

THE ILBERT BILL IN INDIA.

The announcement from Calcutta that the native press of India vehemently opposes any compromise on the Ilbert bill was to be expected. The bill, by subjecting Englishmen who misbehave themselves in India to the same jurisdiction with natives of the same description, is simply a provision for the equality of all men in India before the law. That is the ground alike of the hearty support which is given to it by native Indians and of the hearty opposition it has encountered among Anglo-Indians. Lord RIPON has made himself very unpopular among his own countrymen by advocating what is on its face a piece of simple justice, and his unpopularity is highly honorable to him. The English in India have attacked, without very much success, the organization of society by castes. But the idea that an Englishman is not to have the benefit of his caste when he comes to be tried for crime is intolerable to him.

The *London Times* declares that the Anglo-Indians and the native Indians ought to live in "constant harmony," and that the impartial justice proposed by the Ilbert bill will be destructive of the constant harmony which it appears has been secured by having one measure of justice for natives and another for British residents. The *Times* also cites the opinion of Sir BARTLE FRERE, whose career in South Africa ought to make him a judge of what will produce harmony between Great Britain and her dependencies, that this bill is calculated to "raise dangerous race hatred" by inculcating the idea that justice which is good enough for natives is good enough for Europeans.

The truth is that there has never been any "harmony," constant or otherwise, in British India, and that the natives are held to their allegiance by the tenure of conquest, forming a dominant caste intrenched by privilege. That Lord RIPON has endeavored to convert the tenure of terror into one of attachment by bringing about an equality in the administration of justice is a great offense in the eyes of British residents. Although the day of nabobs has long been over, the Indian civil servant is very much what BURKE described him to be a hundred years ago, a stranger without either knowledge of or sympathy with the people among whom he lives. It has been noted that Anglo-Indians, so far from being liberalized by their experience, are apt to be more bigoted, more illiberal, and more insular than Englishmen who have never left their native island. Such a spirit is the natural result of a residence among a conquered people, among whom the conquerors have established themselves as a superior race. And such a spirit is the natural source of such a fierce and general opposition as has been excited by the measure of justice supported by the Viceroy of India.