. *Bengal: Past and Present*, vol. xiv, pp. 176-77. See also P. C. Mazumdar: *The Musnud of Murshidabad*, pp. 210-12.

² Compare with Grant's statement (below p. 376) about the value of the revenue of Sylhet the following words of the Collector, the Hon. R. Lindsay: "During the Mogul Government Sylhet contributed little or nothing towards defraying the expences of the State. On the contrary, considerable sums of money were remitted from the seat of Government for its defence against the incursions of the hill people, who were represented to be more formidable than was actually the case. The appointment of the foudjar was generally held by one of the Nabob's nearest relations, or confidential friends. To him it was in fact a *faghire* and little more was expected by Government than a few choice elephants some chunam, oranges, and birds of handsome plumage." Firminger: *Sylhet District Records*, vol. ii, No. 294.

³ For the Law family in Bengal, see *Bengal: Past and Present*, vol. iii., pp. 370-71. This member of the family I think, is a son of Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle and a brother of the first Baron Ellenborough and the Bishop of Elphin and Bath and Wells. In 1793 he went to America, where he made the acquaintance of Talleyrand, to endeavour to establish a national currency and died at Washington in 1834. He would, in this case, be the uncle of the Governor-General, the first Earl of Ellenborough and great-uncle of the famous Jesuit Missionary on the Zambesi—Augustus Henry Law. A portion of Gaya, originally known as Eajahabad, was renamed Sahebgunj, in memory of improvements made there by T. Law.