

interesting style. It is a valuable feature that Mr. Barkley's sojourn in Turkey was not made during recent events, and his narrative is not written with a view to advocate one side or the other in the present unhappy conflict. He saw the Bulgarians in what may be called their normal condition, and had no reason to be prejudiced for or against any section of them. He saw much to condemn and a good deal to praise both in Christians and Mohammedans, but little that was praiseworthy in Turkish officials, "from the Governor-General to the hangman." The work contains much information on the Bulgarians, their characters and ways, and will be found both interesting and instructive.

*The District of Bākarganj; its History and Statistics.*  
By H. Beveridge, B.C.S. (London: Trübner and Co., 1876.)

THE publication of this work is somewhat opportune, for under the reformed, if not improved, spelling of the title, our readers will no doubt recognise the district of Backergunge, which, with other districts at the mouth of the Hooghly, was recently overwhelmed by one of the most disastrous cyclone-waves on record. Mr. Beveridge is magistrate and collector of the district, and as such has had a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with it. He has evidently also read a great deal on the subject, and the result is a work which ought to take a good place as a local history. Mr. Beveridge describes the physical features of the district, its antiquities and early history, the pergunnahs and sunderburds, treats of Government estates, land tenures, the inhabitants, productions, and manufactures. The second part refers to the several departments of the administration, education, &c. This district, from its low-lying position at the top of the Bay of Bengal, has been peculiarly subject to the inrush of the wave which accompanies cyclones. Until the recent catastrophe the great event in the history of the district was an inundation, evidently caused by a cyclone-wave, which occurred in June, 1822. According to contemporary account, 100,000 persons lost their lives, and as many cattle; but this must pale before the recent catastrophe, and henceforth October 31, 1876, will be the black-letter day in Bākarganj. Mr. Beveridge's book will be found to contain a great deal of really valuable information, and if every district in India were treated in a similar manner, we should possess a library of information of the greatest value. The volume contains a good map of the district.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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##### Sea Fisheries

PROF. NEWTON has sent you a long reply to my criticism of his Address to the British Association; and although it is exceedingly inconvenient to me, as I believe it is also to him, to continue the discussion at the present time, I must ask you for space, as soon as you can spare it, to point out as briefly as I can, how little progress my friend has yet made in his subject. He was good enough to show me his reply before he sent it to you, and I then told him I should have to meet him on every point in it. Nevertheless he sent it for publication, and as the subject appears to me to be one on which the public should not be misled, I am compelled to ask space for some comments upon it.

The Minutes of Evidence given before the Commission, consisting of 61,831 questions and answers rather frighten him, and he turns to the Index for help. Without a careful study of the evidence the Index is practically useless for my friend's purpose, as I told him. And some knowledge of the habits of sea-fish will be exceedingly valuable in enabling it to be understood. The Index is not a *précis*. There is intrinsic evidence in Prof. Newton's reply that he framed it, I think I may say solely from the Index, and not from the evidence; his tables of increase and decrease,

and calculations of the number of questions and answers relating to each, are obviously so, and the value of his arguments may be judged of accordingly. To show what his tables are worth I will take two or three entries in them for examination. "Bream" is the first, and that fish is said to have increased. This is the only entry relating to bream in the whole Index. Bream are common fish on very many parts of our coast; they often congregate in large numbers, sometimes on one part, sometimes on another; they happened to have been unusually numerous off Hastings just before the Commissioners were there, and the fishermen accordingly recorded the increase. But there is not the slightest reason for believing bream were then more abundant than usual on our coasts generally than the reverse. "Brill" has two entries, both in the decrease column. In one case the evidence is that of fishermen in Start Bay, who used the sean nets within half a mile of the beach, and who were furious against the Brixham trawlers for sometimes working in the Bay; the said trawlers, up to that time, and for the twelve years since, finding no falling off in the supply of brill. The other case was at Liverpool, where brill was mentioned, among other fish, by the Inspector of the Fish Market, as having diminished. He made the remarkable statement that not 1 per cent. of sea-fish of all kinds was brought to the market in 1864 compared with what had been taken there twenty years before. As the number of fishing-boats had increased during that interval, and the price of fish was, if anything, rather less, owing to the large supplies sent by railway from the east coast direct to the fishmongers' shops, and not going into the market, it is very clear that if the fishermen were getting a living from the 1 per cent. in 1864, they must have been making at least 100 times as much money twenty years before, which is an absurdity. "Cod and ling" come next. Here my friend had better look to his arithmetic. There is no doubt that cod, and haddock especially had fallen off at many of the inshore fishing grounds. They are both species which have fluctuated very much in numbers in many places, the haddock in particular making its appearance in abundance for a season or two, and then becoming very scarce; or they have left places where they were abundant for years together, and again unexpectedly returned. The last report I had from the north-east coast of England, just three years ago, was that the line fishermen were doing well, and their only complaint was of the scarcity of mussels for bait. But it was along this coast that the great outcry against the trawlers arose in 1863, which led to the issue of the Sea Fisheries Commission; and a great deal of the evidence given there was such as might have been expected under the circumstances.

It will be difficult to treat the next entry seriously, but I will try to do so. In a table professing to show the increase or decrease of the fishes with which our markets are supplied, he notes one particular kind as having decreased, and he counts the two instances as helping to prove that our sea fisheries are on the high road to ruin. Those persons who have even but a very slight acquaintance with sea fishing will be rather surprised to hear that the fish whose end is approaching is nothing less than the "dogfish!" one whose utter extermination would gladden the hearts of the fishermen from the Shetlands to the Land's End, and from Dingle to Dover. Hordes of these predatory and mischievous fishes roam round the coasts of the British Islands; sometimes they swarm in one place, sometimes in another. In the herring season the destruction they have caused to both fish and nets has been such that the fishing where they were has been almost entirely stopped for nights together, and the long-liners also suffer severely from them. They are said to have seriously interrupted the Yarmouth herring fishery this year; and the official report for 1875 from the coastguard at Killibegs, in Ireland, states that the dogfish had so much increased that Donegal Bay had, on several occasions, been apparently cleared of fish by them, and that the nets were constantly full of them. It may be well said that happy is the country whose dogfish are decreasing! Would that I could believe they were becoming scarce in our own!

Prof. Newton has evidently been taken in by a heading in the Index, thus—"Dogfish, consumption of." The explanation is as amusing as it is simple. In Morecambe Bay some of the fishermen catch the dogfish, and after skinning it and removing the head and tail, send it under the name of "Darwen Salmon" to the Blackburn and Preston weavers, who are the only persons who will buy it. This is the only case I ever heard of in which the hated dogfish was not knocked on the head and thrown overboard whenever there was a chance of doing so.

Had I space at command I could enlarge on these tables, but