

# PARLIAMETARY INFLUENCE AND OFFICIAL INTRIGUE.

RECENTLY DISCLOSED OF THE INQUIRY BEFORE A SELECT  
COMMITTEE ON THE AFFAIR OF

## THE AMEER OF SCINDE;

W. F. FINLASON, ESQ.

London: 1858.



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RECENTLY DISCLOSED OF THE INQUIRY BEFORE A SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON THE AFFAIR OF

## THE AMEER OF SCINDE;

WITH

A NOTICE OF THE AUTHORITIES ON THE SUBJECT OF PARLIAMENTARY  
CORRUPTION, AND A NARRATIVE OF THE CASE, TAKEN

FROM THE EVIDENCE.

BY

**W. F. FINLASON, ESQ.**

Of the middle temple, barrister-at-law; "common law procedure," etc.

"These transactions certainly form a singular revelation of official life in the present day. . . . The case is worthy of the most serious consideration of the house and the country. ... A stringent resolution will be expected from the house if it desires to maintain its fame and dignity." – The Times,  
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## PREFACE.

There is a general impression that the Committee miscarried, and that the inquiry was abortive, no decision having been given on the main point raised, whether the bargain *admitted* by the Member, was not in *reality* a bargain for a pecuniary benefit, to be acquired only by the successful use of his Parliamentary influence with a Minister of State. Moreover, there are other questions upon which the disclosures elicited have a public interest; for instance, the apparent existence of a system, or practice, of so using Parliamentary influence, its probable effect; in producing a kind of traffic between Ministers and Members; and its tendency to the perversion of official power, for the purpose of crushing individuals whom it is apprehended may disclose the secrets of their intrigues. And at the present period, when such attention is drawn to the question of the double government of India, the inquiry has an interest in another way – that it throws light upon the comparative merits of the two departments of that system, and tends to show that the peccant part is not the Government of the Court of Directors, but of the Board of Control; and that corrupt intrigues are actually carried on by means of the influence of Members of the House of Commons. It is in that latter point of view that the subject is of the deepest and broadest importance, for it affects the whole character of our representative institutions, and illustrates the *practical working* of our constitutional government under the present system. A Committee of the House of Commons have in effect, decided that there is nothing worthy of censure in the transactions here narrated. Let the public judge.

The two great points are not merely whether the particular bargain *admitted* by the Member did not create a direct pecuniary interest in the subject, nor even whether the system of a paid advocacy in Parliament is constitutional (for *advocacy*, paid or unpaid, if *open*, and in the face of Parliament, will be duly estimated), but whether a system of *secret* advocacy carried on by a Member with a Minister is not necessarily fraught with evils infinitely worse. The Committee, however, have managed to blink *all* these questions; upon the last, indeed, they have rather indicated an opinion that such proceedings are either not within their province (as not being “proceedings in *Parliament!*”) or perfectly unobjectionable ; for they absolved the Member on the ground that during the time covered by the contract he took “no proceedings in Parliament” – a distinction absolutely the reverse of what obtains in courts of law, where what is secret is always in such cases regarded with most jealousy.

*Temple, March, 1858*

# PARLIAMENTARY INFLUENCE

## AND

### OFFICIAL INTRIGUE.

On the 2nd May, 1695, it was resolved by the House of Commons "That the offer of any money or other advantage to any Member of Parliament, for the promoting of any matter whatsoever depending or to be transacted in Parliament, is a high crime and misdemeanor, and tends to the subversion of the English constitution."<sup>1</sup> And Mr. May, in his able work on the "Privileges of Parliament," gives a great many instances in which the House of Commons have decided what is an "interest" which disqualifies a Member even from voting, and which was thus defined by Mr. Speaker Abbott:—"It must be a direct pecuniary interest, and separately belonging to the persons whose votes are questioned, and not in common with the rest of the nation, or on a matter of state policy."<sup>2</sup>

There is, moreover, a whole body of legislation directed against the influence of interest, whether in municipal or judicial tribunals, and, above all, in Parliament itself. Town commissioners, &c., are always liable to penalties if they vote on questions on which they are interested. "Government contractors, being supposed," says Mr. May,<sup>3</sup> "to be liable to the influence of their employers, are disqualified from serving in Parliament. The Act 22 Geo. III., c. 45, declares that any person, who shall directly or indirectly undertake any contract with a Government department, shall be incapable of being elected, or of sitting or voting." The penalties for violation of the Act are peculiarly severe. A contractor sitting or voting is liable to forfeit £500 for every day on which he shall sit or vote. By the standing orders of the House of Commons, opposed private Bills are referred to a Chairman and four Members *not locally or otherwise interested*,<sup>4</sup> to whom are added, in certain cases, Members representing the county or borough to which the Bill relates. Each member of a railway committee, and each member not locally or otherwise interested of a committee on opposed private Bills,

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<sup>1</sup> Com. Journ. 381; May's Proc. of Parl. 285.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. 281.

<sup>3</sup> May's Parliamentary Law, &c. p. 34, 2nd edit,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 524.

before he is entitled to attend and vote, is required to sign a declaration that his constituents have no local interest, and that he has no personal interest, in the bill.<sup>5</sup>

Twenty years ago it was declared to be contrary to the law and usage of Parliament for any Member to be engaged in the management of private Bills for pecuniary reward. This was resolved in the case of Mr. D. W. Harvey, on the ground that it was derogatory to the dignity of the House that any of its Members should be actively engaged in the conduct of business commonly called private business, whether individually or in partnership. The House, at the same time, refused to resolve, that it is destructive of the ends of public and private justice, and inconsistent with the duty of any Member, to vote in committee on any Bill in which he is directly or personally interested. But it was opposed only on the ground stated by Mr. Croker, "that the law of *Parliament always was that a Member interested could not vote*, and that therefore the further resolution was worse than nothing, *because it restricted that non-voting to committees only.*" This, no doubt, put the question on its right basis, one of general principle, not of formal rule.

The cases of private Bills, however, like railway Bills, are comparatively unimportant; as they, after all, involve interests almost private, or so far of an internal and domestic character, as not to affect the general policy of the country. Yet even upon these matters Courts of Law have laid down principles and doctrines which show that the question is not one of standing orders or of rules, but of morality, honesty, and public policy. The question arose in 1839, in the Courts of Westminster,<sup>6</sup> in an action in which Lord Howden sued on a contract, by which it was agreed that he should withdraw his opposition to a Bill for a railway in a certain direction near his mansion, and that on a Bill for another line being passed, he should receive £5,000 as compensation. In that case a Court of Error laid it down that such a contract would be void, as corrupt, if it were *secret*, and such that it "placed his private interest in conflict with his public duty as a Peer in Parliament;" and unless his quality of Peer in no way affected the bargain in question, and he was left, notwithstanding the agreement, to exercise his free judgment, and give or withhold his vote, according to his conscience, upon the measure when it came before him in his legislative capacity. If it were proved that the money was really paid as a consideration for Lord Howden's giving his vote for or withholding his vote against the Bill, it would be *a corrupt and illegal contract.*" Yet that was a matter in which the peer had, by reason of his own property, a precedent lawful personal interest; and the bill was private, and in the nature of a contract with the landowners, of whom he was one. The money was to be paid as a compensation for injury to his land, and it did not appear the contract was any *secret* "And," said the court, "though he was a Member of Parliament, that would not affect his right to make

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 529.

<sup>6</sup> 10 Ad. & Ellis's Reports, 793.

any such bargain for the sale of *his own land*. If it did, a Peer or Member of Parliament would be placed in a worse position than any private individual.”

In that case the present Mr. Justice Cresswell, arguing for the noble lord, said it was not an admitted principle that a Member might not vote in cases affecting his interests: “if it were,” he said, “no proprietor of East-India stock could vote on a question relative to the charters of the East-India Company.” These are, however, not cases of “interest” within the definition of Speaker Abbott or the Courts of Law, but cases of general legislation, in which the common interest of the citizen counterbalances the special interest; and the particular interest, moreover, is held in common with so large a class as to prevent it from being of a *peculiar* or particular character, and, indeed, to make the question of interest practically idle; the interest being, moreover, notorious, tacitly acquiesced in, and not excepted to. The gist of corruption is *secrecy*.

Thus the Court of Queen’s Bench will quash any decision of magistrates in a case in which they are interested, unless they *avow their* interest, and the parties concerned waive the *objection*.<sup>7</sup> For this reason it is well known that judges who happen to be shareholders in public companies, or even ratepayers in particular parishes, withdraw from the bench when cases came on in which their companies or parishes are interested, or, at all events, mention the fact, and offer to withdraw.

These, however, are comparatively unimportant cases, and are only put as illustrations of the principle and as showing that it is one of universal application, resting upon natural justice. Whatever is corrupt is immoral; and of course the stain of corruption is the deeper and the darker when it attaches to the exercise of functions legislative or judicial. The functions of Members of Parliament partake often of both characters: when called upon to adjudicate on the cases of individuals complaining of the conduct of the Government, these functions are rather judicial, and they are acting in their most solemn character as the “grand inquest of the nation;” and they have obviously *opportunities* of carrying on a double or reciprocal system of corruption, making a market with individuals of their influence with the Government, and acquiring that influence either by exercising or refraining to exercise their functions in that most sacred capacity. Such a system may be used to secure objects which, under the old borough mongering system, were far more honestly obtained by the simple process of sending nominees to Parliament—a practice which could of course be resorted to by Indian princes, or by any other wealthy person, and had at least the merit of being comparatively avowed, or at all events not secret.

During the debates on the Reform Bill, Lord Brougham was wont to declaim about the Nabob of Arcot, and his command of seats in the House of Commons. In a reformed Parliament it appears that nabobs have found a way equally efficacious. If they have

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<sup>7</sup> The Queen *v.* The Cheltenham Commissioners, 1 Queen’s Bench Reports, 472.

not the seats, they have the "interest" of the Members, and can command their influence with the Government.

It appears that it is not an uncommon thing for members of the House of Commons, who profess to take an "interest" in the cases of the Indian princes, who complain of grievances, to have interviews with the President of the Board of Control on behalf of their clients, whether lawyers or not; and the late President has declared that he had *heard it generally stated that Members of Parliament and people who advocated Indian claims received presents for it.* (Mr. V. Smith, 1631.) Such interviews occurred it seems in the cases of the Rajah of Sattara and the Nawab of Surat (*ib.* 1623), and doubtless in many others. Such interviews with the President also took place in the case of the Ameer of Scinde. Interviews, and something more, took place in that case; whether what occurred in that case had occurred before in others, the public can only conjecture; but from the history of that case will be apt to draw shrewd inferences as to the past, which is veiled in secret, save so far as the veil was for an instant removed by the President of the Board of Control, allowing only a transient glimpse into the mystery of Parliamentary influence.

In 1856, the Ameer's agent, Mr. Coffey, a gentleman who had held a high official post in Scinde, and had left it (with high testimonials) to enter into the Ameer's service, got introduced to Mr. Butt, a member of the House of Commons,<sup>8</sup> and secured his services on behalf of the Ameer in Parliament. Mr. Butt stated that when there was a conversation about offering him a general retainer, his *feeling* was that he would rather not have a retainer, or be professionally concerned, "as that would leave him *more free to advocate the case in Parliament.*" (Butt, 2319.) So it is clear he was to advocate the case in Parliament. At the same time he received fees, nominally as a lawyer, though there was no law in the case, as he saw at a glance; "all open, all legal efforts failed." On the 21st of June he received a "consultation fee" to attend a conference with the counsel of the Ameer as to the course to be taken (Butt, 1829), at which conference he instantly arrived at the conclusion that the only remedy was by bringing the case before Parliament. (*Ib.* 1833.) Subsequently he prepared a petition, and presented it himself. (*Ib.* 1836.) At a subsequent conference, for which he stated that he refused a fee (1843), it was determined that a petition should be presented to the Queen in Council, and that no proceeding in Parliament should be taken until that petition was disposed of. This was very much to his annoyance, as he thought the true *field for action was Parliament*—with what reason will be seen. He shortly afterwards, however, moved for papers (*ib.* 1842), and tried to bring the case as apropos of the Indian budget (*ib.*), but he failed.

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<sup>8</sup> They were both Irishmen, and Mr. Butt had known the brother of Mr. Coffey, who was a barrister, for many years. This is important with reference to what follows in regard to a lady who figured in the case, and was known by Mr. Butt to be an esteemed friend of the family.



In January, 1857, there was a petition to the Queen, which was rejected. In February, 1857, Mr. Butt received another fee for attending a "consultation" of the Ameer's counsel (1868); "it was strictly a professional consultation;" "all the counsel who attended the conference, two of whom were Members, received their fees in the ordinary way; it was strictly a legal consultation" (1868), although there was nothing "legal" in the case; for, as Mr. Butt had judged the year before, there was no redress in any legal tribunal (Butt, 1833), not even by a Petition of Right, the Ameer being (in theory, at all events) an independent prince. (*Ib.*) "It was a question of policy not of law;" it was the "act of the Government;" "there was no appeal to the Privy Council;" "the only remedy would be in Parliament." Therefore these "consultations" could only have related to proceedings in *Parliament*, and it was always Mr. Butt's opinion that in Parliament the work was to be done, and there it was done. Let it be seen how.

Immediately after the last consultation came on the debate on the China war; and in that debate Mr. Butt voted with the Government of Lord Palmerston, which made some of the Ameer's friends fancy he would not be a fit man to press the case in Parliament. Mr. Butt said, "You are wrong;" and the event showed that he was right. He knew the illuminative power of the China vote. It had, indeed, separated him from his own party (who were out), but it had given him a great claim, for that every reason, on the other party, who were in. He had made a noble sacrifice of party interest; he was sure the minister would appreciate it. He opened a negotiation with the Board of Control (*ib.* 1877), and he succeeded. Mr. Butt was better than a lawyer; he saw that the "legal consultations wasted time" (1875); he was a practical man, and he went to the Minister. And he went the right way to work with him; for a whole year he had labored without result—now he had made an impression. It was about *March*, 1857, that Mr. V. Smith began to see the strength of the Ameer's claim. (Mr. V. Smith, 1517-1519.)

Mr. Butt felt his advantage, and pressed it well. He wrote a letter to Mr. Vernon Smith, and in that letter (which was private) pointed out that "there was a very strong case against the Government;" "that the discussion of cases, in which the honour of the Government was damaged, was always to be avoided, if possible, and that this might be avoided." (1877.) Mr. Butt was pre-eminently a practical man; he "took care, when he thought he had a strong point, to write the Minister as long a letter as possible, and took care that it should go to his house on Saturday, that he should have it for his Sunday reading." (1877.) The result of these Sunday readings, and the reflections they suggested, on the "strong points" of Mr. Butt's case (not omitting his China vote), was that "Mr. Vernon Smith said he was very much disposed to take tolerably the same view as Mr. Butt of the case; but that a memorial should be sent to the Company, in which they were to be asked to concede that case without censuring their former judgment." (*Ib.* 1878.) This seemed (very naturally) to Mr. Butt a difficult thing to do; whereupon the Minister paid him the compliment of saying that he was quite certain he (Mr. Butt) would do it dexterously. (*Ib.*) Then it was that Mr. Butt had his interviews with the Chairman and ex-Chairman of the Company (Ev. of Sir J. W. Hogg

and Mr. Mangles), whose conduct in the transaction contrasts very favorably with that of the President; and at a time when so much obloquy is heaped upon the Company, and so much abuse upon the "double Government," it is worth noticing that throughout this transaction all the intrigue is with the Board of Control, not the Court of Directors, and that the effect of secret Parliamentary influence told, not upon the East-India Company, but the Ministry. The Directors, who were canvassed, continued firm, and adhered to their previous decision, although it was plainly intimated to them at the same time by Mr. Butt that, if the Court of Directors did not make the concession which he demanded, it would be his duty to bring the matter before Parliament. (*Ib.* 1306.) Mr. Butt told the late Chairman that his "attention had been drawn" to the case, and that "he had very diligently inquired into the case." He "spoke strongly of his own feeling as to the injustice that had been done" towards the Ameer; and that, "influenced by a strong sense of this injustice," he should certainly bring the matter before the House of Commons, unless the Court of Directors would mitigate the sentence." (Sir J. Hogg, 1216.) And the late Chairman "considered that Mr. Butt had called upon him as a Member of the House of Commons who had taken up the case of some particular person that was injured?" (*Ib.* 1216.) Quite from a sense of justice; nothing else. So thought the hon. ex-Chairman. Yet it was hardly so. For at that time, as will be seen, Mr. Butt was contemplating a lucrative contract with the Ameer to take effect only in the event of his succeeding in those exertions (2296) – a contract to go out with him to India for £10,000. The Directors were unaware of this; yet they acted with courteous firmness.

The "Chairs" were inexorable, as will be seen, but Mr. Butt was indefatigable. He prepared a memoir to be presented to the Court of Directors, but first he submitted it to Mr. Vernon Smith, who was struck with the strength of the case it made out, showing, as it did, that Sir C. Napier declared that the Ameer had been cheated, that Lord Ellenborough to a great extent admitted his claim, and that Lord Dalhousie had in a minute formally recommended that the Ameer should be restored to his patrimonial estates. (*Ib.* 1883.) The Minister said, "One thing is clear, I agree with Sir C. Napier that even if the Ameer tried to cheat us, *we did cheat him.*" The Ameer had justice on his side; and what was better, he had the support of a practical man who knew his way to the Minister. He had communications with Mr. Vernon Smith respecting the subject "repeatedly (1884) up to the end of June, 1857." "The communications he had with the President were very confidential." (1885.) Very; the whole affair was eminently "confidential." It is the *secrecy* of these negotiations which is to be observed, coupled with the obvious interest of the advocate.

The Ameer was to go out to India, "if he was satisfied." (Butt, 1923.) And the Ameer had been constantly pressing his advocate, Mr. Butt, to go out to India with him. (*Ib.* 1930.) "During the month of June there was a constant pressure on the part of the Ameer for his advocate to assent." (*Ib.*) And there was no refusal on his part; indeed, Mr. Butt was "anxious to go, all through the month of June" (1928); that is, through all

the time during which he was so exerting himself with the Minister (1885) and preparing the memorial to the Court, which was presented early in July. (2099.)

Long before the memorial was answered – in the course of July – the Ameer’s advocate appears to have learnt positively “that the answer would be unfavorable” (1937); whereupon he wrote a strong letter to the Minister (*ib.*); and this produced a kind note: “Dear sir, I shall be happy to see you at the Board of Control.” (*Ib.*) Before the answer to the memorial came – before the end of July – Mr. Butt had come to an understanding with the Minister that the Ameer was to go to India (2067), and that the matter was to be referred back, generally, to the Indian Government for him to make his claims to them. (2083.) This was afterwards altered.

Now, be it observed, that Mr. Butt had then entered into an agreement with the Ameer to go to India to prosecute his claim before the authorities there (2098), having been anxious to go. (1928.) Before he got the answer of the Court he entered into this agreement (2100); and it was understood between him and Mr. Smith that any adverse decision of the Court of Directors would be overruled. (2105.) The agreement was that he should receive £10,000; half on leaving the country, and half in India. (2108.) Shortly after that, in order to test, as he said, the sincerity of the Ameer, he asked him for £500, and got £300. (2110.)

In the mean time – that is, in the month of July (2033) – one Sunday morning Ali Akbar had a conversation with Mr. Butt about the Ameer’s money, in which, he says, it was suggested to him that Mr. Coffey had received large sums for which he had not accounted, to the amount of £6,500. To which Mr. Butt states that he made this curious answer: “To my knowledge the Ameer has been very wasteful of his money; and if Mr. Coffey has not had more than £6,500, I do not think that he has spent it wrongfully.” It is plain from this that Mr. Butt knew how the Ameer was spending his money; and there is a passage in his evidence which shows that he was aware of something else upon that head, which is very material. *lie* then states that he was made acquainted with the lady already alluded to, as a friend of his old friends the Coffey family, and was made aware that she “had been of considerable use to the Ameer,” – introducing him to different persons, &c. This is further explained by her evidence that she made purchases for him in articles of which a lady only could judge. However, the result of the conference with Ali Akbar was that Mr. Butt went to the Ameer, and insisted on seeing him alone (2033), telling Mr. Coffey that he must not be present. (2034.) In answer to his questions, however, the Ameer declared it to be utterly untrue that Mr. Coffey had cheated him, said that he had given him accounts, and declared that he had confidence in him. (*Ib.*) Whether this contented Mr. Butt or not, is doubtful. It did seem not. Some how or other he was moved to ask the Ameer whether any one had ever represented to him that any money of his had been used for the purpose of obtaining support in Parliament?” (2034.) At the very same time there was an agreement between him and the Ameer that he was to receive £10,000 for going out to India to advocate his claims there (2107), the Ameer having obtained the Minister’s consent to

his going there entirely through the exertions of Mr. Butt (2088), and it having been entirely obtained through the threat, on his part, that the case was one which should be brought before Parliament. (1937.) Mr. Butt succeeded in persuading the Committee that this was not obtaining money for Parliamentary support. Yet certainly it was Parliamentary influence which secured the Ameer the partial restoration he received. For the Minister admitted (1598) that not until he had the interviews with Mr. Butt did he arrive at any opinion that some investigation was due to the Ameer. (1597.)

The Court of Directors adhered to their former judgment against him, and the Minister investigated it. (1588, 1590.) The Court sent on the 12th of August a draft letter rejecting the Ameer's memorial. (1291.) Between that day and the 19th, the Minister saw Mr. Butt (1612), who came to him very frequently at that period (*ib.*); and on the 19th of August the draft was returned, corrected and altered by the Minister (1341–1616), containing a concession, to a certain extent, of the Ameer's claim (1340), a concession which was yielded to by the Court from a fear of being "left in the lurch" by the Minister. (1336.) The Court had written a letter, and sent it up to the Board of Control for approval, altogether rejecting the petition of Ali Moorad, and standing on their first decision; but when the President of the Board of Control altered that, and the Chairman perceived that he was not disposed to contest the matter in the House of Commons, he saw that it was better to make a compromise. (1348.) Thus, then, the Court of Directors were influenced by the Minister, and the Minister by the advocate of the Ameer: and how? By the threats of Parliamentary action which were made to the Minister (1937), and to the Chairman (1315- 22) and ex-Chairman (1296) of the Court of Directors.

By these means, then, Mr. Butt got the Ameer leave to go out and submit his claims to the Indian Government; and at the same time agreed for £10,000 to go out and advocate those claims there. But he had a pledge that they should be conceded.

This part of the case must be clearly understood.

So early as the 20th June, the proposal to him to go out to India was made (2381), and on the 7th July the memorial he had agreed upon with the Minister was sent in. (2396.) Meantime he pressed the Chairman, the ex-Chairman, and the Minister, with the inconvenience of having the case discussed in Parliament (2326), arranged with the Minister that the Ameer should go to India, and with the Ameer that he himself should go with him for £10,000; on the 19th August he obtained the assent to his proposal; and on the 24th received £2,000 from the Ameer, and lodged it in a bank. (2357.) It was the reference to the Bombay Government which made the Ameer wish Mr. Butt to go with him (2411), and this reference was arranged with Mr. V. Smith before the bargain as to the £10,000 (*ib.*), Mr. Butt having been for some time "anxious to go." (1928.) Had it not been for the influence of Mr. Butt in Parliament, the Ameer would not have had leave to go; if he had not, then Mr. Butt would not have gone; but if he had to go, he was to

get £10,000. So that in trying to get the Ameer leave to go, he was in effect getting his £10,000, half of which was to be paid before he left. Was not this a pecuniary interest?

At the end of July, the Ameer was taken by Mr. Butt to the Minister, who told him that he was safe in going out to India; that he would be received as a friend, and in the favour of the Government; and he was clearly given to understand that his lands would be restored to him (2191), so clearly, that Mr. Butt said to him, "Now, you have heard this assurance you need not rely on me any more." The Ameer, nevertheless wanted a dispatch, to make assurance sure, and repeatedly asked Mr. Butt for it, who told him that it would be sent to India. (2195.) Some how or other the Ameer did not go for well nigh another month, and Mr. Butt professed he "was puzzled" to account for his delay (2202), although he acknowledges that at one time he thought the Ameer was waiting for the reply of the Court of Directors, which he (Mr. Butt) thought extremely "foolish." (2203.) Nevertheless, the result showed that the Ameer was right, for on the 20th August he got a reply; on the 21st he paid his advocate £2,000; and at the same time bills for £8,000 were secured, which Mr. Butt had ascertained would be discounted. (2227.) The object of the Ameer was attained, and on the 22nd of August he started for Trieste, in company with Mr. Coffey.

It is important now to mark the position of the respective parties. Mr. Butt had received £2,300 in cash and secured bills for £8,000, upon a bargain, as he says, for £10,000, to go out to India. The amounts, it will be observed, do not tally with that total, and he tried to explain that difficulty; but no matter: taking his own statement, he had on the 22nd August, 1857, cash to the amount of £2,300, and had procured bills to the amount of £8,000, on that professed bargain to go to India. At the same time it is clear that in his own opinion it was not necessary for the interests of the Ameer that he should go; for he himself said to the Ameer, "Now you have heard that assurance of the Minister, you need not rely on me any more" (2192); a clear assurance that the Ameer's lands would be restored to him on his arrival in India. Mr. Butt distinctly denied that the money was to be paid in England, if he obtained from the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, by his negotiation, the full restoration of the Turban lands (2295), or that he ever received or got one penny of money, except for the express and direct purpose of going to India." (2296.) Therefore by his account it was a contract that he was bound to go to India. Nevertheless he did not go. He represented that he was bound to go if the Ameer thought it necessary (2257), and that this necessity, in the Ameer's idea, would depend upon whether a dispatch could be procured by Mr. Butt to be sent out to India. If such a dispatch was sent, the Ameer would probably feel safe; if not, he might require Mr. Butt's pressure to enforce his claims. A copy of the reply of the Court would, of course, be sent out, and might amount to the same thing as a dispatch: if not, the poor Ameer got neither Mr. Butt nor the dispatch; and this, as will be seen, caused great discontent in the Ameer's mind. All this, of course, was pregnant with peril to Mr. Butt and to the Board.

When the Ameer left England, Mr. Butt thought that Mr. E. Coffey was to go to Bombay with him (2228),—a man who certainly, under the circumstances, would be more likely to be useful to him than a lawyer, especially as the Ameer had the Minister's assurance that his lands should be restored ; for Mr. E. Coffey had held a high office in the Ameer's country, Scinde, which he had resigned, to serve the Ameer, not as his secret, but his avowed agent, in which capacity he had secured the unavowed services of his Parliamentary advocate, Mr. Butt. Mr. Coffey, moreover, had high testimonials from Mr. Frere, the Commissioner of Scinde, and the very man with whom the Ameer would have to do. If any man's services could be useful to the Ameer, it certainly would have been Mr. Coffey. What the Ameer could have done with an Irish barrister in Scinde, or what use he could have made of him, is hard to say. And so perhaps thought Mr. Butt; for he did not go. But he kept the money. The idea of his going to India, after the final assurance of the Minister, seems to have vanished from his mind, so Mr. Coffey went with the Ameer to Trieste; and the Ameer went minus £2,300.

But then Mr. Coffey might not unnaturally think within himself, and tell the Ameer: "Why should Mr. Butt keep your £2,300, and why should he have the £8,000 bills, if he is not going out to India?" Mr. Butt admitted that he received the £2,300 on the positive understanding that he would go (2253), and that he made up his mind afterwards not to go (2263), yet he did not return the money. And Mr. Coffey, he might naturally apprehend, might urge the Ameer to demand in that event the return of the money. Mr. Butt himself told the Ameer, that if he did not go, he would return it. (2255.) Then it is clear that Mr. Butt had the strongest interest to separate the Ameer from Mr. Coffey, and send him on to India by himself. And this is just what took place, as will be seen. But there is something else to be noted first: viz., that Mr. Coffey could have no manner of interest in preventing the Ameer from going to India. Mr. Butt's interest was to get the Ameer off as quickly as possible, and other parties had that interest too, and for other reasons, in which Mr. Butt shared.

"It was considered desirable by the Board of Control to get the man away from the country; it was very troublesome, and on other accounts." (What this meant, the past narrative will explain.) "It was considered desirable to get him to Scinde. At the Board of Control it was considered proper to give him every assistance they could to get him away as quickly as possible." (Sir G. Clerk, 1812.) Very natural. The further he was off the better for the Minister of the Board of Control, whose "interviews" and "negotiations" with Mr. Butt would infallibly come out, if the Ameer should be induced by Mr. Coffey to demand from Mr. Butt the repayment of the £2,300.

Thus the Board of Control and Mr. Butt had a common interest in separating Mr. Coffey from the Ameer, and getting the Ameer out to Scinde as soon as possible. It is not surprising, then, that they are found working together for that end and that they attain their object. By what means it remains now to disclose; and is by far the worst feature in this whole transaction.

“Mr. Butt had been frequently at the Board of Control, as a Member of Parliament taking a great interest in the case” (to the extent of £10,000); “and he represented to the President, as he had desired that the Ameer should embark for India as soon as possible, that he was stopped at Trieste, or somewhere, by Mr. Coffey, and he proposed to go himself in order to send him forth to India.” (Sir G. Clerk, 1792.) Mr. Butt said “that Mr. Coffey was eating up the Ameer” (1812)—a metaphorical phrase, implying the exhaustion of his finances—a process in which Mr. Butt had certainly had a share, since he at that moment had £2,300 of the Ameer’s money in his pocket. Some how or other, it happened that about that time the Board came to have a memorandum which “tallied very much with that statement;” and which the Permanent Secretary to the Board, Sir G. Clerk, thought had come from Ali Akbar (1812), the very individual who had the conversation with Mr. Butt some time before about Mr. Coffey, which resulted in Mr. Butt seeing the Ameer alone, and speaking to him behind Mr. Coffey ‘a back ; but on which occasion the Ameer denied that Mr. Coffey had cheated him, and declared that he had confidence in him, rather than in Ali Akbar. In the memorandum of this worthy, it is stated against Mr. Coffey that he had received two sums of £300 and £2,000 from the Ameer—those being the identical sums which he had paid to Mr. Butt.

It is hardly credible, but is nevertheless stated by the “Permanent Secretary,” who presented this paper to Mr. Butt for him to make use of against Mr. Coffey (1812), that Mr. Butt never explained to him that the amounts those figures represented were two sums received by himself! (1816.) Almost as incredible is it, but it is nevertheless true, that, as the “Permanent Secretary” states, “Mr. Butt stated that Mr. Coffey was now appropriating some funds belonging to the Ameer, and that for that purpose he was going to visit him.” (1785.)

This was taking place in London.

Meanwhile what was going on elsewhere?

*En route to Vienna*, Mr. E. Coffey wrote a letter to Mr. Butt: “The Ameer is dreadfully uneasy at not having heard from you about the promised dispatch from India. He is in very low spirits. We are pushing on very rapidly, and hope to reach Vienna tomorrow. I must see to all arrangements at Trieste, where we all hope to have letters from you containing some news from the Board of Control, as also the letter from yourself to the Ameer which he was to show to Frere at Kurrachee. The Ameer also desired me to remind you of your promise to get him a letter from Vernon Smith to the Governor of Bombay, asking the latter to see him and receive him with the honors due to his rank.” That letter was received by Mr. Butt about the time that he was having those interviews with the “Permanent Secretary” of the Board. And on the 15th of September, 1857, the following telegram from Mr. Coffey at Trieste was received by Mr. Butt: “Ameer waits until the 27th. Passage taken from here; cost safe; do not

hesitate; no delays." On the same day also a letter was written by Mr. Coffey to Mr. Butt in these terms: "We were greatly disappointed at not having letters from you at Paris; the Ameer felt so sure about it. We then pushed on to this place, in the hope of hearing from you here, and to catch the steamer, in both of which we failed. We are now detained until the 27th, and to-day the Ameer desired me to telegraph to you to come on, as also to write to you, begging of you in the name of God to join him here. He has made all arrangements, so far as you are concerned, about the cash, which will be paid to you in one lump on arrival at Bombay, and before you proceed a step in the business. I hope you will not fail us at the pinch. Today I have secured yours and Irwin's passage from hence."

From that letter it is clear that the Ameer and Mr. Coffey were discontented with Mr. Butt; had been delayed by his delay, and were pressing him to fulfill his engagement. If the Ameer resolved on waiting at Trieste for Mr. Butt to do so, and Mr. Butt did not do so, *all would come out*. The Board of Control and Mr. Butt had a common interest in preventing this; and the only way to prevent it was to get rid of Mr. Coffey, and send out the Ameer by himself, or in charge of a friend of Mr. Butt's; which is exactly what was done, and done by the Board of Control and Mr. Butt in concert; with a little aid from the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Department.

On the 15th of September—the very day on which that menacing telegram, which heralded that letter, reached Mr. Butt—he found himself at the office of the Board of Control "to see Mr. Vernon Smith." (1954.) "Not at all in reference to Ali Moorad's affairs" (*ib.*)—not at all. Though we should think those "affairs" were just then uppermost in Mr. Butt's mind, and they certainly were so with the Minister; for the "Permanent Secretary" had been at work again, and had obtained something else better than Ali Akbar's memorandum for the purpose of effecting the object—viz., a telegram received at the Foreign Office from the embassy at Vienna, where the Ameer and his suite were for a few days, en route to Vienna. "Meer Ali and his conductor, Mr. Coffey, are here about to embark at Trieste for India. Coffey says that the prince is angry at the neglect of some claim, and believes that on reaching Scinde he is likely to join which ever side appears the strongest. If it be thought desirable, Coffey offers to induce the prince to defer his journey."

Very strange this ; upon the face of it, extremely suspicious—its arrival at such a critical juncture, such a delicate crisis of the affair—its fitness for the purposes of the Board and Mr. Butt; its unintelligibility except for those purposes; for what on earth could it matter to Coffey whether or not the prince went to India? *While it was life and death to the Board and Mr. Butt.*

There is an obvious mode of testing the genuineness of the communication. How was it acted upon by the parties who professed to receive it? For its pretended purpose—to warn and alarm the Board of Control as to the danger of the Ameer's departure for India—it was disregarded and set at nought. But for that other purpose —of



separating Mr. Coffey from the Ameer—it was speedily used. “It excited me a good deal,” says Mr. Butt. No doubt. He went to Vienna. Mr. Vernon Smith said it was “the best course to take.” (1956.) Beyond question. Moreover, “the Minister gave him a letter of introduction to Sir Hamilton Seymour.” (1956.) “Mr. Vernon Smith said it was extremely desirable he should go.” (1645.) Sir G. Clerk, the Permanent Secretary, had sent him the “memorandum” of Ali Akbar and a copy of the telegram. Thus doubly armed, he proceeded to Vienna, where Sir Hamilton gave him a letter to the consul “to do anything he could to help him, saying he was engaged in something of importance to the Government.” Exactly. It was of the utmost importance to the Government and to Mr. Butt. If the Ameer continued to have the assistance of Mr. Coffey, Mr. Butt would soon have been called upon to go to India, or refund the £2,300 he had received. The result showed that he was prepared to do neither: for he did not go; he did not refund. If the question was raised, all would come out. If Mr. Coffey was not got rid of, the “Board” would be exposed, and Mr. Butt would be ruined. And Mr. Coffey was got rid of, and by means which the Board and Mr. Butt employed in concert. Truly was Consul Raven told that the matter was of the “utmost importance to the Government.” Mr. Butt having all the aid he could from the Government officials, and having had the opportunity of seeing them and speaking to them before Mr. Coffey had any notice of the charge (for Mr. Butt went to Vienna to speak to the officials before he went to Trieste to see Mr. Coffey), and having thrown out observations to them which would have been the best possible instructions to them as to their maintaining the truth of the story they had set up; he must then have known, if he did not know before, that the lady alluded to (in whose saloon the conversation on which the “telegram” was founded had taken place) was travelling, with her son, in the company of the Ameer’s suite, for the same reason which had operated, to the knowledge of Mr. Butt, in London, viz., that she was very useful to him in the way of introductions, purchases, &c., especially as her son spoke continental languages. The attaché would naturally mention to Mr. Butt what he mentioned a few days afterwards, in a written statement, sent at the request of Mr. Butt—the occasion on which the conversation he had reported had occurred; and, as he afterwards stated that the lady who took a share in it he supposed to be the wife of Mr. Coffey, he would as naturally mention that circumstance. Did Mr. Butt undeceive him? Did he explain: “That lady is an old friend of the Coffey family, and is travelling along with the Ameer’s suite, having herself business in Germany, because her introductions are useful to the Ameer”? (1957.) No. But having branded Mr. Coffey as “treacherous” (1958), Mr. Butt then went to Trieste; saw Mr. Coffey; read him the telegram; added, “I can listen to no explanations – whatever explanations you give must be given before the Ameer” (1964); and then, before the Ameer, he read the telegram and the memorandum of Ali Akbar; containing, be it observed, charges as to the two sums of £300 and £2,000 which Mr. Butt had himself received from Ameer! “He (Coffey) began to say something about the memorandum,” and what he would have said can easily be conceived; “but I [Mr. Butt] said, ‘Let us dispose of the telegram first.’” Mr. Coffey denied the charge; though he said something had passed, and that he had seen a paragraph in the paper about guards “going out to India, and that he had gone to ask if Bombay was in

insurrection." Mr. Butt said, "If you take my advice, you will not place yourself in competition with the gentlemen at the embassy, for no human being will ever believe that the telegram was sent home without your having given information." (1965.) But let what follows be observed, in order to judge of the value of this disinterested advice. "The Ameer wanted to return to England." (1967). This was natural; for if the (i telegram had been genuine, it would have been regarded by the Government, and induced them to feel alarm at the idea of the Ameer going to India. Quite the reverse. Mr. Butt took upon him to assure the Ameer that it was not regarded." (1967.) And the Board wrote to tell the Ameer so. (Appendix.) They were anxious he should understand that they made no account of it at all. They were anxious that the Ameer should not return to England, and so was Mr. Butt. "The Saturday was spent in dissuading him from returning to London; and I represented to him that, having given that promise to the Government to go on, his return was not consistent with it, and that his return to London would make the whole transaction known to his enemies at the East-India Board, and that therefore he had much better proceed to India." (1976.) Of course. No matter the pretended danger to India, the real danger was to the Board and Mr. Butt.

Mr. Butt pressed the Ameer to get rid of Coffey. "I told him that if he took Mr. Coffey with him it must be interpreted as admitting the truth of the charge;" *i.e.*, the charge of hostility to the British Government; "and," said Mr. Butt, "there is nothing that Englishmen hate so much as treachery." Perfectly true Mr. Butt added, "The effect of your keeping Mr. Coffey will be that you will never succeed in getting your claim satisfied." (1987.) Nothing could be more calculated to make an impression on the Ameer. And it is clear, from the strong menaces and persuasions employed by Mr. Butt, that there was great necessity for them, in order to induce the Ameer to part with Mr. Coffey, and that he was reluctant to do so. Mr. Coffey was not present then. (1988.) Mr. Butt used these persuasions and menaces in his absence. Then Mr. Coffey was called in, and when he asked if the Ameer dismissed him, "the Ameer still hesitated" (1988), and at last Mr. Butt took upon him to dismiss Mr. Coffey. (*Ib.*) It is plain that the Ameer did not believe the story which had been trumped up against him. Mr. Coffey solemnly denied it (1994), and Mr. Butt received messages of a painful character from him; and at last, yielding to his protestations, wrote to Sir H. Seymour, who replied first in a private letter to Mr. Butt, or at least with one sentence in it marked private (1995), and then in a letter which commenced, "I have now the satisfaction of enclosing you a statement which will set all your doubts at rest." Why "satisfaction?" It was a "statement" calculated to crush Mr. Coffey: why should Sir Hamilton feel "satisfaction" at that? This is only explainable by the terms of his note to Consul Raven, desiring him "to do anything he could to aid Mr. Butt, for that he was engaged on something of importance to the Government." (1958.)

The "statement" inclosed by Sir Hamilton with such satisfaction, showed how heartily all those connected with the embassy had entered into the spirit of these instructions, which doubtless had not been confined to Consul Raven. It was a "statement" of one

Elliott, one of the attaches of the mission: "I saw Mr. Coffey at his hotel, when he conveyed to me the impression that the fidelity of the Ameer was not to be depended on," &c.

He went on to say that "it seemed very questionable whether it was prudent to allow the prince to go to India in that frame of mind; and Mrs. Coffey took her share in the conversation; and in this opinion they both appeared to concur." Now, to appreciate this – undoubtedly the meanest part of the transaction – it must be borne in mind that before this, and before Mr. Butt went to Trieste to dismiss Mr. Coffey, he had been at Vienna, and seen persons attached to the embassy – if not this very Elliott (1957) ; and Mr. Butt knew who this lady was here mentioned by Elliott as "Mrs. Coffey," and knew her to be a married lady, whom he himself had met in good society, and had himself partaken of her hospitality. (2036.) At all events, he knew, when he saw Elliott's "statement," that this was the lady so referred to as Mrs. Coffey; and yet it does not appear that he took any steps to remove the impression which this statement was calculated to produce. The result was unfortunate. The charge upon which Mr. Butt had got rid of Mr. Coffey was founded on a misrepresentation of a few words dropped in conversation in the apartments of that lady; the true version of which she would be able to give. Her evidence would clear Mr. Coffey; and the injurious misrepresentation conveyed in the statement of Elliott was not corrected. Elliott's statement commenced: "I saw Mr. Coffey at his hotel." It was an hotel at which the Ameer and his suite were staying, and at which, also, the lady, who had travelled with her son in their company, and arrived by the same train, was (very naturally) also staying. The attaché called – what did he "call" for? Had he received any hints similar to that conveyed to Consul Raven? Had he heard from the Board of Control, just then so anxious to get rid of Mr. Coffey? However, he called at this hotel; and that gentleman happening to be, with other persons, in the apartment of the lady in question, the attaché was shown in there, and his card was handed to the lady; upon which he – not rashly, not in a hurry, but writing shortly afterwards – writing after the visit to the embassy of Mr. Butt, who knew the lady, and who would be aware that she was travelling in the company of the Ameer's suite – described her as Mrs. Coffey.

In the mean time, however, Mr. Coffey had been got rid of; and then the Ameer was to be got out of the way. "He pressed me," says Mr. Butt, "exceedingly to go out to India." But he refused; saying, "I do not think I can be of any use to you in India." (2005.) No doubt. The Ameer was to have his lands: what could he want with Mr. Butt? What he wanted more - was money. He would have asked, no doubt, the return of the money he had paid Mr. Butt; for at that very time the Ameer was in want of money. (2008.) The Ameer offered to give him bills on Bombay for the £8,000, and a *jaghire* of £1,000 a year. He made this offer when he was in great distress and agitation of mind at Trieste (2262), deprived of the aid of Mr. Coffey, wholly in the power of Mr. Butt. The poor Ameer appealed to him to fulfill his contract, and go out to India, for which already he had received £2,300; and he refused to go. He had made up his mind that he would not go. (2262.) Mr. Butt's idea was curious. "It would have been

dishonorable in me to do anything of benefit to myself." (2265.) The thing demanded of him by the Ameer being that he should perform his contract, in that part of it which was for the benefit of the Ameer. However, he refused, and left the Ameer, who went to India without him; but, nevertheless, accompanied by Mr. Irwin, a relative of Mr. Butt's. (2244.) No arrangement was made with the Ameer while at Trieste about Mr. Butt's going out to India afterwards. (2250.) The Ameer refused to go, unless either Mr. Butt or Mr. Irwin went (2244); and it is pretty plain, as Mr. Irwin went, and not Mr. Butt, that he went in the place of Mr. Butt. But the Ameer went without his money, which, probably, he would have reclaimed had he not been deprived of Mr. Coffey. And Mr. Butt went home with the Ameer's money in his pocket; and, as it was conceived, the common object of the Board of Control and Mr. Butt was now attained. Both Mr. Coffey and the Ameer were got rid of. The Ameer was removed from the scene, in the custody of a relation of Mr. Butt's; and for Mr. Coffey, he had been dismissed on charges of dishonesty and treachery. These were hateful charges: "there is nothing Englishmen hate so much as treachery." And even should he dare to defend himself, why, on the charge of dishonesty, the only witness who could clear him—the Ameer—was gone; and for the other charge—that of treachery, founded on the story of the attaché—why, the only witness he could rely on—the lady in whose apartment the conversation occurred—was herself supposed to be damaged by the same story, as conveyed in the attaché's deliberate statement. Both the character of Mr. Coffey and the credit of his chief witness were, it was believed, destroyed. In a word, Mr. Coffey was crushed, and the Board and Mr. Butt were safe.

Writing a month after that, in November, the attaché apologized for the imputation he had thus conveyed, and pleaded, in excuse, that when shown into the room in September, he not "unnaturally supposed" that the lady was Mrs. Coffey. But the point was not what he supposed then, but what he "supposed" a month later, after Mr. Butt's visit to Vienna, when he wrote his "statement" in October, deliberately making that representation. And upon that point the attaché is silent, as also on another matter—still more interesting to the country—viz., whether it is part of the ordinary duty of diplomacy to enter into private society, listen to conversation, gather up scraps and fragments of small talk, and construct there out materials for telegraphic dispatches, calculated to blast the characters of persons whom any "department" desire to get rid of or to destroy, and actually used for that purpose! The Board of Control desired to get rid of or destroy Mr. Coffey, as privy to their dealings with Mr. Butt; and the Foreign Office furnished them the means. The attaches of the Vienna mission were employed; and out of the loose gossip of a lady's drawing-room were fabricated materials for blasting his character, even at the sacrifice of her own. She might be his witness: to destroy her character was, therefore, as important as to destroy his. And it was hoped that the work was done.

But in this, as in many similar cases, the mark was overshot. Mr. Butt's disinterested advice to Mr. Coffey was, "not to place himself in competition with the gentlemen of the embassy." (1964.) Mr. Butt had evidently an exalted idea of the diplomatic

department. No wonder—it had served him well. Happily, however, Mr. Coffey did not take his advice; and even if he had been disposed to do so, the lady was not. It is a dangerous thing to attack the honour of a woman of spirit. She went to the “gentlemen of the embassy,” and compelled them to retract and apologize for their imputation upon her, and explain it away as a “mistake.” But her evidence had been vouched by the attaché of the Vienna mission for the statement which had been made the means of destroying her friend, on foul charges of treachery and dishonesty. Both she and Mr. Coffey had therefore a common interest in his vindication no less than in her own.

Mr. Coffey appealed to the President of the Board of Control, who had given Mr. Butt the “memorandum” of Ali Akbar accusing him of dishonesty, and the copy of the telegram from the Vienna embassy imputing treachery. To that minister Mr. Coffey appealed for inquiry. He had returned to England—he asked the opportunity of “clearing himself” before the Board. Simple Mr. Coffey! Why to “clear himself” would be to convict the Board and Mr. Butt. They were in the same boat. To “clear himself” would be to show that Mr. Butt had in his pocket the two sums of £300 and £2,000, which, in the “memorandum” of Ali Akbar, given by the President to Mr. Butt, and by him read to the Ameer (1964), were charged against Mr. Coffey. Those sums had been received by Mr. Butt, and for what? As he said, “for going to India with the Ameer;” on a contract made while he was using his Parliamentary influence with the Minister to get the Ameer leave to return to India. To have disclosed this would indeed have “cleared” Mr. Coffey; but how would it have “affected” the Board of Control? The last thing the Board could have desired was that Mr. Coffey should be “cleared.” No wonder he received only a formal acknowledgment of his communication; and to another, in which he demanded distinctly whether Mr. Butt had been formally accredited by the Board to proceed to Vienna and Trieste to warn the Ameer and supersede him, and whether the Board had given Mr. Butt documents to use against him, &c.,—the official answer was, that “the ‘Board’ could not enter upon a discussion upon the subject of his differences with Mr. Butt;” which cool letter was signed by Sir George Clerk, the “Permanent Secretary,” the very man who had handed to Mr. Butt the memorandum groundlessly imputing dishonesty to the applicant, and the telegram accusing him of treachery. That is to say, the “Board” had supplied Mr. Butt with weapons wherewith to destroy Mr. Coffey—a person obnoxious both to him and to the Board, and then, when these weapons had effected their purpose, the “Board” refuse all inquiry or redress. They “decline entering into any differences between the parties.” The differences between the parties! Why it was a “difference” with the Board. It was an appeal to their justice against the perversion of official agencies for the destruction of personal character. The appeal was rejected with cool insolence. Such was official morality. (See the letters in the Appendix.)

And now an appeal was made to Parliamentary morality. Alas! With no better success. The petition stated that Isaac Butt, Esq., M.P., in or about the month of July, 1856, entered into a corrupt agreement with the Rajah Ali Moorad Khan, or his agents, the effect of which was that the said Isaac Butt, for a sum of money stipulated to be paid to

him, should advocate and prosecute in the House of Commons the claims of his Highness for the recovery of the territory of which he had been deprived by annexation by the East-India Company; and that in pursuance of such corrupt agreement divers sums of money had been actually paid by the said Ameer Ali Moorad Khan to the said Isaac Butt. The petitioner was advised, and believed, that if the House should institute an inquiry into the circumstances, it would be found that the said Isaac Butt had been guilty of a breach of privilege of the House, and he therefore prayed that the House would take steps to investigate the allegations in the petition.

The petition, it will be observed, charged that at some time (the exact time laid is immaterial even at law) Mr. Butt entered into a corrupt agreement with the Ameer or his agents, the effect of which was that he for a sum of money stipulated to be paid to him—not defining the particular manner in which, or the terms on which, it was stipulated—“should advocate and prosecute in the House of Commons the claims of his Highness,” Sic. The question upon this was, whether the bargain admitted to have been made was “in effect” this—that “for or in expectation of a sum of money to be paid, at some time, on some terms, he should prosecute the Ameer’s claim,” by influence or advocacy, “in the House.” And it was so if the prosecution of the claim was in expectation of the receipt of money. And it must have been so, if, as was admitted, the bargain was to take effect only if the Parliamentary exertions were successful. One would have thought that the case was very clear and simple, and lay in a short compass. Mr. Butt, however, not only denied the charge, but declared it the result of a vile conspiracy!

A conspiracy? How? By whom? Why all the material facts were admitted. The matter stood thus—that a private individual had been grievously injured upon charges of dishonesty and treachery—supported on the testimony of officials, or supplied from official sources—supplied secretly against him, and used behind his back with deadly effect; and the gist of the charge of dishonesty was that he had embezzled two sums of money which a Member of the House had received on a contract for £10,000 made with an Indian prince pending endeavors made on his behalf by means of that Member’s Parliamentary influence to obtain him a concession from the Board of Control. The latter part of the case brought it clearly within the scope of Parliamentary prosecution as a breach of the privileges of the House; and the rest was, it is conceived, equally within that prosecution as a question of the abuse of official influence by a department of the Government, and a Member of the House. However, the ground on which the petition rested was the former, of breach of privilege by a Member in the receipt of money for Parliamentary influence and support.

That was the formal and the technical ground; but the whole case came before the committee, and the facts above-stated, drawn from the official papers in the Appendix, from the statements of the accused himself, and from the statements of the officials examined, may be taken as undoubted. The Member himself admitted the receipt of

the money; and stated that the contract on which it was received was a contract to go to India to prosecute the Ameer's claims there; that the contract was made while he was prosecuting his claims here by means of Parliamentary influence, and seeking to get the Ameer leave to return. Moreover, he admitted that after he had thus far succeeded as to get not only this concession, but a restitution of lands, he considered that it was not necessary for him to go to India, and he refused to go, and an arrangement was made by which some one else went; he nevertheless retained the money. Nor was this all; he admitted that he had got the lands of the Ameer restored by means of secret influence with the President of the Board of Control, who was ignorant of the sums which he, the Member, had received. All this was admitted.

It is not worth while entering at all into what was disputed, because, upon the view here taken, it is very immaterial whether or not, at some particular period, there was an express agreement, in terms, between Mr. Butt and the Ameer, to advocate his claims in Parliament for a specific sum of money, to be paid expressly for that advocacy; it was not merely an immaterial, but absolutely idle inquiry; for will any man really fancy that an experienced lawyer would commit himself, in terms, to such an illegal agreement? And this was all that was denied. The question was, whether there had been, indirectly, any bargain for a pecuniary benefit, which would not have been received had it not been for Parliamentary influence. And it was admitted by Mr. Butt that was to advocate the Ameer's claims in Parliament (2319), and that unless he succeeded in obtaining the Ameer's restoration, the bargain made was not to take effect. (2296.) All the rest was collateral and entirely immaterial, except in so far as it might bear on that, the main point in the case. And on that there was no dispute as to the facts. It was a question, upon the undisputed facts, for the committee to determine, whether what had been done was proper or permissible. As to the express agreement, which was all that Mr. Butt denied, the case rested of necessity mainly on the evidence of Mr. Coffey; and of course it would be the object of Mr. Butt to affect his credit, if he could do so. But nothing could be elicited to affect it, except the testimony coming from the Vienna mission. As to the charges of dishonesty conveyed by Mr. Butt to the Ameer, no attempt was made to sustain them. It was admitted by Mr. Butt that he had received the two sums which had been charged to Mr. Coffey. There was nothing, then, to affect the character of Mr. Coffey save the Vienna charge of treachery. This rested entirely on a conversation at the house of the lady already alluded to: and of course it would be in her power to clear her friend. But this was a matter wholly collateral—not relevant in the least to the issues raised by the petition as against Mr. Butt; for the telegram had come from Vienna to the Foreign Office, and from that office to the Board of Control, and thence to Mr. Butt. According to his statement, he heard of it quite unexpectedly on a casual call at the office of the President. Then how came it that his advocate and he should have conceived it so material to their case to uphold the truth of the Vienna testimony against Coffey, and with that view to seek to destroy the character of the lady? Her evidence, and therefore her credit as a witness, were only material as to the genuineness of the Vienna telegram. And how came Mr. Butt to fancy that he had to do with that? If he had not to do with it, then her character was as

totally irrelevant as anything that could be conceived. Yet his advocate and he directed their endeavors in a great degree to destroy her character, by reviving the scandal caused by the rash note of the Vienna attaché; although the attaché had himself retracted and apologized for it, and had given an explanation of which Mr. Butt and his advocate were well aware. Nay, Mr. Butt had himself retracted it, or rather in writing disclaimed it, before the committee met (2038), at an interview which, according to his own account, ended very remarkably, by her declaring, "You cannot expect me to stop Mr. Coffey from vindicating his character—he is determined not to let the matter rest;" which looks extremely as though Mr. Butt had tried to induce her to try to "stop" him "from vindicating his character," and to "let the matter rest;" just as he had himself "advised" Mr. Coffey to do so, and not to "bring himself in competition with the gentlemen of the embassy," for whom Mr. Butt seemed to have such a grateful regard. It seems to have been suggested to the lady that she should let Mr. Coffey's character be sacrificed as the price of vindicating her own. She had too much spirit to yield, and hence she encountered all the hostility of the "Board" and Mr. Butt. All along it has been apparent that they felt they were in the same boat. And although Mr. Butt's case, if all were bond fide, could not in the least degree be affected by the Vienna telegram charging Mr. Coffey with treachery, and although the lady's testimony was only relevant on that point, some how or other Mr. Butt and his advocate made a dead set at the lady, and sought to destroy her character in order to damage her credit. They did this mainly by seeking to revive the attaché's careless scandal, which he had himself retracted, and which Mr. Butt had himself disavowed! It is surprising that the committee should have suffered this, and only explainable on the supposition that they conceived that somehow the Board and Mr. Butt were in the same boat, and that as the Board had provided and supplied the Vienna charge against Coffey, the honour of the Board was concerned in keeping it up, and, with that view, in damaging the credit of the lady. At all events, it is plain that Mr. Butt's advocate conceived his client's case required that this lady's credit should be sacrificed, in order to support the credit of the Board, and certainly they left no stone unturned to effect their object. The writer has never known, in the course of twenty years' observation of courts of justice, such a deadly and determined attack upon the credit of a witness, as that which was made upon this lady. This is immaterial to the public, except so far as it tends to show that somehow Mr. Butt, not less than the Board, or Mr. Butt for the sake of the Board, felt bound to uphold the credit of the Government telegram, and therefore to destroy the credit of the lady's testimony. In a word, she was to be sacrificed to the Board. It is incredible that the committee suffered it, except on the supposition that they were trying the case of the Board as well as of Mr. Butt. If so, why did they not pronounce upon it? Nevertheless, they entered eagerly into this miserable irrelevant matter, and allowed a retracted scandal to be revived, until, at the end of the inquiry, one of the witnesses called by Mr. Butt himself—his old friend, Mr. James Coffey, the barrister—gave it the death-blow, by saying, "I have ascertained and satisfied myself that it is not true that my brother travelled with the lady or introduced her as his wife. There is a gentleman of position in the room, and in his presence I got the explanations, along with the letters given from the embassy, which



show that there was a mistake; that the persons themselves fell into a mistake; but, in addition to that, this gentlemen assured me that his wife and daughters and all the members of his family were aware of that lady going out with the Ameer's party, and it was with their sanction." (2608.)

That of course destroyed one scandal. But the accused and his advocate did not rest contented with that effort to damage the lady's credit. They had evidently been at great pains to rake up anything in her past history which, blurted out upon her all of a sudden, without previous notice, and therefore without means of explanation—except at the hazard of mentioning the names of other parties, and entering into all kinds of extraneous matters, the full explanation of which would be endless—might operate to her prejudice. This is an old artifice of prisoners' counsel, in our criminal courts, to make a deadly attack on a witness, material or immaterial. It was in this way that a matter was raked up against the lady which, without compromising other parties, she could hardly explain, and which would have operated fatally to her prejudice, had not a gentleman cognizant of the circumstances (a queen's counsel), come forward like a man, and written a letter to the lady (which the committee justly and generously printed), clearing her from the malignant imputation, and declaring that "no imputation of any kind" should rest upon her with reference to the transaction. But why was it made?

All this is immaterial to the public, except so far as it betrays how deeply Mr. Butt felt himself concerned in maintaining the credit of the Vienna telegram which he had from the Board of Control. In that point of view, no doubt it was vital to them—that is, if Mr. Butt's case involved the conduct of the Board. If it did not, why on earth did the committee allow all this miserable scandal to be entered into? Both the lady and Mr. Coffey avowed that the object of the inquiry was to clear his character from the imputation of embezzling money which a Member of the House had received, and which it was admitted he received. So far as the motives of the petition were material, that was admitted; and the lady and Mr. Coffey, as already observed, had a common interest in his vindication. But the gist of the inquiry was as to the consideration for which the Member had received the money. If the case of the accused had anything to do with the conduct of the Board, why did not the committee pronounce upon it?

The truth is, the committee pronounced upon nothing that was material, and the inquiry was abortive; both practically as to the issue raised, and with reference to the constitutional principles involved; which is what, above all, the public are concerned with. The inquiry was not abortive so far as Mr. Coffey was concerned; his character was cleared; the two sums he was charged with embezzling he traced to the Member's pockets. But the country cared not for Mr. Coffey, and what the country cared for, and now cares for, is the character of the House of Commons.

And as to that, the inquiry of the committee in the first place was abortive, and in the next place, because it was abortive, reflected no credit upon the character of the House.

The affair now is worse than it was before. Then it did not affect the character of the House. Now it does; for what a committee of some of its ablest and most honourable Members do not condemn, and tacitly approve, affects the character of the House, and therefore of the country.

The inquiry was abortive. The committee first resolved, that Mr. Butt did not, as stated in the petition, "in or about the months of July or August, 1856, corruptly enter into an agreement with the Ameer or his agent to the effect that he should, for a sum of money, advocate and prosecute the claims of his Highness for the recovery of his territory." Now this is what pleaders call a "negative pregnant," and it is a negative implying an affirmative. It implies that at some time Mr. Butt may have entered into some such agreement; and the resolution turns upon a mere ambiguity, partly as to time, and partly as to terms. The petitioner stated the time as the months of July or August, 1856, because at that time Mr. Butt first took up the Ameer's case, and because at that time he actually received fees – nominally as a lawyer, though, as he himself said, there was really no law in the case, and it must be managed in the House; and because the subsequent bargain might be naturally referred back to the commencement of the transaction. If a Member was proved to have made an express contract at a later period, and to have received sums of money at an earlier period, and the contract was pending Parliamentary exertions, and for a pecuniary benefit which could not take effect unless in the event of those exertions proving successful, as they did, then the question was one of inference whether there had all along been not an express agreement (which is evidently what the committee mean) ; but an expectation of, or understanding about, pecuniary benefit, at first undefined and vague, and ultimately definite and distinct. It would be obviously absurd to expect to find express proof of an actual agreement by a queen's counsel in the terms stated; and when the express agreement was made it would of course be in a form apparently lawful, and the whole question would be as to its true effect; on which point, the whole point in the case, the committee avoided deciding. This is not all.

The committee declined to express their opinion, "that the receipt of money or reward by Members for their services in advising or assisting in the prosecution of any claims on the Executive Government, or in the transaction of business with a department thereof, would be detrimental to the character and dignity of the House, and deserves their serious reprobation." Would be detrimental! Was it not so? Had not the case actually occurred? Had it not been proved, nay, admitted by the Member implicated? Even taking his own account of the matter, had he not made a contract for £10,000 dependent upon his success in the use of Parliamentary influence? That was the question referred to the committee. But it has been wholly blinked; so of other important questions of Parliamentary morality, although distinctly raised, if not by the petition, by the proof. The Member had not performed the contract, but had retained the money; and had got it pending services by way of secret influence, with the Minister, for the benefit of the party paying it.

The committee's idea of Parliamentary morality is obviously somewhat narrow, and confined by technical rule. They keep within the letter of the rule, and the letter of the charge. For a Member to bargain for money, which is not to be paid unless he succeeds in certain Parliamentary services, is not, it would seem, wrong, provided the contract in terms is, to do services out of Parliament, in the event of the services in Parliament proving successful. This is a Parliamentary subtlety which is above common men. It beats special pleading; especially as the committee appear to think it right to retain the money, although the services nominally stipulated for are not performed. At least, the committee had nothing to say upon it; and this, although the contract was, according to the Member's own statement, for part to be paid here, and the rest on arriving in India (2108, 2222), and he at the same time avowed that he refused to go unless the whole was remitted to him here. (2257.) Thus, then, the contract was not to be performed—at all events was not performed—but the money was retained; and the committee had nothing to say about it, nor as to the return of the money if the contract in its professed effect was not performed. They pronounced no opinion upon it. They negative, "by the card," the allegation in the petition that on a certain day, in a certain year, a certain express agreement was entered into, and pass over the admission of an agreement substantially the same in effect, but not carried out by the Member; and this, although the Member by no means plainly denied that he intended to retain the money, even if he did not go out, and rather intimated that his relative had gone out in his place. (2244.) If he did not go out, he said, "Perhaps, between man and man, I might say I had some claim to the money paid. I might leave it to a person to decide" (perhaps Ali Akbar, the accomplished Arab gentleman he so much admires). "I never dreamed of doing such a thing, and never will. If I do not go to India, I intend to return the money; if it is not his interest to take me to India, the money shall be returned." (2255.) But he kept it.

And this, although he had himself told the Ameer over and over again that he did not think it necessary for him to go, and had refused to go when at Trieste; and when the Ameer in his distress pressed him to go. Mr. Butt himself admits that he would be bound to refuse offers of reward even under the guise of professional fees, "if it occurred to him that it was in reality to secure influence with the Government offices, which he does not think a man is at liberty to traffic in." (2441.) And the question was whether the real effect of the bargain for £10,000 to go out to India, in the event of the Ameer's restoration, which Mr. Butt was then trying to get by "influence with a Government office"—to wit, the Board of Control—was not "in reality to secure his influence with that office." Can any man pretend to doubt that it did "secure" it? Was there not an inducement to the extent of £10,000 to exert his influence for the Ameer's restoration? Test it thus:—Suppose a motion had come on for an address against the contemplated concession, as dangerous to India, would Mr. Butt's vote have been utterly uninfluenced by the consideration that if the Ameer did not go, he himself could not go, and would lose his £10,000? At all events, was not the interest just the same, in effect, as if the bargain had been— "When the restoration is secured, you shall receive £5,000, and an option of receiving £5,000 more if you like to go to India?"

It is to be presumed that the committee saw nothing to condemn in all this; for they simply find the fact of the contract and the facts of the payment to the Member of the two sums in question. And they then state that, during the period referred to in 1857, he was actively engaged in advising and assisting the Ameer in prosecuting his claim against the Government of India, and that with that view he had frequent personal interviews with the President of the Board of Control; but they also state, "that no proceedings in Parliament were taken in 1857 by Mr. Butt on the subject of the Ameer's claims;" whereby it appears that the committee considered that "frequent personal interviews " of a Member with a Minister, in which proceedings in the House are threatened or treated of, are not " proceedings in Parliament" which come within the principle precluding Members from using Parliamentary influence in matters upon which they are personally interested. Mr. Butt, by his own account, had an interest to the extent of £10,000 in the concession made to the Ameer, and obtained the concession by the threat of Parliamentary proceedings. The committees in terms determine that this is not "a proceeding in Parliament." But that was not the question. The question was, whether it was a use of Parliamentary influence in a matter in which a Member had a personal pecuniary interest.

Moreover, the committee pronounced no opinion upon the conduct of the officials in the case, and passed it by as not requiring any animadversion; whence we may presume that they saw nothing in it worthy of blame, except, perhaps, that it was found out.

How about the Board of Control and the Foreign Office, and their use of private gossip in official telegrams to destroy the characters of men far away ? And how about the conduct of the Board in handing to one private individual the means of injuring another, and that without inquiry or authentic information, as in the case of Ali Akbar's memorandum, charging Mr. Coffey with embezzlement of moneys received by a Member in the bargain alluded to? How about the startling revelation that the resources of our diplomatic establishments are applied for purposes which look like espionage, and remind one of the spy system of the continental police? All this the committee pass over in silence, and seem to think perfectly correct and unblamable.

How about Mr. Butt's written statement, after he had got rid of Coffey: "I did all this with the most cordial approbation of Vernon Smith, who gave me permission to use the official documents as I thought fit, and also gave me a letter to Sir Hamilton Seymour," which Mr. Vernon Smith had to acknowledge (1645), although he had also to acknowledge that he had nothing to do with Mr. Coffey, that he had no authority over Ali Moorad, that he could not stop him even if he wished. (1567.) How about Sir Hamilton's note to Consul Raven, to do all he could to aid Mr. Butt, as he was engaged in a matter of importance to the Government. (1958.) In short, how about the whole energy of Government having been used, at the instigation of a Member and a Minister, on their own admission, to get rid of a man who might rip up the affairs

which had occurred between that Minister and that Member, and “cause the whole transaction to be known at the India Board?” (1976.) That was the most important part of the case as disclosed, and it was passed over by the committee in utter silence!

How about the letter of that individual to the Board, begging for an inquiry to clear his character, on the ground that official power had been used to destroy him; and how about the insolent official answer that the Board had nothing to do with it? How about all this? Simply nothing. The Committee have nothing to say about it. If they do not deem it within their province, why did they enter into it? If it was within their province, why did they not pronounce an opinion upon it? Above all, however, why did they not pronounce a judgment upon the very question raised by the petition or the evidence—whether the bargain admitted to have been made was not in reality a bargain for a pecuniary benefit dependent upon the result of Parliamentary influence? Why did they not decide whether the case did not come within the old resolution: “That the offer” (and of course acceptance) “of any money or any other advantage to any member of Parliament, for the promoting of any matter whatever depending or to be transacted in Parliament, is a high crime and misdemeanor, and tends to the subversion of the English constitution.”

It has been represented that the question was merely one of paid advocacy in Parliament. But that was not the question. The question was as to something far more serious. When a Member rises in the House to bring forward the claims of an individual or a class, he avows that he is an advocate,—his very position implies it; and it is comparatively immaterial whether he is fed or not. His statements and arguments are received for what they are worth; and the evils of such a system of paid, but open advocacy, are comparatively trivial. Far otherwise is it when the advocacy is secret, and a Member exercises secret influence with a Minister, and mainly by means of threatening or hinting at open proceedings in Parliament suggesting to the Minister an easy way of escaping or avoiding them. If the evil of pecuniary interest is great when it applies to open advocacy, how much greater is it when it is underhand? The door is then opened to the worst species of corruption and intrigue. The Member may make a market of his vote, the Minister of his power; and while in the former case Parliament has, at least, the opportunity of determining—in the other, and the worse case, the work is done behind the back of Parliament.

The Member may or may not have had a pecuniary inducement; or, if he had, the Minister may or may not have known it. No matter; such a system affords the easiest means of making a market of their Parliamentary influence and official power; and therefore it cannot be constitutional. In the present instance the Member’s vote with the Ministry may or may not have had to do with the matter,—enough that it might have had. It may be that the Member’s receipt of money had no influence with him; no one will deny that it might have had. And the question for the House of Commons and for the country is, whether such a system is constitutional. The committee have declined to pronounce upon it,—or, rather, have plainly implied that, in their opinion,

Parliament has no right to take cognizance of it, though it would have a right to take cognizance of open proceedings in Parliament.' That is to say, that open proceedings are unconstitutional, but secret proceedings are constitutional! That the lesser evil is to be condemned, but that the greater one is to be allowed!

It is scarcely credible that a committee should have taken such a view: it remains to be seen whether the House and the country will sanction it. It can only be accounted for on the supposition that the Member and his skilful advocate managed to confuse the perceptions of the committee by awaking their sympathies on his behalf, as the victim of a conspiracy! If conspiracy there was, it certainly was not one of which he was the victim. He had, with the aid of the Board, got the petitioner dismissed by means such as we have seen—partly upon the charge of embezzling money which he had himself received—and the petitioner's effort to clear himself was called a "conspiracy"! Nor is this all. It matters not a straw what were the motives of a charge in which the honour and character of Parliament were concerned. But the motives in this case were natural, laudable, and relevant to the question at issue. The Member's services had been secured for the Ameer by the Ameer's agent; and from him the Member had received the Ameer's money. The Member had then got it, or professed to have got it, upon a certain bargain, which he did not perform. He had got the agent dismissed on certain charges, which branded his character, and then pretended that the stain upon the agent's character so "tainted" the whole contract, that he could not complete it. (2257.) So that his attack on the agent's character was his excuse for not performing his part of his admitted contract with the Ameer. And having thus himself mixed up the two matters—the petitioner's character and his own conduct—his advocate then endeavored to represent this as casting discredit upon the petition. As if it could discredit it that its object was to vindicate the petitioner's character, especially as an attack on that character had been made by the accused Member the means, or the excuse, for retaining the money in question! But the accused and his advocate contrived very skillfully to invert the issues, and confuse the question. They made it appear that the member was accused for purposes of vengeance, when it was really for purposes of vindication.

And then they represented as collateral and immaterial what the Member himself had chosen to make of the essence of the case, and which they still strove to make so ; for they took advantage of a confusion which he had himself created; they strove throughout not so much to vindicate his character as to blacken the accuser's. This would have been more material had the charge rested solely or chiefly on his evidence, but it did not; it rested entirely on the admissions of the accused Member himself. It was material upon the Member's own showing, not as to his receipt of the money, but his non-performance of the contract on which he professed to have received it. He had branded the petitioner's character, and therefore (strange inference!) felt bound, not, indeed, to return the Ameer's money, but to refuse to perform the contract. According to the Member, it was not his conduct, but the petitioner's, which had so "tainted" the transaction, although it was the petitioner's conduct subsequent to the receipt of the

money. And the consequence deduced was more curious still—*viz.*, that the Member should retain the money, while declining to perform the contract! This was the Member's idea of what "tainted" the transaction, and of the consequences of the "taint." Loose words repeated behind the back of the petitioner, and by him afterwards denied—that it was which "tainted" a transaction upon which the Member had already received the money; and the effect of the "taint" was that he felt himself compelled to retain it. This was all the "taint" there was in the transaction, and this was all the result of it. So said the Member, and so, in effect, said the committee. There is no "taint" in the receipt of money by a Member, and in his secret influence with a Minister. All this was thought by the committee immaterial—they had wasted their energies for a miserable scandal; and while the character of a lady was being murdered, they allowed the accused to escape under cover of that cloud of calumny which his advocate had contrived to raise. Never had an inquiry a more cruel effect, never a more miserable and abortive result.

The matters in controversy were collateral and immaterial—the matters of calumny were still more so; but the committee were so eagerly intent upon them that they altogether lost sight of the great question which was raised for their decision, or they appeared to decide it so as to give a tacit sanction to a secret system of Parliamentary intrigue.

## APPENDIX.

### SELECTION OF DOCUMENTS PRINTED IN THE APPENDIX TO THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, AND ILLUSTRATING THE PRECEDING NARRATIVE.

*Documents illustrating the real reasons of the course taken against the Petitioner by the Hoard of Control.*

*Trieste, 15 Sept., 1857*

My Dear Butt,

We were greatly disappointed at not having Letters from you at Paris. The Ameer felt so sore about it. We then pushed on to this place, in the hope of hearing from you here, and to catch the steamer, in both of which we failed. We are now detained until the 27th; and today the Ameer desired me to telegraph you to come on, as also to write to you, begging of you, in the name of God, to join him here along with Irvine. He has made all arrangements so far as you are concerned, about the cash, which will be paid you in one lump on arrival at Bombay, and before you proceed a single step in the business. I hope you will not fail us at this pinch of the business. To-day I have secured yours and Irvine's passage from hence with us by the steamer of the 27th. Should you not be able to reach in time, you can catch the Marseilles steamer to Alexandria, where we will meet you and proceed all together; but, if possible, we would wish this route. I trust sincerely you will not hesitate to take this step, as, believe me, I should not write unless fully satisfied that all was clear. I do so with much more confidence since receiving David's telegraph, in which he states the Turban lands are all restored, as also the money. I am anxiously looking out for your telegraph in answer to mine of this morning.

*Very sincerely yours,*

*Ed. Lees Coffey.*

I. Butt, Esq., M.P.

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#### *Telegraphic Message.*

The following message, forwarded from Trieste station, and received at Dublin station, September 15, 1857, from \_\_\_\_ Coffey to \_\_\_\_ Butt, M.P.,

Leeson Street, Dublin :—



“Ameer waits until 27. Passage taken from here with us; cash safe. Reight come with Irvine. Do not hesitate; no delays. Reply telegraph.”

*B. Dunn, Clerk.*

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*Monday, en route to Frankfort. My Dear Butt,*

The Ameer is dreadfully uneasy at not having heard from you about the promised dispatch to India. He is in very low spirits; I do all in my power to rally him, but without effect. We are pushing on very rapidly, and hope to reach Vienna tomorrow evening. I must see to all arrangements at Trieste, where we all hope to have letters from you, containing some news from the Board of Control, as also the letter from yourself to the Ameer, which he was to show to Frere, at Kurrachee. The Ameer also desired me remind you of your promise to get him a letter from Vernon Smith to the Governor of Bombay, asking the latter to see and receive him with the honors due to his rank. I will write very fully to you from Trieste on all points.

*Ever yours faithfully,  
Ed. Lees Coffey.*

(Addressed)  
Isaac Butt, Esq., M.P.,  
17, St. James Place, St. James's, London.

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(No. 1.)

*Letter from Sir Geo. Clerk, inclosing Telegram, &c.*

*India Board, 14 Sept., 1857.*

Dear Sir,

I am directed by the Commissioners for the Affairs of India to transmit to you a copy of a memorandum which has been submitted respecting Meer Ali Morad and Mr. Coffey, and a telegram received from Vienna relating to the same subject, for your private information.

*I have, &c.,  
(Signed) George Clerk.*

(No. 2.)

*Copy Telegram from Sir H. Seymour.*

*Vienna, 8 September, 6.30 p.m.*

Meer Ali, of Khyrpore, and his conductor, Mr. Coffey, are here, about to embark at Trieste for India, on Thursday afternoon.

Coffey says that the Prince is angry at the neglect of some claim, and believes that on reaching Scinde he is likely to join whichever side appears the strongest,

If it be thought desirable, Coffey offers to induce the Prince to defer his journey.

In this case instructions to that (effect?) should be sent to Consul Raven direct from London.

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(No. 4.)

*Copy of Mr. Coffey's Statement.*

**Memorandum relating to Interview at Embassy, Vienna.**

Perceiving by the Times newspaper, which reached Vienna when I was about departing for Trieste, that the Coldstream Guards had embarked from Woolwich for India, I directly conjectured affairs in India were in a more precarious state than when we left London, and considered it was only discreet on my part, before proceeding further, to discover from the British representatives at Vienna the state of affairs in the Presidency to which I was going.

My conversation was to this effect:—I perceive the Guards have been ordered out to India, and as this portends a gloomy state of affairs, and as I had no information of the state of things since leaving London, I would be glad to know in what state the Bombay presidency is, as in the event of its being disaffected, our presence at the moment might embarrass the Government, and if so (*i.e.* if Sir [*sic*] had news to that effect), I was perfectly at his orders to remain or return; in fact, to act as Sir H. Seymour might suggest. Not that I had any doubts of the Ameer's loyalty and wish to serve and uphold the English Government; but not being aware how the rebellion progressed, so far as Bombay was concerned, I was most anxious to consult one in our Ambassador's position; and my consulting him as to my remaining or going was certainly and distinctly only in reference to any news he might have as to the state of India. Had I

the means of acquiring the information at Vienna otherwise, a reference to the Ambassador would not have been necessary. So far as the Ameer was concerned, I never heard him give utterance to a single sentence at variance to the wish of any one of Her Majesty's most devoted and loyal subjects, and I do firmly believe his Highness is most willing and anxious to aid the English Government with all the resources of his country. I should say that I mentioned at the Embassy, that the Ameer always felt sore at, and could not understand, the reason of his not having been presented at the English court; but, nevertheless, his attachment and fidelity to the Queen was undoubted.

*Edward Lees Coffey.*  
*Trieste, 26 September, 1857.*

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*Copy of a Letter from the Assistant Secretary of the India Board to Mr. Coffey, dated, 26th November, 1857 (in answer to the Charges made against him by means of assistance derived from the Board).*

Sir,

I am desired by the President of the Board of Commissioners for the affairs of India to acknowledge the receipt of the letter which you yesterday addressed to him.

*I am, &c.*

*(Signed) WM. Leach.*

E. L. Coffey, Esq.

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*Second Letter of the Petitioner, praying the Board of Control for Inquiry. To the Right Honourable Vernon Smith, M.P., President of the Board of Control, &c. &c. Sir,*

I have to thank you for a letter acknowledging the receipt of a written statement which I have forwarded to the Board of Control, respecting my conduct in connection with his Highness Meer Ali Morad.

Since that statement was written, I have had the opportunity of making further inquiries upon the matter. The result of these inquiries still more fully proves that your name as an individual, and the authority of the Board over which you preside, were used in such a manner, to my prejudice, as to entitle me to ask you, most respectfully,

as the only person who can really solve the existing difficulty, to give me a reply to the following questions.

I should at once, Sir, state, that these questions arise partly from what Mr. Butt himself stated to me, and partly from a letter which he subsequently addressed to my brother.

I feel assured, Sir, that your own feeling as a gentleman will appreciate the very difficult position in which I am placed, and that you will afford me all such assistance as you possibly can to discover the truth.

I therefore respectfully ask, —

1. Was Mr. Butt formally accredited by the Board of Control to proceed to Vienna and Trieste, with the view of warning the Ameer as to the difficulties (arising from my conduct) which attended his position?
2. Was it with your sanction and approval that Mr. Butt brought out to Trieste Captain Langley and Mr. Irvine to supersede me with the Ameer?
3. Did the Board of Control give to Mr. Butt such official documents relative to my conduct towards the Ameer as were then in the Board's possession, and was permission then given to Mr. Butt to use such documents as he thought fit against me?
4. If the fact were so, what were the documents so intrusted to Mr. Butt?
5. Did the Board of Control, or yourself, Sir, give to Mr. Butt the telegraphic message transmitted by Sir. H. Seymour to England with regard to the Ameer?
6. Did you express to Mr. Butt your conviction that, had the telegram said to contain information which I had given at Vienna been sent to Lord Elphinstone, he would at once have imprisoned the Ameer upon his arrival in Bombay?
7. Did you ever give Mr. Butt to understand that he had your authority to state to the Ameer, that, unless I were at once dismissed, he had no chance of regaining either his money or his lands?
8. Is it true, as Mr. Butt has stated, that my conduct towards the Ameer has either prevented or impeded the transmission of a dispatch from the Board to the authorities in India, as to the establishment of the Ameer in his own territory?
9. Did you ever give Mr. Butt authority or countenance to say that, in the opinion of yourself and Sir George Clerk, my motive for proceeding to the

Embassy at Vienna was in order to sell the interests of the Ameer to the British Government?

These, Sir, are specific statements and accusations made against me by Mr. Butt. I place myself at once in your hands.

Your name has been made the authority by which Mr. Butt has worked. I, on the honour of a gentleman, deny the truth of his personal accusations against myself, and I now ask you, Sir, to let me know how far the Board of Control sanctioned those proceedings of Mr. Butt, of which I complain.

Hoping for the favour of an answer at your earliest convenience,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

*Your most obedient Servant,*

*Edward Lees Coffey.*

Stafford-street Club, Albemarle-street, 12 December, 1857.

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*Copy of a Letter from the Secretary of the India Board to Mr. Coffey, dated 22 December, 1857.*

Sir,

I am directed by the Commissioners for the Affairs of India, to acknowledge the receipt of the letter which you addressed to the President of the Board on the 12th instant, and to inform you that the Board cannot enter upon a discussion of the subject of your differences with Mr. Butt.

*I am, &c.*

*(Signed) George Clerk.*

E. L. Coffey, Esq.

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*Letter written (several months before the Committee sat) to the Lady whose character was attacked before the Committee as one of the Witnesses for the Petitioner.*

*Vienna, 30 November, 1857.*

Madam,

With regard to the communication you have made to me today, I hasten to express the very deep regret I shall feel if anything I may have said or written has been the means of subjecting you to an erroneous imputation.

On calling at the hotel and inquiring for Mr. Coffey, I was shown into a room where he was in the company of a lady, evidently at home there, and belonging to the party, and who likewise joined in the conversation.

I not unnaturally supposed her to be the wife of the gentleman in whose rooms I imagined ourselves to be, and I can but again express my regret if—having been shown into your room by the waiter in consequence of his knowing that Mr. Coffey was with you at the moment—my mistake should have become the cause of a serious annoyance to you.

I may add that a gentleman wearing an evening dress and a decoration was present during a part of my visit.

*I have the honour to be, Madam,  
Your most obedient servant,  
Henry Elliott.*

(Addressed)

Mrs. Parr, Hotel, Wandl.

H. Elliott.

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*Letter written by Mr. Butt before the Committee sat as to the character of the Lady whose character was attacked by his Advocate during the inquiry.*

*London, 13 Feb., 1858.*

Madam,

You have mentioned to me that a statement has been made that I showed letters from persons connected with the embassy at Vienna, alleging that you have been travelling with Mr. Coffey as his wife on the Continent.

It became necessary, in explanation of transactions connected with the Ameer Ali Moorad, that I should show to Mr. James Coffey a letter officially addressed to me from Sir Hamilton Seymour, enclosing from Mr. Elliott, one of the attaches of the

Embassy, a statement of a conversation which he had at Vienna -with Mr. Edward Coffey.

In this letter it was incidentally mentioned that Mrs. Coffey was present and joined in the conversation.

Not the slightest allusion was made to your name directly or indirectly.

In no other letter was the slightest reference either to you or any lady whatever.

Mr. Elliott has himself explained to you the circumstances under which he fell into the mistake when he- met you at Vienna in company with Mr. Coffey.

I can only express my deep regret that this mistake should have caused you the slightest annoyance; I am, however, in no respect to blame. I never made any statement like that which you tell me has been imputed to me, and I am not in possession of any letter which throws the least imputation upon you. I have the honour to be,

*Your very faithful servant,*

*Isaac Butt.*

My communication with Mr. James Coffey was entirely of a confidential character, and has only reference to the affairs of Ameer Ali Moorad.

(Addressed)

Mrs. Parr, 17, Old Bond-street.

Isaac Butt.

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*Letter from the Chairman of the Board of Directors to Mr. Butt declining to accede to his original application in behalf of the Ameer. .*

*India-House, 22 May 1857.*

Dear Sir,

I beg to thank you very sincerely for the courtesy of your two communications on the affairs of the Ameer Ali Morad.

I have consulted my Colleagues on the subject (carefully abstaining from the slightest allusion to your name in connection with it), and they entirely concur with me that in such a case it would not be proper to make a compromise of the nature of a bargain with any person in the position of Ali Morad, who has come to England, without the

consent of the authorities in India, to complain of acts of the Court of Directors (sanctioned, of course, by the Board of Control), the grounds of which are on record.

It would be quite a different question whether Ali Morad returning to India, and there conducting his relations with the British Government, and with his own subjects, in such a manner as to re-establish a claim to consideration and confidence, he might not then urge, with a fair prospect of success, an application for a remission of a, part of the penalty with which he has been visited.

I spoke on the matter to Sir George Clerk yesterday, and he told me that this was the line of conduct which he had advised the agent of Ali Morad (Akbur Ali) to recommend to his principal.

I return the paper ordered in your last note, which, as well as the first one, I have destroyed. No one but Mr. Vernon Smith is aware that we have had any correspondence on the subject.

*(Not signed.)*

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*Final Letter from the Court of Directors, as altered by the President of the Board of Control, in consequence of Mr. Butt's influence conceding to the Ameer leave to return to his country.*

*East-India House, August 1857.*

I have laid before the Court of Directors your memorial, dated the 6th ultimo, praying for the restoration to you of a portion of the territory of which you were deprived in consequence of the acts proved against you before a Commission in 1851, and I am directed in reply to inform you, that the Court are of opinion, that the proper course for you now to pursue is to return to your country, and under the protection and the guidance of the Chief Commissioner in Sindh to manifest your zeal and fidelity in the service of the British Government.

It will be a satisfaction to the Court to receive from the Chief Commissioner such reports of your conduct as may seem hereafter to justify their considering your case more favorable than hitherto.

*(Signed)*                      *I have, &c.*  
*James C. Melvill,*  
*Secretary.*



His Highness the Ameer Ali Morad Khan Behadoor, 18, Carlton Hill East, St. John's Wood.

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### THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE.

1. That Isaac Butt, Esq., Q.C., did not, as stated in the petition of E. L. Coffey, in or about the months of July or August, 1856, corruptly enter into an agreement with his Highness Ameer Ali Moorad Khan, or his agents, to the effect that the said Isaac Butt should for a sum of money advocate and prosecute in the House of Commons, with her Majesty's Government and the East-India Company, the claims of his Highness for the recovery of his territory : nor in pursuance of such corrupt agreement have divers sums of money been paid by the Ameer to Mr. Butt.

2. That Isaac Butt, Esq., in or about the month of July, 1857, did enter into an agreement with his Highness to go out to India to assist him in prosecuting his claim with the local Government of Bombay, in consideration of the sum of £10,000, of which the said Isaac Butt received £2,000 (£1,999 net), and the remainder was to be paid in bills proposed to be drawn or accepted by the Ameer.

3. That Isaac Butt Esq., did, in the period which elapsed between the month of June 1856 and the month of September 1857, advise and assist his Highness in prosecuting his claim against the Government of India, and with that view had frequent personal interviews in the year 1857, after the meeting of Parliament, with the President of the Board of Control, and also some communications with the Chairman of the Board of Directors, and one other member of that Board.

4. That, in or about the month of August, 1857, Isaac Butt, Esq., received from his Highness another sum of £300, but it has not been shown<sup>9</sup> to your committee that such payment to Isaac Butt, Esq., had any reference to proceedings in Parliament.

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The following were printed as to be proposed, but were not proposed<sup>10</sup>:—

5. That no proceedings in Parliament were taken by Isaac Butt, Esq., in 1857, on the subject of the Ameer's claims, but that in 1856 the said Isaac Butt presented a petition

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<sup>9</sup> The words "it does not appear" were in the original draft.

<sup>10</sup> For some reason omitted in the Minutes of Proceedings.

from his Highness on the day of June ; moved on the day of for papers on the subject; and gave notice on the day of of an intended motion by himself on the subject.

6. That your committee wish to express the opinion that the receipt of money or rewards to Members of the House of Commons for their service in advising or assisting in the prosecution of the claims on the Executive Government, or interest transaction of business with a department the would be detrimental to the character and dignity of the House, and deserves their serious reprobation.

**T H E   E N D .**

