

The Significance of Indian Nationalism

By
H. M. Howsin

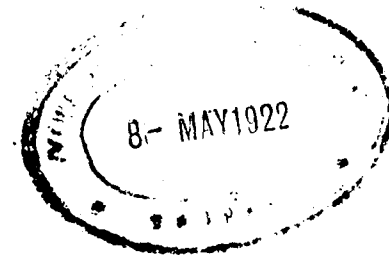
& Co., Madras

49335

8- MAY 14 1922

Contents

	Page
Author's Introductory Note ...	vii
Chapter I	
The Great Issue ...	1
Chapter II	
Historical Sketch ...	5
Chapter III	
Indian Science, Art, and Philosophy ...	31
Chapter IV	
A False Charge ...	46
Chapter V	
Religious Consciousness ...	54
Chapter VI	
The Future ...	73
Chapter VII	
Legislative Councils ...	98



Author's Introductory Note to the Second Edition

"WHEN in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."—JEFFERSON.

A declaration by the representatives of the United States of America.

WHEN, in August 1919, I was released from a four years' internment, one of the first persons I talked with was the late Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was then in London. He urged me to republish this little book. Serious ill-health prevented me from doing so then, but later on I set about revising it that it might be brought up to date. All that was then done has been discarded in the conviction that such revision would necessarily destroy whatever of value it may hold for those who are studying and living in the present situation. For as it stands, it is a reflection, albeit an incomplete one, of the problem of Indian Nationalism as it existed in 1909. It is also a landmark, showing how far ahead the tide of progress has swept even in a short six years, since the innocuous opinions and arguments which it presents, apparently formed one of the reasons why the wisdom of the Advisory Committee of the Home Office who were supposed to examine

into these matters, ordained that I should be imprisoned for the period of the war, lest I might attempt to raise "rebellion" in India! To-day, as has been observed, "everyone is discussing the shadow of an Indian republic looming on the horizon."

In 1909 when the book was first written and published, there was a widespread hope that if only the average English man and woman could be made to understand the Indian demand for freedom, they would recognise its justice and its logic, that their national acumen would foresee irremediable disaster for England, should she persist in her attempt to frustrate the independent development of Indian nationality, and that consequently the pressure of an awakened public opinion would compel the Government to a liberating policy in conformity with English idealism and the security of the Empire.

Since then the unfolding of events has steadily driven out the belief, not merely in the utility, but also in the pertinence of any such appeal. The people of Great Britain are suspected of being under the domination of a short-sighted expediency, which does not shrink from using the higher principles of humanity as a lure in the pursuance of its Imperialistic greed, and

are moreover, judged to be too strongly enslaved by their parliamentary system to be capable of exercising a directive influence on the policy of the Government which is erroneously described as representing them. A deeper perception reveals that the large majority of British people would contentedly accept any settlement with India their Ministers might propose. It is a problem remote from their concern, it is a subject upon which they candidly admit their profound ignorance, and are quick to assert, as is indeed the case, that they are too minutely engrossed with their own ever-increasing difficulties to do otherwise than leave the elucidation of Indian affairs in the hands of the Government and the interested Services. Further out of the maelstrom of war has emerged a new poise, a new status, a new principle, submerging all old attitudes, old conventions, and setting up a new international equilibrium. It is the poise of independence: it is the equilibrium of free fellowship: it is the principle of self-determination and equality of right among Nations.

India no longer begs for Freedom as a boon: she fights for it as a duty: she claims it as a right. In the terror of a world war, in the extremity of dire necessity amid the chaos of

war it was proclaimed over and over again by the British Government that the foundations of peace could only be laid by the application of the principle of self-determination to all civilised peoples, and that none should be compelled to submit to a government they did not choose. That principle has been applied to the subjects of the late German Empire; it has become the battle-cry of the subjects of the British Empire, and those who would now ignore that principle will not escape the fire of its functioning. One of its first results is to put an end to "sedition". Mahatma Gandhi declares that "sedition" has become the creed of the Congress, but in truth, sedition, or treason, as applied to a people under a foreign Government which imposes itself upon them, no longer has any meaning. *There is no such thing.* To seek to overthrow a foreign Government which does not act by consent of the people and which they have judged unworthy to govern them, is a legitimate aim. A people have only one object of loyalty, and that is the revelation of their National spirit. This does not of necessity preclude co-operation with foreigners who are themselves subservient to the National will, but it must always preclude loyalty to a foreign authority: it must always preclude

loyalty to an alien revelation. The great Non-co-operation-movement is not only an inspired act of volition, a supreme act of faith, by which the people identify themselves with that body of capacities and powers which is the spiritual reality of the Nation, but it is the direct challenge of India to the Government and people of Great Britain themselves to abide in the faith they have accepted before the world.

The old argument that India must be denied immediate Swaraj, because her masses are illiterate and because within her component parts lurk potentialities of strife, is shattered by the logic of the war. The Great powers of Europe plunged for five years into such an appalling hell of blood and devastation as the world had never before witnessed, and dragged unwilling Asia down with them into the shambles. At its conclusion the terms of the so-called "Peace" treaties of Versailles and Sevres proved because of their treachery to be largely impracticable. The minor wars, the blockades, the famines and social dislocation of the aftermath threaten with ruin the civilisation of Europe. If, then, the ability to maintain peace be the test for freedom, England, in common with her Allies, must seek a conqueror. Within her own empire, the bitter alienation of

India, the Irish war, the Egyptian struggle all attest that the responsibility for the direction of its own life belongs to each nation, and that the usurpation of that responsibility by another, is, in a most real sense, the sin of standing between a people and their God. The "literate" of Europe made and maintained the war: their representatives drew up the peace. It was the best they could all of them do. The significant question remains, could the "illiterate" East have done worse? The average of literacy can never be made the test of self-determination. It is to the discredit of England that under her long rule the education of the Indian masses has been unprovided for: but to suggest that a people's literacy be made their qualification for freedom, the test of their sagacity in choosing leaders, of discernment in fundamental issues in National policy and morality, even of loyalty to the citizen ideal, is disproved, if need be, by the result of the last General Election in Great Britain itself.

India is awake to her paramount duty. She will steadily reject the attempt to foist ready-made foreign institutions upon her, which work mechanically, because the supreme authority is foreign and leave the basic problems of the country unsolved and undealt with. The

Parliamentary usages of Great Britain grew up piecemeal as the political ideas of the people developed. Once regarded as sacrosanct, the old faith in British Parliamentary institutions is nowhere more rudely shaken than in Great Britain itself, where the forms of representative government, neither representative nor democratic, have ceased to express the political form, and are inadequate to deal with the National needs, while the tendency of British democracy in which such high hopes were placed, as one of its most ardent defenders is constrained to admit, is "to corrupt . . . and be corrupted." *

India will select from Europe, from Britain, from Ireland, from America, whatever is of value in the reorganisation of her National life. But she will modify all forms and modes she may transplant to conform with her own line of growth. Thus her educational policy, her social reforms, her political institutions, will be the channels of vigorous and original life, because they will be truly Indian, expressing and recreating the National genius of her peoples. The return to the *Charka* as the means of industrial emancipation, is a timely

* (Mr. Percy Alden in the "Contemporary" Review for October 1921)

re-education of the National cultural perception to the recognition of true values and sound principles, and brings into common operation the ideal of handicraft with which the most progressive and inspirational of the western educationalists and artists are striving to regenerate the lives and conceptions of their own people. India's first and holiest duty, as the first, fruits of a new dispensation, is to be free. She has proved her moral position by the choice of the highest plane for battle. The National acceptance of Non-violence places her in the vanguard of the pioneers of a new world-order. She appears not only as the liberator of her own people, but as the saviour of her enemies. Racially, geographically, culturally, England and India are set apart. They progress on different lines, and are in many aspects complementary, the one to the other. The absolute inviolability of the individuality of each is the essential condition of approach. In the economy of an inter-dependent world, isolation is impossible: enmity disastrous for both. Only on the basis of mutual independence is a friendly and beneficial inter-dependence possible, and nothing short of this can bring peace.

The vision is with India. The power of its spirit is upon her. Her contempt for suffering

places her beyond the dominion of earthly weapons. The hypnotism of foreign control is at last broken: she has snapped the spell and trodden her weakness underfoot. Each day world forces lift her nearer the goal, and confident in her strength she presses on to meet her destiny, perceiving, with an illumined devotion which shrivells all personal enmities and unworthy suspicions in the flame of its purity, the realisation of *Swarajya* to be the incarnation of her Divine Lord.

H. M. H.

The Significance of Indian Nationalism

Chapter I

The Great Issue

THE possibility that India should in time aspire to and accomplish her freedom and independence was recognised in the days of the East India Company, and the justice of the claim was fully acknowledged. In those earlier days, though for all too brief a period, there was a deep conviction that the fair fame of empire rests upon a solid basis of national integrity; that in no wise could England so forget her high principles, so soil her honour, as to deliberately withhold from India, for the purposes of subjection, those rights, those liberties which she herself deems essential to all healthy development. When in 1833 Lord Ellenborough had declared that "our very existence depended upon the exclusion of the natives from military and political power in that

2 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

country," Macaulay replied in his famous speech before the House of Commons. It is well-known, and too long for full quotation here, but we cannot forbear a few extracts :

" We shall never consent . . . to stupefy and paralyse a great people whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control. . . . We are free, we are civilised to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an *equal measure* of civilisation. Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive ? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition ? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent ? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative ? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative by every person who maintains that we ought permanently to exclude the natives from high office. I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us, and it is the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour. . . . It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown the system ; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government ; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. *But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it.* Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. . . . The sceptre may pass away from us. . . . There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay . . . that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws."

At the present time we are in grave danger of forgetting those high ideals ; the path of expediency, of material aggrandisement, seems

The Great Issue

3

to be preferred to that of duty, of wisdom, of honour ; while the building of our " imperishable empire " has become so far removed from the realm of practical ideals that when Lord Morley tells us that

" Military strength and material strength we have in abundance. *What we still want to acquire is moral strength.*"

we receive that startling indictment of British character with unruffled equanimity.

It was an ideal of an earlier generation that England should so guide, so train India, that ultimately she would not only demand, but be qualified to receive, European institutions. The general ignorance of the time was such that India was regarded as being essentially a barbarous nation, unaccustomed at all periods of her history to any methods but those of a tyrannical despotism. Such ignorance, however excusable then, is culpable at the present time, and yet even to-day it is hardly recognised how strong, how persistent, through all external change and tumult, is the tradition and actuality of constitutional usages throughout the whole vast period of Indian history. It is not that Hindu contact with Western ideals and the study of our literature, science, and polity, have induced the growth of a foreign excrescence which expresses itself as Indian

4 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

Nationalism, but rather that after a period of weakness, degeneration, and national sickness, the continued pressure of Western supremacy, the stimulus of Western civilisation, have hastened the time of regeneration, have promoted a healthy reaction, and renewed in India the consciousness of her ancient ideals, of her latent powers, of her own traditions of liberty, of justice, of self-ordained constitutionalism. It is on these inherent grounds that the demand of Indians for self-Government, for an unhindered expression of their national life is to be justified; and if it be objected that in the following pages we have dwelt upon qualifications, but have ignored disabilities, we would reply that as a candidate's testimonials do not consist of an enumeration of his physical, mental, and moral failings, but are concerned solely with the setting forth of his merits, as a barrister does not call attention to the weak spots in his client's suit, but emphasises the bases upon which he believes his case can be legally won, so we desire to indicate the reasons which make the purposes and ideals of Indian Nationalism valid and honourable, in spite of any evidence of incapacity, of failure, of disability in any particular which may be preferred against them.

Chapter II

Historical Sketch

IT is impossible to understand the aims and aspirations of India to-day without some knowledge of her mighty past, in which they have their root, of which they are the opening flower.

Far back in vast ages, whose beginnings are still wrapped in the mists of time, there were four great civilisations: the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Babylonian-Assyrian, and the Aryan. All these developed to a very high degree their own systems of culture, of social and political economy. It is India with which we are now concerned, and the story is that of "An Aryan people, at first isolated by situation and circumstance from the outside world, and working out its own religious and social institutions, its literature, laws, and science; and it forms one of the most instructive and interesting chapters in the annals of human progress and culture." *

Some time before 2000 B. C. this Aryan people settled in the Punjab and began their

* "Ancient India," by R. C. Dutt ("Epochs of Indian History." Longmans, Green & Co.)

conquest of Northern India. In course of time differences arose on religious matters, and one portion migrated westward to Persia, and became the founders of that great empire and of the Zoroastrian religion. The history of the Hindu section which remained is more or less preserved for us in one of the most ancient scriptures of the world—the Rig-Veda. Though not historical in the strict sense of the word, it presents us with a very intimate picture of the lives of the people; while its noble language and lofty conceptions presuppose a high degree of mental and moral culture. The beautiful farewell to the dead may be given as an example of the deep poetic sense which characterised these ancient Hindus:

"Depart thou, depart thou, by the ancient paths to the place whither our fathers have departed. Meet with the Ancient ones: meet with the Lord of Death. Throwing off thine imperfections, go to thy home. . . . Let him depart to those who, through meditation, have obtained the victory, who, by fixing their thoughts on the unseen, have gone to heaven. Let him depart to the mighty in battle, to the heroes who have laid down their lives for others, to those who have bestowed their odds on the poor."

We quote also a few stanzas taken from "The Invocation to the Dawn," a beautiful lyric which not even translation into a foreign tongue can rob of its delicacy and charm:

What mortal knoweth thee, O Immortal Ushas (the Dawn),
id of our praise! Whom, O mighty one, dost thou favour?

"Far extending, many tinted, brilliant Ushas! We know not
y abode, whether it be high or remote.

"Daughter of the sky! Accept these offerings, and perpetuate
our welfare.

"Auspicious Ushas has harnessed her chariots from afar,
before the rising of the sun! She comes in radiance and glory
on us in her hundred chariots.

"Following the path of mornings that have passed, to be
followed by endless mornings to come, bright Ushas dispels
darkness, and awakens to life all beings, unconscious like the
dead in sleep.

"How long have the Dawns risen? How long will the Dawns
arise? The present morning pursues those that are gone, future
mornings will pursue this resplendent Ushas.

"Mortals who behold the pristine Ushas have passed away;
we behold her now; and men will come after us who will behold
Ushas in the future.

"Ahana gently proceeds to every house; she comes ever
diffusing light, and blesses us and accepts our offerings."*

These hymns show us a very united family life; the father was the high priest of the household; the chief was the father and priest of his tribe, and although his office was hereditary, it was also elective; he must be fit for his high position. Women were honoured, and consulted in all matters of importance, and we find them holding their own with the men in philosophic discussion and in literary composition. Marriage w

* "Rig-Veda," I.

regarded as a very sacred sacrament; the woman was the joint ruler of the house with her husband, and they performed religious ceremonies together.

There is mention made of various mechanical and industrial arts; there are goldsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, and various trades; horses and chariots are used in battle; but, generally speaking, the people appear to have settled down to a peaceful agricultural life, and gradually, as civilisation became more intricate in its growth, the four great castes emerged—priests, warriors, merchants, and artisans.

Thus we find a civilisation rich in ethical, philosophic, and literary culture, with a highly developed social polity, gradually increasing through the military caste its martial prowess, but not expressing itself strongly in industrialism.

So we pass on to a later period, extending roughly from 1400-1000 B.C. By this time the whole of the Gangetic basin became consolidated into an Hindu Empire, consisting of several independent states, which, in spite of mutual jealousies and sometimes internecine wars, were firmly united by a common sacred language, literature, and religion, and social

and political institutions, also common to all. This period presents a picture of

"The cultured Gangetic races, with their brilliant courts and schools of learning, with their great tournaments and feats of arms, and with their elaborate social rules and religious rites." *

In course of time these states extended their boundaries and colonised the further territory, until by the fourth century B.C. the whole of India, with Ceylon, was brought under Hindu civilisation.

In their relations with other peoples, the primitive races of India, the Hindus evinced an extraordinary synthetic capacity; they did not merely annex territory, they absorbed the conquered races into their own culture and customs, making them one with Hindu civilisation.

We glean much information about Indian life at this time from the records of various travellers. The Greeks had peaceful trading intercourse with India from very ancient times. As early as 401 B.C. Ktesias, the Greek physician and traveller, had been greatly impressed by the extreme justness of the Hindus in all their dealings, their devotion to their sovereign, and their contempt for death. Later,

* "Ancient India," by R. C. Dutt.

Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador in Bengal, gives us a detailed picture of the life around him. He, too, is full of admiration for the Hindu character. He emphasises particularly their scrupulous truthfulness, honesty, and their great valour. He lays stress upon the chastity of their women, and the sobriety, industry, and skill of the farmers and artisans. Like Alexander, he observes with great appreciation the powerful Brahman caste, with their life dedicated to the spiritual service of humanity, and he places on record, as many a later writer has done, the great uplifting influence they exercised over the rest of the community.

"The whole body of the Sanskrit literature bears witness to the fact that this ideal life was constantly before their eyes, and that it served to the whole caste as a high standard in its really essential features of self-culture and self-restraint. . . . The Brahman stands apart . . . the man of self-centred refinement. He is an example of a class becoming the ruling power in a country, not by force of arms, but by the vigour of hereditary culture and temperance. One race has swept across India after another, dynasties have risen and fallen, religions have spread themselves and disappeared. But since the dawn of history the Brahman has calmly ruled; swaying the minds and receiving the homage of the people, and accepted by foreign nations as the highest type of Indian mankind." *

Megasthenes has also left us a graphic account of the internal condition of the country.

* "Indian Empire" (third edition), pp. 137-8. Sir W. Hunter

He notes the great natural fertility of the soil, which is still further increased by systematic irrigation; so that "it is accordingly affirmed that famine has never visited India, and that there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food." He speaks at length of the extremely flourishing condition of manufactures, commerce, arts and sciences, the wealth of the people, their love of ornament and fine clothing, and their great artistic skill in these matters.

"The kingly government is portrayed almost as described in Maun, with its hereditary castes of councillors and soldiers. Megasthenes mentions that India was divided into 118 kingdoms, some of which, such as that of the Prasi under Chandragupta exercised suzerain powers." *

The invasion of India by Alexander the Great, in 327 B.C. marks the culminating point in Greek influence, for though he was forced to abandon all idea of conquest, he made alliances, planted Greek colonies, and founded cities, introducing for the time being, at any rate, a stable Grecian element into the Hindu civilisation. The latter, however, proved the great solvent—India assimilated the foreign culture,

* "The Indian Empire," p. 217.

Hinduised the foreign colonies, and herself remained inviolate.

We pass on to the time of the world-famed Hindu Emperor Asoka, 272 B.C. In the early part of his reign he won military renown by the conquest and annexation of the kingdom of Kalinga,* but so distressed was he at the sufferings consequent upon war, that he resolved never to countenance warfare, on whatever pretext, again. He embraced Buddhism, and as a result published his famous Edicts, the chief of which were :

(1) The sanctity of all non-human life was to be observed, and the killing of animals, though not strictly prohibited, was hedged round with severe restrictions.

(2) The obligation of reverence and obedience to all superiors.

(3) The obligation of kindness and consideration to all inferiors.

(4) Courtesy, consideration, and liberality to all who differ from ourselves in religion, mode of life, and thought.

(5) Strict truthfulness.

(6) A further special emphasis on the duty of ungrudging, active toleration to all.

(7) Almsgiving commended, always remembering that there is "no such charity as the gift of piety, no such distribution as the distribution of piety." Ritual of comparatively little value.

Censors were appointed in each district to see that these edicts were really observed by the people. Every class of society was super-

* Now known as Bengal and Orissa.

vised, not excepting royalty, and the edicts were graven upon rocks and tablets, in public places, by the wayside, and in the desert throughout the land, so that all, in whatever remote district, might profit by them.

The generous and heartfelt allegiance which the people gave to these edicts is but an example of the instant and spontaneous response given by the Hindu mind to a spiritual appeal.

Asoka also made special provision for travellers. Free hospitals were built for men and animals throughout the land. Nor was he concerned solely with ethical and charitable projects. A great lover of art, he had a genius for design combining elaboration of ornament with breadth of conception. He built numerous magnificent monasteries and temples, as well as public buildings of all kinds.

When Fa-hein, a Chinese pilgrim, visited India in the fifth century A.D. he found Asoka's palace at Patna still standing, and he could not bring himself to believe that such inspiring beauty, such delicate workmanship, such perfection of design, were the work of merely human hands and brains.

The whole history of India at this period and for many centuries reveals a wonderfully developed civilisation, so ultra-modern in many

of its socio-political aspects that we seem to be looking forward into the future instead of backwards into the ages when Europe was overrun by barbaric hordes. The central government retained the ultimate control of affairs in its own hands, while maintaining the constitutional liberties of its subjects. One dominant feature of Indian political life stands out from the dawn of history until it was unfortunately effaced under British dominion—the rule of the village communities. Each village was self-governing through a headman and a council: there was complete freedom in all internal affairs; the council controlled taxation, settled disputes, protected personal property, maintained individual rights, checked crime, and preserved order. Megasthenes likened the village community to “a little independent republic.” Even in times of disturbance and anarchy these little self-governing communities maintained order and peace, settling their own disputes, and ordering, without hindrance, their own affairs, and thus, in spite of any vicissitude, preserving the internal economy of the country intact. We may remark in this connection that as the Hindu law exempted cultivators from military service, so also were their lands regarded as sacred and

secure from pillage in time of war. It is much to be regretted that these ancient constitutional institutions have disappeared under British administration.*

If we have dwelt unduly on this subject, it is because we would again emphasise in the

* (1) Sir Charles Metcalfe, temporary Governor-General of India, 1855-6, in a minute of the Governor-General's Council 1830, wrote

“The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down: revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Moghul, Mahratta, Sikh, English are masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same. . . . The union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all revolutions and change which they have suffered, and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.

(2) In Elphinstone's Bombay Report it was stated that “these communities contain in miniature all the materials of a state within themselves, and are almost sufficient to protect their members if all other governments are withdrawn.”

(3) Mr. Romesh Dutt, in discussing the effects of the centralising policy of the English Government, says:

“One of the saddest results of British rule in India is the effacement of that system of village government which was developed earliest and preserved longest in India among all the countries of the world.”—“India under Early British Rule,” p. 388.

16 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

strongest manner that self-government is no new thing in India. We are too apt to regard it as a cutting which she has indiscriminately filched from Western culture, and would ignorantly plant in an altogether unsuitable soil, whereas it is an imperishable thread woven throughout the whole Hindu polity from the earliest dawn of history.

In 316 B.C. the great Chandra Gupta founded the Magadha dynasty, subjugated the ancient Gangetic kingdoms, ruling the whole of Northern India from Punjab to Behar.

The decline of the Gupta dynasty marks the rise of the Andhras of the Deccan. They established great schools of learning, and extending their sway, ultimately held supreme control in both Northern and Southern India.

In the fifth century Fa-hein describes an orderly and efficient government, the people of all classes prosperous and contented. The free hospitals and free rest houses for travellers were still maintained, the sacredness of animal life was recognised, and the people were gentle, learned, and benevolent, with a great love and aptitude for art, and distinguished for their universal courtesy and toleration. Strangers were received as welcome

guests and could travel without passports. The taxation was light, and jurisdiction free from harassing regulations and prohibitions.

The sixth century is resplendent with the fame of Vikrama'ditya of Ujain, the great epic hero of India.

"Vikrama'ditya of Ujain is to the Hindus what Charlemagne is to the French, what Alfred is to the English, what Asoka is to the Buddhists, what Harun-al-Rashid is to the Muhammadans. . . . Neither Roland nor Arthur is the subject of so much romance in literature as Vikrama'ditya of Ujain. . . . he repelled the foreign invaders, and the country enjoyed rest from foreign invasions. . . . the whole of Northern India came under his enlightened and vigorous rule. The arts of peace flourished, science and literature obtained a fresh start, poetry and the drama lighted their magic lamp and shed a lustre over this Augustan period of Hindu history. Religion itself gathered strength and life, and modern Hinduism flourished under his fostering care."

The seventh century saw the reign of Sil'a-ditya II (A.D. 610-50), who was ruler over the whole of the Gangetic basin, including Nepal, from the Himalayas to the Narbada river. His foreign conquests included Assam and Valabhi. But though supreme throughout Northern India, he met his match in the warlike Mara'thas of the South, and signally failed in his attempt to annex their kingdom. This, however, was no disgrace.

* "Ancient India," by R. C. Dutt, pp. 144-5.

The Mara'thas were a noble people, combining military prowess and administrative capacity with literary culture. "The Mara'thas have in them the grit of the best of the old Dravidian races, combined with the quick perception and constructive energy of the Aryan or Brahman stratum which in prehistoric times superimposed its higher religious conceptions on the earlier peoples of the South. The result has been to develop in a high degree, alike the active and the reflective sides of the Mara'tha character. For the Mara'thas are scarcely more distinguished as a military than as a literary race. The Mara'thas are a people proud, not only of their history as a conquering and governing race, but also of their national literature."*

But to return to the kingdom of Siladitya again. We are impressed by the high character of the civil administration, the details of which were left in the hands of the local rajahs. Taxation was light, the payment of officials good and the personal service which the subject might be called upon to render unexact-ing; education was widely diffused, with competent teachers of both sexes.

* "Bombay. A Study in Indian Administration," by Sir W. Hunter, pp. 42-3.

Siladitya himself was a liberal patron of literature and kindred arts, and in later life withdrew himself from material ambitions and imitated the religious asceticism of Asoka.

There are certain details of the civic administration of this period which are worthy of consideration. Irrigation being essential to secure a plenteous supply of foodstuffs to the community, it was recognised that one of the first duties of a monarch must be the provision and maintenance of an adequate irrigation system throughout the empire.

A special Irrigation Department measured lands and regulated sluices so that all should receive a proper share of water. Roads were also under State control. A Board of Trade regulated sales, and enforced the use of standard weights and measures. Merchants paid a license tax, and those who traded in more than one class of commodities paid double. There was also a Board of Manufactures, and a Municipal Board which superintended industrial arts. The military department was controlled by a War Office consisting of (1) Admiralty Board, (2) transport commissariat and army service (3) infantry, (4) cavalry, (5) war chariots, (6) elephants.

The registration of births and deaths was

compulsory. Foreigners and travellers were arranged for by a special board which provided them with suitable lodgings, escorts, and medical attendance.

We find another striking characteristic of Indian civilisation in the many trade guilds. These safeguarded the occupations of their workers, upheld their interests in cases of disputes with other guilds, regulated working hours and wages, imposed fines and penalties on offending members, and, in fact, exercised strict supervision of the craftsmen in the interests of the whole community. The proper education of the young in their hereditary craft was secured, while adequate provision was made for needy or aged members.

"The trade guild in the cities and the village community in the country, act, together with caste, as mutual assurance societies, and under normal conditions allow none of their members to starve. Caste, and the trading and agricultural guilds concurrent with it, take the place of a poor law in India."

While none are permitted to be in want, all are compelled, as long as they are able, to contribute their proper share of labour, of whatever kind it may be, so that India had no need for either poor law or workhouse. Nor was this desirable condition attained through a too

* "Indian Empire," by Sir William Hunter.

strenuous and prolonged labour. The village and civic life of India presents an enviable picture of the social gatherings at the close of the day's work: sometimes for music and gaiety, more often for neighbourly chat and philosophic and religious discussion. It was a life of careful loving work, of healthy simple recreation, of few wants, of many blameless joys, with leisure to enjoy not only the society of friends, but that loving intercourse with nature that awakens so deep a response in the Hindu heart.

The ninth and tenth centuries saw the rise of the Rajputs, with their chivalrous ideal of honour, of valour, of truth. Ruling the north of India, they were the first to repel the earliest Moslem invaders, who had settled in Sind in the eighth century. After many fierce battles the Moslems were finally expelled from Sind in A.D. 828. By their chivalry and bravery during this campaign the Rajputs have gained for themselves world-wide and immortal renown.

"One Rajput garrison preferred extermination to submission. They raised a huge funeral pile, upon which the women and children first threw themselves. The men then bathed, took a solemn farewell of each other, and

22 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

throwing open the gates, rushed upon the besiegers and perished to a man."*

"By the close of the tenth century the Rájputs were the rulers in Ujain and in Kanouj, in Delhi, in Gujrat, and in the Punjab."†

The rise of the Rájputs, who were strong supporters of Hinduism, marks the decline of Buddhism, which from their time ceased to be a power in India.

We shall pass rapidly over the Muham-madan invasion of India, deeply interesting, pulsating with vivid life, romantic, gorgeous, barbaric alike in splendour and in cruelty, elemental in its extremes of good and evil, as it is, because though it furrowed and scarred the surface of India, it left the bed-rock of her essential life and heart untouched.

The progress of the Moslems was very slow, and suffered continual checks. "The armies of Islám had carried the crescent from the Hindu Kush westward, through Asia, Africa, and Southern Europe to distant Spain and France, before they obtained a foothold in the Punjab. This long delay was due, not only to the daring of individual tribes, such as the

Sind Rajputs, but to the military organisation of the Hindu kingdoms. To the north of the Vindhya three separate groups of princes governed the great river valleys. The Rájputs ruled in the north-west, throughout the Indus plains, and along the upper waters of the Jumna. The ancient Middle Land of Sanskrit times (Madhyadesha) was divided among powerful kingdoms, with their suzerain at Kanouj. The Lower Gangetic Valley, from Behar downwards, was still in part governed by Pál or Buddhist dynasties. . . . The Vindhya ranges stretched their wall of forest and mountain between the northern and southern halves of India. Their eastern and central regions were peopled by fierce hill-tribes. At their western extremity, towards the Bombay coast, lay the Hindu kingdom of Málavá with its brilliant literary traditions of Vikramá-ditya and a vast feudal array of fighting men. India to the south of the Vindhya was occupied by a number of warlike princes, chiefly of non-Aryan descent, but loosely grouped under three great over-lords, represented by the Chera, Chola, and Pandya dynasties."*

Such was the military organisation of India in A.D. 1000.

* "Indian Empire," p. 321.

† "Ancient India," pp. 150-7. Dutt.

* "Indian Empire," p. 322.

The only way in which the Moslems could establish and maintain a foothold in India was by taking advantage of the mutual jealousies of the various kingdoms, to make an ally of one powerful state, and with its aid conquer its rival. But the Hindu states were very powerful, and were never at any time completely subjugated. It is interesting to note that the Hindu kingdoms of Carnata and Tellingana were re-established about the middle of the fourteenth century. "The first, with its capital, Bijanuggur, 'attained to a pitch of power and splendour not perhaps surpassed by any previous Hindu dynasty'; and such was the mutual estimation between the Hindu and Musulman sovereigns of the Deccan, that intermarriages took place between them, Hindus were in high command in the Musulman army, and Musulmans in the Hindu, and one Rajah of Bijanuggur built a mosque for his Muhammadan subjects." *

The supremacy of Muhammadan rule reached its culmination in the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), who consolidated his empire by a wise conciliation of the Hindu princes, and thus, through diplomacy, brought them into political dependence.

* "Poverty and un-British Rule in India," p. 587, by Naoroji.

By bestowing the highest political and martial appointments upon Hindus, by alliance with them in marriage, by securing to them a sufficiency of careers which should satisfy their ambitions and absorb their energies, he won them to his side, and with their aid extended conquests throughout Northern India. All his efforts to subdue Southern India were unavailing, and he was forced to retire.

The secret of Akbar's success lay, as we have indicated, in his thorough incorporation of Hinduism into his policy, and his constitutional security of equal political rights to all his subjects.

Salim, his favourite son and successor, weak and self-indulgent, added nothing to the stability of the empire; but Akbar's generous traditions were continued during the earlier and best years of Shah Jehan's reign, but its foundations were loosened and the way to its final fall prepared by Aurungzib, who by his despotic policy, his acts of bigotry and oppression, alienated the Hindu princes and peoples, who now began to reunite in order to compass the overthrow of the Moslem empire.

At the time of Aurungzib's death, in 1707, the Rajputs and Sikhs were threatening the Muhammadan power in the south and

north-west, while all over India the Marathas were exacting tribute from Moslem kingdoms. "As far as can now be estimated, the advance of the English power at the beginning of the nineteenth century alone saved the Mogul empire from passing to Hindus."

But, although their supremacy was modified and their triumph comparatively short-lived, the Moguls left a brilliant record behind them. This was due to their wisdom in not attempting to undermine existing conditions, but rather to glory in adding stone to stone to the native edifice. They adopted the conquered territory as their own land, they received its sons into their own family. "The principal administrators of the Musulman dynasties, with rare exceptions, were Hindus—they were entrusted with the command of armies, and with the regulation of the finances." †

As the Hindus themselves had, through their aid, made possible the Moslem conquests, so through their own administration in the offices of state they maintained the Moslem suzerainty. The emperors were careful to foster the external and internal well-being of the country. They lavished vast sums on public

* "Indian Empire," p. 323. Sir William Hunter.

† "Poverty and un-British Rule in India," p. 591.

works of utility, buildings, reservoirs, bridges, colleges, public baths, canals, great roads, etc., while at the same time they were enthusiastic patrons of the arts and sciences.

The mutual toleration of both parties permitted the new faith to establish itself and develop side by side with Hinduism. "The Muhammadan conquest introduced a new feature, and the mosques became in India, as other countries of Islam, centres of instruction in and of literary activity." When the power of the East India Company was finally established, it had therefore to rule over a people who were accustomed to instruction and respected learning. It found four ancient methods of education at work:

- (1) The teaching given by Brahmans to their disciples.
- (2) The *tols*, or seats of Sanskrit learning.
- (3) The *Makhtabs* and *Madrassas*, or schools and colleges of the Muhammadans; and
- (4) The village schools.

The details of the British occupation are too well known to call for repetition here. Circumstances favoured our advent. The Muhammadan power was decaying, and though the

* "Bombay Administration," p. 128. Sir William Hunter.

30 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

only waits a favourable opportunity to again spring upwards and outwards, and that in all probability it is through the Federal ideal that India will accomplish her freedom and take her place in honour among the nations of the world.

Chapter III

Music, Science, Art and Philosophy

Hindu thought conceives Sound to be the means whereby the manifested universe is created. There is the Formless Breath; there is the Breath which forms: Vach, the creative word, the Logos of the Gnostics: "By Him all things were made." The creative sounds of the whole universe combine to make the "Music of the Spheres". All things from the planets downwards have their right and appropriate rhythm, and the music which man makes must be in harmony with the universal musical order around him, since though taken by themselves his songs may be melodious, yet if sung at a time and season which does not synchronise with that of the universal orchestra the result is discordant and disintegrating. Sound and form being co-operative, the dance harmonises the individual with cosmic motion as music with cosmic melody. Hindu music is based on the ancient Sanscrit notation, and has a scale of twenty-two notes. Its themes are cast into the outlines of different *rag*s. A *rag* is a combination of from five to seven notes,

and according to the science of correspondences, each rag is correlated with a particular time of day or season, and an appropriate emotion. "Our music" says Dr. Rabindranath Tagore "is the music of cosmic emotion. It deals not primarily with the Viscissitudes of human life. It does not give emphasis to the social enjoyments of men. It is never its function to provide fuel for the flame of our gaiety but to temper it and add to it a quality of depth and detachment." The skill of the musician consists in original improvisation of melodies within the prescribed limits of the rag and in his sympathetic interpretation of the beauty and significance of the songs he renders. There is no orchestral music and associated effort is confined to the spontaneous co-operation of the audience in the chorus. But the Hindu conception of the art of music produces a rhythmic absorption of the singer in the song, an inspirational and individual quality, which is not evoked by Western methods.

"As it still exists, Indian music is the most significant of surviving Indian arts. It has been perhaps the greatest aesthetic achievement of Indian civilisation, the art in which that civilisation has most perfectly expressed itself. Even now there are Indian musicians

living of whom it is no exaggeration to say that they are quite supreme artists. Their music is the highest development of melody the world has seen, a science and an art comparable only with the wholesale achievement of western music on different lines." (Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami). The principal Indian instruments are the Sarangi, Sitar, Vina and Tabla. The more subtle intervals of the scale, which occidental ears are not trained to distinguish, present an obstacle to the enjoyment and understanding of Hindu music by Europeans; yet to the few European and American Musicians who have had the privilege of hearing it, it has come as a revelation of beauty.

We give here an example of a Love Song, a Cradle song and a Song appropriate for weddings, or for the ceremony of the investiture of the Sacred Thread and other anniversaries.

Dogri Love Song Ragini Jog

Some day come to my county, O Raja of the hills! I would be like the dripping rain upon the land of my Beloved; were I a little cloud I would have sheltered Thee, Beloved!

Cradle Song

I'll rock thee, rock, in a cradle of bells!
When thou cam'st at midnight out of my
[womb,

God wrote thy horoscope,
With the horoscope came seven planets
[here--
I'll rock thee, rock, in a cradle of bells.
Thy father is Indra Raja, thy mother a
[lily !
I'll spread in thy cradle jasmine and
[velvet,
Golden bells in thy cradle too --
I'll rock thee, rock, in a cradle of bells.

Song

Darling child of the gopis --
Show me Thy face O Cowherd !
For love of thee, pearls fell from the
[vines :
Radha in baskets picked them up,
Went to the bazar to sell --
Show me thy face, O Cowherd !
To Dwarka He went for bathing,
Again will come here to dwell.
O Balabhadra, O Krishna, Avatar,
Show me thy face, O Cowherd !

From "Classic Indian Ragas,"
(DR. COOMARASWAMY).

In science the Hindus were pioneers. "Other nations have carried scientific researches to a higher state of perfection in modern, and even in ancient, times, but it is very doubtful if any

nation has in any age displayed a higher inventive intellect, or made more original discoveries for the benefit of successive ages." *

In so literary a nation, it may well be understood, that the science of language was deemed to be of the utmost importance. Sanskrit is universally acknowledged to be the richest and most perfect of all languages ancient or modern. In the chanting and recital of the scriptures the right pronunciation modulation, and rhythm, were absolutely essential. This necessitated a complete understanding of the origin of words and their combinations and thus a very accurate and exhaustive science of grammar was built up. The Hindu Panini, who lived about the sixth or seventh century B.C., was probably the greatest grammarian the world has ever known. He anticipated all modern discoveries of the roots and common origin of Aryan languages, and his rules of derivation and construction are so perfect that they have never been superseded or even modified.

The Hindus were, and are still, great geometers, and it is now generally conceded that in all probability Pythagoras and the Greeks derived their geometrical science from them. In arithmetic also India was the pioneer; from

* R. C. Dutt in "Ancient India," p. 93.

36 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

her the Arabs learnt their decimal notation, and in their turn introduced it to the Western world. But it is for her proficiency in medical science that India stands out pre-eminently among other civilisations. The Hindus studied anatomy, probably at first from the dissection of sacrificial animal victims; later the many hospitals throughout India provided schools for observation and treatment. In discussing Vedic and Brahman medicine, Sir William Hunter says :

“Indian medicine dealt with the whole area of the science. It described the structure of the body, its organs, ligaments, muscles, vessels, and tissues. The *materia medica* of the Hindus embraces a vast collection of drugs belonging to the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, many of which have been adopted by European physicians. Their pharmacy contained ingenious processes of preparation, with elaborate directions for the administration and classification of medicines.

“Much attention was devoted to hygiene, to the regimen of the body, and to diet. The surgery of the ancient Indian physicians appears to have been bold and skilful. They conducted amputations . . . they practised lithotomy, performed operations in the abdomen and uterus, set broken bones and dislocations; and were dexterous in the extraction of foreign substances from the body. A special branch of surgery was devoted to rhinoplasty, or operations for improving deformed ears and noses and forming new ones; a useful operation in a country where mutilation formed part of the judicial system, and one which European surgeons have borrowed. . . . The ancient Indian surgeons also mention a cure for neuralgia, analogous to the modern cutting of the

Music, Science, Art and Philosophy 37

fifth nerve above the eyebrow. They devoted great care to making of surgical instruments, and to the training of students by means of operations performed on wax spread out on a board, or on the tissues and cells of the vegetable kingdom, or on dead animals. They were expert in midwifery, not shrinking from the most critical operations, and in the diseases of women and children. Their practice of physic embraced the classification, causes, symptoms, and treatment of diseases—diagnosis and prognosis . . . considerable advances were also made in veterinary science, and monographs exist on the diseases of horses and elephants.”*

Hindu medical science reached its zenith during the Buddhist era—250 B. C.—A. D. 750. In the succeeding revival of Hinduism, the Brahmans, who up to this time had been its chief exponents, began, for ceremonial reasons, to dissociate themselves from the profession, relegating it to the lower castes, and a period of degeneration set in in consequence.

At the present day, since the establishment of the Government Medical Colleges during the last century, Indians are again coming to the front in a science which is particularly their own.

It would be impossible to omit, in an account, however cursory, of Indian life and characteristics, some mention of so integral a part of the national life as Indian art. It is much to be regretted that this vast treasure-

* “The Indian Empire,” p. 149.

field is so little valued, so almost universally misunderstood, so practically unexplored by Europeans. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Professor Havell, of the Calcutta and Madras Schools of Art, and to Dr. Coomaraswamy for their labour of love in this direction, which should, at least, lay the foundation for a real appreciation, a deeper apprehension, of Hindu art by English students.

The history of Indian art covers a period of more than two thousand years, but its principles were first formulated by the art academies attached to the ancient universities of Northern India. These inaugurated a period of remarkable art revival and development, lasting from the first to the seventh centuries A.D., and spreading throughout the greater part of Asia.

Professor Havell writes:

"We have far more to learn from India in art than India has to learn from Europe. . . . The great traditions of Indian architecture, sculpture, and painting are still alive, and if our educational system infused the right kind of mental stimulus into them, instead of crushing them out with the purblind pedantry of the Macaulay school of pedagogics, India might before long recover its former place as the artistic leader of Asia."

We have in the West an entirely different idea of Art, but that surely need not exclude from our understanding and appreciation the

more philosophic basis of Hindu art and its expression. Rather should we be grateful to India for preserving the higher ideal, the more scientific conception, that all real art must be subordinate to the needs of man, and only as it serves to evoke a fuller expression of his inner potentialities is it legitimate. Therefore the Indian artist does not try to imitate the exact contour and colouring of any one object, but rather to express through his painting and carving in one whole, the sum total of the characteristics of the species that nature expresses by means of many individuals. The object thus elaborated is moulded to symbolise some aspect of the spiritual nature of man and the universe. It is the deliberate aim of the Hindu artist that his creations should awaken spiritual insight; through them he makes a conscious appeal, primarily to the intuition, only secondarily to the senses.

But, however backward our appreciation of Indian painting and sculpture, we have always been enthusiastic admirers of the wonderfully designed and executed brass-work, and it is a melancholy reflection on the superficiality of our own culture that our patronage of this industry is bringing about its degradation. The London market demands cheap work, and

the necessarily inferior quality is no deterrent. Under these conditions the deterioration of the former high standard is being rapidly effected.

The architectural achievements of the Hindus have evoked universal wonder and admiration. Successive periods, differing races, developed various forms, but all preserve in their temples a grandeur of conception, a perfection of proportion, a profusion of design, an exquisite delicacy of workmanship, which combine to form a whole of such noble harmony, such solemn majesty, as has not been equalled by the finest product of Western civilisation; while the structural grace of many of the common dwelling-houses, with their wealth of beautiful carving, prove an artistic revelation to European eyes. "It may be truly said that the artistic spirit displayed in the architecture of their temples penetrates the life of the people. From the earliest times they have been famous throughout the world for their skill in the production of delicate woven fabrics, in the blending of colours, in the delicate working of metals and precious stones. Everything that comes from the hands of their artisans, down to the cheapest toy or earthen vessel, is a work of art." *

* "India and its Problems," by W. S. Lilley, p. 258.

Unfortunately, the same degradation of standard which is so seriously affecting the brass-work is gradually undermining all the other industrial arts. The British Government, by its policy of centralisation, has necessarily disorganised the trade guilds, under whose protection purity of work and excellence of standard was maintained, while it has neglected to substitute any other method of protection. The consequent loosening of communistic ties, together with the spread of poverty, has forced the spirit of modern individualism upon the reluctant craftsman, who, now that all security for his proper maintenance has been removed, is compelled to produce cheap, bad work in order to live. The *morale* of the worker suffers no less than the quality of his work, and both react injuriously on the life of the whole community.*

All the arts and sciences of India are synthesised in her philosophy, which in its religious aspect regards all activities as means and aids in the perception of the true nature of man, which it is the object of all true philosophy to elucidate.

We may just remark, before passing on to the

* For an exhaustive survey of the subject, see "The Industrial Arts of India," by Sir George Birdwood.

consideration of those two corner-stones of philosophy—the Vedānta and Sāṅkhya systems—that in the light of modern science it is interesting to recall that the cardinal principle of the Hindu Vaiśeṣika system is that the whole universe and all material substances are aggregates of atoms: the atoms being imperishable, but the aggregates perishing by disintegration.

Ages before the era of the Greek philosophers India had been leader of the world in logic, philosophy, and metaphysics. To-day, with the lapse of centuries, with the growth of new nations, new civilisations, and new systems of thought, she still maintains her unrivalled supremacy. The conclusions of the most profound modern thinkers—Berkeley, Hume, Hartmann, Schopenhauer—are all anticipated, and subjected to minute analysis in the Sāṅkhya philosophy (the seventh century B.C. is the date usually assigned to its formulation), while the depths of the Vedānta have never been sounded outside that system.

“The Vedānta and the Sāṅkhya stand pre-eminent among the six systems of Hindu philosophy—the former for its noble conceptions of one universal source of all objects and all beings, the latter for its fearless analysis of the mind and its faculties. As an effort of generalisation—an attempt to grasp the secret and origin of the limitless world with its varied and varying

and multitudinous creatures—the Vedānta system has never been surpassed. As an effort of introspection—an endeavour to analyse the senses and the mind, the phenomena which leave their impress on the unchangeable soul—the Sāṅkhya Philosophy has seldom been equalled.”*

We conquered and still hold India in subjection through our material ascendancy. In our Western civilisation the battle is to the strong, the wealthy, the famous; these express our ideals, and it is doubtless because our attention is almost entirely turned in these directions that we fail to realise to any appreciable degree the extent to which India, by a far greater conquest, is pervading our whole realm of thought and gradually including in her “imperishable empire” the entire Western world.

Nor are we sufficiently aware of our own particular indebtedness. Yet at one of the most vital crises of our age, India, without noise, almost without recognition, opened to us a way of escape. At a time when the Intellect, freeing itself from the bondage of an anthropomorphic religion, refused to believe any longer in the crude dogmas of orthodox Christianity, and was about to cast itself into the arms of an equally crude and ignorant materialism, the deep spiritual wisdom of India came to our

* R. C. Dutt in “Indian Review,” 1900.

44 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

aid. Liberated by the efforts of men like Professors Max Müller and Deussen, the subtle, invigorating breath of Hindu Idealism swept across our national thought and, all-pervading, found echoes in many hearts and minds unconscious of its origin. So far-reaching, so compelling has been its transmuting power, that, looking backwards, it is difficult to believe that but a few years ago rational minds on the one hand, and spiritually intuitive hearts on the other, were alike honestly "taken in" and seriously dismayed by so clumsy a "boggart" as the irreconcilability of science and religion.

Of the many whose inner lives expand and are renewed in the genial influence of a serener wisdom, an appreciative tolerance, few pause to consider the source of their emancipation. Thus are the conquered, in a very vital manner, invading and possessing the country, the very minds and souls, of their conquerors; and in this instance the latter will do well to set a good example by acknowledging the debt of gratitude due to the beneficent influence of "foreign rule"!

We should like, in closing this chapter, to leave with our readers some faint realisation of the sweetness, the grandeur, the majestic aloofness, the intimate at-one-ness of the im-

mortal Vedanta, and to this end we cannot do better than conclude with Professor Max Müller's unqualified appreciation in his introduction to the "Six Systems of Philosophy."

"It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedanta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India thousands of years ago—a system which even now makes us feel giddy, as in mounting the last steps of an ancient Gothic Cathedral. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows upon stone in regular succession—after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman. We need not praise or try to imitate a Colosseum, but if we have any heart for the builders of former days, we cannot help feeling it was a colossal and stupendous effort. And this is the feeling which I cannot resist in examining the Vedanta. Other philosophers have denied the reality of the world perceived by us, but no one has ventured to deny at the same time the reality of what we call Ego, the senses and the mind, and their inherent forms. And yet, after lifting the self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and Man, Brahman and Atman, these Vedanta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works are necessary as a preparation, nay, as a *sine qua non*, for the attainment of that higher knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home, and restores it to its true nature, to its true self-hood in Brahman."

Chapter VI

A False Charge

A CHARGE frequently preferred against Indian Nationalists is that they are merely seeking to benefit their own section of the community, and are altogether indifferent to the welfare of others, particularly that of cultivators, and that their professed sympathy in this direction is merely a political blind. The only ground on which such a charge can be maintained is on the assumption that the cultivator under British rule can and does attain to such a degree of prosperity that he must necessarily suffer in the event of any change. Unhappily, this ideal condition does not obtain; British rule has given India internal peace; the cultivator has no marauding robber bands, no plundering armies from neighbouring states to fear; but with peace has come increasing poverty.

The genesis of the poverty may be traced to the early days of the Company's rule, when, in addition to pillage and extortion, the rich manufactures of India were deliberately killed by excessive pro-English duties and unfair monopolies, and the surplus population thrown

on the land in an utterly destitute condition, there to be subjected to severe and ceaseless taxation. The much augmented agricultural population have never had the opportunity to recuperate their exhausted energies and resources. As a result, famines, from being comparatively infrequent and local, have become terrible in severity, almost universal in extent. According to the official reckoning of the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, there were eighteen famines, and the estimated loss of life due to them totalled twenty-six million lives.* The great majority of people year by year eke out an existence on the verge of starvation. The immediate cause of this awful poverty is the unrelenting pressure of the land tax, which prevents the accumulation of any capital wherewith to meet an unproductive season. In England the land tax raised during the wars of the Spanish Succession was made perpetual and redeemable in 1798. For the previous hundred years it had averaged between five and twenty per cent. of the rental. In India the land tax was made permanent in Bengal (1793), and was fixed at ninety per cent of the rental! It now works out at thirty-five per cent. including the im-

* See "Prosperous British India," by William Digby, C.I.E.

position of new taxes. In other provinces, where, in spite of our repeated most solemn pledges to the contrary, it still remains unfixed. It is recognised in theory that the land tax should not exceed one-half of the rental. In practice the Government often takes one-third of the field produce,* and adds various road, railway, and other local cesses. The frequent reassessments, which are made on the prospective, not the real rental, take away all sense of security. In Northern India the tax is close upon sixty per cent of the rental. In 1898 it was increased at the new assessment of the North-West Provinces and Oude, from nineteen to fifty-three per cent (Administrative Reports); while in some districts in Madras it actually approximates to the whole of the economic rent!† In the re-assessment of the Central Provinces in 1888 the land tax was raised from fifty to sixty per cent.; this, with the addition of local cesses, brought it up to nearly seventy per cent.‡ These unfortunate

* Speech on the Economic Condition of India, by R. C. Dutt, delivered at the Philosophical Institution, Glasgow, on Sept. 4th, 1901.

† Fourth Reply to Lord Curzon's Land Resolution, by R. C. Mitra (Calcutta, 1904).

‡ See R. C. Dutt's Presidential Speech at Lucknow Congress, 1899.

provinces are constantly famine-stricken. In different districts of Madras the assessments have been raised fifty-five, eighty-four, eighty-five, and a hundred and five per cent. since the beginning of this century.*

"In 1893 the Hon. Mr. G. Rogers, of the Indian Civil Service and Member of the Bombay Council, writing to the Under-Secretary of State for India, declared:

"In the eleven years from 1879-80 to 1889-90, there were sold by auction for the collection of land revenue the occupancy rights of 1,963,364 acres of land held by 840,713 defaulters, in addition to *Personal* property of the value of Rs. 2,965,081. Of the 1,963,364 acres, 1,174,143 had to be bought in on the part of Government for want of bidders, that is to say, very nearly 60 per cent. of the land supposed to be fairly and equitably assessed could not find purchasers, and only the balance of 779,142 acres was sold. The evils of the Mahratta farming system (in Bombay) have been pointed out in my 'History of the Bombay Land Revenue,' but I doubt if that system at its worst could have shown such a spectacle as that of nearly 850,000 ryots (heads of families), in the course of eleven years, sold out of about 1,900,000 acres of land."

"Roundly, one-eighth part of the entire agricultural population was sold out of house and home in little more than a decade. Not only were their farms brought to auction, but their poor personal belongings, their plough cattle and their cooking utensils, their beds and everything but their scanty clothes, were sold to provide money for a host of 'Imperialist' adventure. The picture is incomplete till it is remembered that these eleven years of 'denudation' immediately followed the terrible famine of 1877-8, during which Madras lost three millions of its inhabitants by starvation. . . . Only last year, (1902) the

* Second Reply to Lord Curzon's Land Resolution, by R. C. Dutt, 1902.

Hon. B. K. Bose, a Member of the Viceroy's Council, stood up in the presence of Lord Curzon and stated that: 'Proceedings into a new second settlement are also in progress in Bilaspur and Raipur. These districts, especially the former, were very hard hit during the last famine. They are no less so this time. They were both newly assessed only about ten years ago. The enhancement in Bilaspur was 102 per cent in some groups, and 105 per cent in others.' And there was no denial."

"11,749 cultivators were ejected from their holdings in Madras last year for inability to pay the Government demand; 60,896 acres were sold for arrears of revenue; one-half of this found no purchasers in the market, and was bought up by the Government itself at a nominal value! Six millions of acres of cultivable land remain uncultivated under the present system of heavy assessment."—"The Indian Land Question," by R. C. Dutt, in "The Imperial and Colonial Magazine," February, 1901.

Mr. S. S. Thorburn gave evidence, as Revenue Commissioner, that "in the four selected circles [upon which he made his report] quite half the old agriculturists are *already ruined beyond redemption* in 126 villages."

Lord Salisbury, in 1875, condemned a policy which drew "the mass of revenue from the rural districts, where capital is scarce," and recommended that the cultivator should pay a smaller proportion of the whole national charge, but no such amelioration has been effected.

Mr. Smith, M.P., in a speech before the House

* C. J. O'Donnell in "The Failure of Lord Curzon" (Fisher Unwin).

of Commons in 1894, computed that one penny in the income tax in England brings in £2,000,000 with a population of 38 millions; while one penny in India realises considerably less than £200,000 with a population of 220 millions, i.e. one-sixtieth of what an equal number in England would yield! In proportion to her income, poverty-stricken India is taxed three times as heavily as England! The ryots of India are patient and uncomplaining to a degree; they pay the tax, and themselves subsist on sufferance from the money-lender, of whom Sir William Hunter says:

"If he sometimes makes a merciless use of his legal position, the fault rests rather with the inflexible rules of our Courts, which enable him to push the cultivator to extremes not allowed under native rules. Abolish the money-lender and the general body of cultivators would have nothing to depend upon but the harvest of a single year."*

Again, it is often stated that the ryots are an ignorant, idle, thriftless people, and that under any system they would be always in a condition of poverty by reason of their own shortcomings. Such arguments, which can only be born of ignorance and the desire to believe that which is most acceptable, regardless of its validity, can best be answered by an extract from the Government Report of Dr.

* "The Indian Empire." Sir William Hunter.

Voeleker (consulting chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England) in 1889:

"The ideas generally maintained in England that Indian agriculture is, as a whole, primitive and backward, and that little has been done to try and remedy it, are altogether erroneous. . . . Taking everything together, and more especially considering the conditions under which Indian crops are grown, they are wonderfully good. At his best, the Indian ryot or cultivator is quite as good as, and in some respects the superior of, the average British farmer; while at his worst, it can only be said that this state is brought about largely by an absence of facilities for improvement, which is probably unequalled by any other country, and that the ryot will struggle on patiently and uncomplainingly in the face of difficulties, in a way that no one else would. Nor need our British farmers be surprised at what I say, for it may be remembered that the natives of India were cultivators of wheat centuries before we in England were. It is not likely, therefore, that their practice should be capable of much improvement. What does, however, prevent them from growing larger crops is the limited facilities to which they have access, such as the supply of water and manure. But to take the ordinary acts of husbandry, nowhere would one find better instances of keeping land scrupulously clean from weeds, of ingenuity in device of water-raising appliances, as well as the exact time to sow and to reap, as one would in Indian agriculture, and this is not at its best alone, but at its ordinary level. It is wonderful, too, how much is known of rotation, the system of mixed crops, and of fallowing. Certain it is that I, at least, have never seen a more perfect picture of careful cultivation, combined with hard labour."

In the face of these facts, then, it is idle to deny to the Indian Nationalist a genuine sympathy with, and an earnest desire to ameliorate the condition of the ryots, nor is there any un-

reason in his contention that a government in touch with the people of their own flesh and blood, and responsible to them, would realise their needs and provide for them more effectually than the despotism, however benevolent in intention, of an alien race.

Chapter V

Religious Consciousness

THE religious consciousness of India may be likened to the Great World Tree, which has its roots in heaven and its branches growing downwards throughout the world. India's spirituality is rooted in the unclouded heaven of pure monism, while its trunk bifurcates into a vast network of systems which define the limitations of the human mind. Hinduism has always recognised that, while Truth is one and infinite, yet human apprehension of it, being finite, must necessarily take many forms, and that each man will naturally, according to his character and the stage of development he has attained, assimilate one aspect of it rather than another, which will colour his conception of the whole, so that within the sphere of pure monism arise various cults. There are worshippers of Vishnu, Siva, Hari, Krishna, etc., all acknowledging that the Divine is One, but devoting themselves to that aspect which most nourishes and illumines their particular nature. In this connection it is interesting to recall Keshub Chundra Sen's "Defence of Idol Wor-

ship" in the Brahma Year-Book, 1880. He says.

"Hindu idolatry is not to be altogether overlooked or rejected. As we explained some time ago, it represents millions of broken fragments of God. Collect them together and you get the indivisible Divinity. When the Hindus lost sight of their great God, they contented themselves with retaining particular aspects of Him and representing them in human shapes or images. Their idolatry is nothing but the worship of a Divine attribute materialised. If the material shape is given up, what remains is a beautiful allegory or picture of Heaven's dispensation.

"The Theist rejects the image, but he cannot dispense with the spirit of which that image is the form. The revival of the spirit, the destruction of the form, is the work of the New Dispensation. Cheer up, then, O Hindus, for the long lost Father from whom ye have for centuries strayed is coming back to you. The road is clear enough: it lies through your numerous Puranas and Epics. Never were we so struck with the eclectic method as when we explored the gloomy regions of mythological India. The sermons now delivered in the Brahma Mandir (church) are solely occupied with the precious truths discovered therein, and our own occupation is merely to gather the jewels as we go on. We have found out that every idol worshipped by the Hindu represents an attribute of God, and that each attribute is called by a particular name. The believer in the New Dispensation is required to worship God as the possessor of all those attributes, represented by the Hindu as innumerable, or 330 millions. To believe in an undivided Deity without reference to those aspects of His nature, is to believe in an abstract God, and it would tend to practical rationalism and infidelity. Nor can we worship the same God with the same attributes investing Him. That would make our worship dull, lifeless, and insipid. Hence we should contemplate Him with His numerous attributes. We shall name one attribute

Saraswati, another Lakshmi, another Mahadeva, another Jagatdhatri, etc., and worship God each day under a new name, that is to say, in a new aspect. We do not worship Him as a Yogi for ever, or as Father, or as Mother, or as Lakshmi, or as Saraswati. But now in one and then in the other, and so on, beholding our Hari in new garb, and in new loveliness for ever. How bewitching the prospect, how grand the picture!"

From the standpoint of Hindu monism, man, in his essential nature, is not a "child of God," nor a creature, nor an emanation from Him; but, he is God, and it is ignorance alone which hinders him from the knowledge of this truth. It is, therefore, the object of Hindu religion to so regulate the life of the individual, of Society, of the State, that all activities, whether pertaining to the physical, social, or mental life, inasmuch as they are the healthy and legitimate expression of the evolving man, become means to a divine end, for by the exercise of all his powers in orderly sequence and due proportion man prepares the way for his awakening to the realisation of his true nature. There is thus no differentiation into "sacred and secular," such as we have in the West.

Here we come to the great doctrine of Dharma; it has been variously translated as Duty, Law, Righteousness, Destiny, etc.; it includes all these and much more. It is the law of self-unfolding, and may be taken as

embodying the stage of development reached by any particular ego, together with his essential character plus the next step onward in his evolution. Thus different individuals, different castes, different states, different nations have different dharmas, and it is only by following the virtues and qualities which rightly are theirs that progress in evolution is made.

"Of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras, O Parantapa, the duties have been distributed, according to the qualities born of their own natures. Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, and also uprightness, wisdom, knowledge, belief in God, are the Brahmana duty, born of his own nature.

"Prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, and also not flying from battle, generosity, the nature of a ruler, are the Kshatriya duty, born of his own nature.

"Ploughing, protection of kine, and trade are the Vaisya duty, born of his own nature.

"Action, of the nature of service, is the Sudra duty, born of his own nature.

"Man reacheth perfection by each being intent on his own duty. . . . Better is one's own duty, though defective, than the duty of another well-performed."

Interwoven with Dharma is the doctrine of Karma and Re-birth. The former may be briefly described as an enunciation of the law of causation, the teaching that "whatever a man soweth, that shall he surely reap," applied

* "Bhagavad-Gita," XVIII.

58 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

to every manifestation of life. In humanity it applies to both the man and the nation, making individual and collective Karma.

In the doctrine of Re-birth, Hinduism completes the Western theory of evolution by presupposing a corresponding evolution of the souls, which inform the physical vehicles, both being but the inner and outer aspect of the same phenomenon. It was recognised that different classes of individuals are at different stages of growth, and that the rules of conduct, duties, and modes of life most practicable and helpful to each necessarily differ in each class.

Broadly, as we have seen, four great castes were distinguished, differentiated outwardly by physical traits; inwardly by character and capacity. In course of time these subdivided into innumerable sections. It must never be forgotten that, in the last resort, caste was determined by character, not by birth.

"A man does not become a Brahmana by his plaited hair, by his family, or by birth; in whom there is truth and righteousness, he is blessed, he is a Brahmana."*

In the Sonadanda Sutta the venerable Brahman declares that only two of the five characteristics of Brahmins are really essential, i.e., wisdom and uprightness, and that a "man

* "Dhammapada," XXVI, p. 393.

Religious Consciousness

59

can accurately say 'I am Brahman' without being guilty of falsehood" if he has only these. The remaining three characteristics are pure descent on both sides; knowledge of the sacred books; physical health and beauty (a sound mind in a sound body).

Turning to the Upanishads, in the touching story of Satyakāma Jabāla we find the son desirous of becoming a Brahmachārin inquiring of his mother of what family he was, in order that he might present his credentials before the teacher. She told him:

"I do not know, my child, of what family thou art. In my youth, when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabāla by name, thou art Satyakāma. Say that thou art Satyakāma Jabāla."

So the youth went to the teacher, and was, of course, questioned of his birth. Satyakāma frankly told him all, and was rewarded with:

"No one but a true Brāhman would thus speak out. Go and fetch fuel, friend, I shall initiate you. You have not swerved from the truth."*

Again, in the Vasettha Suttā (57):

"One is not a Brāhman nor a non-Brāhman by birth. By his conduct alone is he a Brāhman, and by his conduct alone he is a non-Brāhman."†

* "Chhandogya Upanishad," IV, 4.

† See also "Story of Janaka Satapatha Brāhmana," XI, 6, 2, 1.

60 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

Caste, then, was a means to an end, not an end in itself. This conception is clearly brought out in the Brihadâranyaka-Upanishad:

"Verily, the Brahman class is not dear, that you may love the Brahman-class; but that you may love the Self; therefore the Brahman-class is dear.

"Verily, the Kshatriya-class is not dear, that you may love the Kshatriya-class; but that you may love the Self; therefore the Kshatriya-class is dear.

* * * *

"Whosoever looks for the Brahman-class elsewhere than in the Self, was abandoned by the Brahman-class. Whosoever looks for the Kshatriya-class elsewhere than in the Self, was abandoned by the Kshatriya-class."

The true meaning and purpose of caste, then, is not social inequality—prestige and inherited privilege on the one hand, inferiority and a heritage of degradation on the other—but spiritual culture. By at once placing the individual in his right relation to the rest of the community, in accordance with his qualifications, it removed from his path many temptations and dangers which might otherwise overwhelm him; while at the same time it provided, through the duties and virtues of his order, means whereby the individuality might be strengthened on a right basis, and the whole nature developed in steady and harmonious

* "Sacred Books of the East," Vol. XI, pp. 109-10.

Religious Consciousness

61

growth. Socially, it gave an assured and respected position, since each caste was recognised as an essential factor in the whole fabric of society. By keeping the type pure by stringent caste rules, it was thought to secure suitable bodies for the incoming souls. As in idol worship, the Absolute is approached through the many attributes by which the human mind apprehends in some measure that which is attributeless, so in caste the virtues of each section are but reflections of the divine characteristics; therefore each caste, by developing its own qualities, strengthened its divine nature. Any attribute developed in perfection includes all others; it is merged in the centre wherein all radii meet, and so we understand how in Hinduism, though the Brahmans were set apart as the guardians of spiritual wisdom, yet it was recognised that any member of any caste might attain wisdom and so transcend caste, having become emancipated from all bonds and restrictions. This liberty must not be confused with license to sin. It implies that the man who has attained supreme wisdom is one with supreme good, and therefore his actions are necessarily the unhindered manifestation of the divine law of the universe. From another point of view it is the liberty of the

62 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

self-controlled Logos, who is a law unto himself, none other compelling.

Sir R. H. Elliot, in the course of a striking defence of Caste as a great uplifting and purifying agent in the social life of the State, says:

"Caste, then, as we have seen, protects the poor from the passions of the rich, and it equally protects the upper classes themselves, and enforcedly makes them more moral than, judging from our experience in other quarters of the globe, they would otherwise be.

"Take any of our counties in Great Britain, and compare it with Manjarabad as regards the points I have particularly referred to, and it will be found that Manjarabad (a taluk or county on the S. W. frontier of Mysore) has an immense superiority. The crimes and misery arising from drinking are hardly to be found at all in Manjarabad, while the morality of the sexes I should think could hardly be surpassed. . . .

"But, supposing that the worldly situation as to the means of support and the opportunities of marrying were equal, it seems to me perfectly plain that the people, who have a large proportion of the better classes total abstainers, and who have their Society so controlled that the rich cannot gratify their passions at the expense of the poor, must be in possession of a superior morality."

As the system of caste was designed to facilitate the harmonious evolution, side by side, of the various national types, so the Asramas, or four social orders, of the student,

* "Gold, Sport, and Coffee-Planting in Mysore: being the Thirty-eight Years' Experience of a Mysore Planter," by R. H. Elliot, pp. 219-20.

the householder, the retired, and the mendicant, were instituted to form a basis upon which the individual might build a life of organised progress.

First, after childhood, came the student stage, when, undisturbed by passion, earthly ambitions, and cares, the teacher planted noble ideals and aspirations in the plastic mind, trained and developed the mental and moral nature; then followed the life of the householder, when the youth married and took upon himself family, social, and patriotic duties, expressing himself outwardly, in the world of affairs, performing various religious ceremonies, which served as a perpetual reminder of the correlation of forces, of the interdependence of every atom in the universe; in short, gradually, through the ministry of the multiple creation, bringing the mind of the sacrificer to the contemplation of the all-embracing Brahman.

Lastly, the two concluding stages of the ascetic life, when "with passions subdued, ambitions burnt out, judgment matured, elation and depression alike transcended, the man, his active service to the world performed, withdraws from outer activities and, turning his gaze inwards, meditates on spiritual verities.

64 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

Having cognised and handled the world of effects, he strives to assimilate that of causation, so that his wisdom may be complete, his vision whole. In this stage he is still a life of true service, for he becomes a centre of spiritual force, radiating comfort, counsel, and encouragement to all. He has outgrown caste, and is released from all restrictions.

"Seeing, indeed, everywhere the same Lord, equally dwelling, he doth not destroy the Self by the self, and thus treads the highest path." *

Professor Max Müller pays a fine tribute to the religious harmony which obtains in Hindu homes under the Asramas. It is due to the innate recognition of the One Reality, beneath and within all temporal differentiation.

"There are still Brahmanic families in which the sons learn by heart the ancient hymns, and the father performs day by day his sacred duties and sacrifices; while the grandfather, even though remaining in the village, looks upon all ceremonies and sacrifices as vanity, sees in the Vedic gods nothing but names of what he knows to be beyond all names, and seeks rest in the highest knowledge only, which has become to him the highest religion, viz. the so-called Vedanta, the end and fulfilment of the whole Veda. The three generations have learnt to live together in peace. The grandfather, though more enlightened, does not look down with contempt on his son or grandson, least of all does he suspect them of hypocrisy. He knows that the time of their deliverance will come, and he does not wish that they should anticipate it. Nor does the son, though bound fast

* "Bhagavad Gita," XIII, 28.

by the formulas of his faith and strictly performing the minutest rules of the red ritual, speak unkindly of his father. He knows he has passed through the narrower path, and does not grudge him his freedom and the wider horizon of his views." *

It may be noted that the revival of Nationalism in India was preceded and is accompanied by a spiritual awakening. On consideration it will be seen that the one is but the natural outcome of the other. We have been trying to emphasise the stress laid by Hinduism on the necessity for harmony between thought and action, between the inner conception and the outer life. The present national movement is essentially a spiritual movement; herein is the secret of its unifying power and the security for its fulfilment. It is the legitimate, the imperative demand of India to fulfil her own Dharma in all the departments and activities of life.

Since man manifests as one organism, the stultification of any part reacts perniciously on the whole. India may possess, and in our opinion does possess, the highest spiritual wisdom, yet if she is prevented from formulating the outward expression of her convictions in her own way through her national life, a

* Quoted by N. Gupta in a lecture given in the Max Denso Hall, October 24th, 1885.

stoppage of the normal flow, the natural reaction between cause and effect, ensues, and her crystal fount becomes a stagnant dam of impure and poisonous water. Nor can any fresh influx of spiritual force avail, except it first break through the obstruction and restore the pent-up current to its proper channel.

Another feature of the national revival is the tendency to remove caste barriers. This has been construed as a drastic breaking away from all tradition, an emphatic denial of the very spirit of Hinduism. So far from this being the case, this apparently destructive phase is the very consummation of the ancient ideals.

In the process of evolution the national perception is approaching a stage equivalent to the third Asrama, and having, as it were, performed all ceremonies and assimilated their teachings, observed all caste regulations, and established its stability thereby, the Hindu consciousness is expanding into the wider vision, wherein the means are perceived to be valueless when once the glorious liberty of the end is realised. Throughout India the deep conviction is spreading that any artificial clinging to caste laws, when once the national mind has outgrown them, no longer safeguards and strengthens, but cripples and confines, the ex-

panding life, and prevents the accomplishment of its true Dharma.

This, then, is the stage in her spiritual and national development—for the two are one—which India is now entering; it follows in orderly sequence upon those which have preceded it. As is natural in all stages of national development, many are swept aside and left behind by the advancing current. They are the stragglers in evolution, but they cannot delay the progress of the great evolutionary wave.

Some of the most interesting features of modern Hinduism are associated with Vaishnavism and the worship of Narayana, which embody the Indian expression of that worldwide movement that may perhaps be described as the Cult of Humanity. Its distinguishing feature is the practical recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Man, without distinction of colour, race, sex, or creed; this recognition of fundamental unity being based not on sentiment, but on the realisation of the presence of the Divine Lord in all his creatures. Narayana is the Christ dwelling individually in the hearts of all; collectively, mankind is the great organism through which, as Logos, He is continually realising himself and manifesting, through the process of evolution, His

divine purpose throughout the ages. Incarnate in us, in all our afflictions, He is afflicted, and in the life of humanity we have with us the one pure offering, the perpetual sacrifice, the passion of the Lord, who is daily crucified afresh in the sins and sufferings of His people. The service of mankind is thus the worship of God. Every human being is a manifestation of the Lord; therefore, by feeding the hungry, liberating the bound, enlightening the ignorant, we are ministering to Narayana, we are hastening the day of the Lord, when, finding perfect expression through the minds and hearts of His people, His will will be done on earth "as it is in heaven." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." * These words contain the very essence of Vaishnavism. Through its intense humanitarianism on the material side, its realisation of the Divine Indweller on the spiritual side, it transcends all consciousness of caste. To the Vaishnava there is neither Brahman nor Sudra. As in the West, this religion of Humanity, at first expressing itself in the care and love of individuals, developed ultimately into a fervent desire for the amelioration of mankind in the mass, and became

* St. Matt. XVIII. 40.

political in tendency, so also in India the effort, by organised social and political means to remove distressing disabilities of all kinds, naturally leads to a desire for political freedom as a necessary and legitimate means to a divine end.

* * * *

There has been much discussion of late about the alleged antagonism between Moslems and Hindus. Now, although it is very possible for political purposes to accentuate religious differences and fan them into a flame of jealous rivalry, yet in India Hindus and Moslems have been amalgamated for so many centuries that, fundamentally, their permanent interests are identical, though, as we have indicated, superficial animosities may be provoked for transient periods.

Throughout India we find Hindus and Moslems living together in every relation of civic life in perfect harmony. Sir John Strachey * lays great stress on the fact that the majority of Moslems are to all intents and purposes Hindus, and are accepted as such; the difference in creed is often merely nominal, and does not alienate them from the older religion.

"The Musulman Rajput, Gujar, or Jât is, for all social, tribal,

* See Chapter VIII of "India, its Administration and Progress."

and administrative purposes, exactly as much a Rajput, Gujar, or Jât as his Hindu brother. His social customs are unaltered; his tribal restrictions are unrelaxed, his rules of marriage and inheritance unchanged; and almost all the difference is that he shaves his scalplock and the upper edge of his moustache, repeats the Muhammadan creed in a mosque, and adds the Musulman to the Hindu wedding ceremony. . . . The Hindu family priests are still kept up and consulted as of old, and Brahmans are still fed on the usual occasions and in many cases still officiate at weddings, side by side with the Muhammadan priests."*

Hyderabad has been a Moslem state for centuries, and the Nizam is a staunch Muhammadan, but he has appointed a Hindu as his Prime Minister, and only recently, desirous that his Hindu subjects should receive Hindu education, he was careful to procure the best Hindu text-book obtainable, and has caused it to be used in all the State schools throughout the realm, in order that his Hindu subjects might be properly instructed in their own faith.

Sir Henry Cotton, in the recent debate on the Indian Councils Bill, thought "it deplorable that Members of his House should pose as champions of Hindu or of Muhammadan, instead of remembering that the interests of both are nearly identical. That this is so is recognised by Hindus and Muhammadans themselves."

* Sir Denzil Ibbetson, in Report on the Census of 1881 in the Punjab, p 143.

"I will give you an illustration from the United Province. The United Province is the part of all others in India where there is a distinct, substantial, and essential difference between the Hindu and the Muhammadan community. The Muhammadans of the United Province are the descendants of the Moguls. They are the descendants of the proud invaders who came from across the North-West Frontier. Their position is essentially and fundamentally different from that of the Muhammadans in most other parts of India, but it is a fact that the relations between the Hindus and the Muhammadans are so cordial and so united that in those provinces, when the recent election occurred in the city of Lucknow, which Hon. Members know is the capital of Oudh, out of twenty Muhammadan voters no fewer than fourteen voted for a Hindu gentleman, and, naturally, the Hindu gentleman was returned. They did not vote for the Muhammadans; they voted for the Hindu, and such things are common in Bengal. Over and over again Hindus have voted for Muhammadans, and repeatedly returned them to the Council. At the present moment, at the present day, it is done in Madras, where the Hindus form an extraordinary majority of the population. There are far more Hindus in comparison with the population in the province of Madras than in any other province, and yet year after year the Hindus have returned a Muhammadan to the Viceroy's Council, and he is sitting on that Council at the present moment."

Mr. Dadabhai, a Parsi, urged at the Governor-Generals Council, May 29th, 1909, that "it was a mistake to suppose that the bulk of the Indian Muhammadans are separated from their Hindu congeners by any sharp cleavage of race or tradition. . . . Where there are

* Speech of Sir Henry Cotton, House of Commons, April 1st, 1909.

72 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

deserving Muhammadans they have as good a chance as Hindus. In Municipalities, Local Boards, District Boards, and the Legislative Council, Hindus and Muhammadans have so far worked hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder in cordial co-operation."

In conclusion, we recall the very significant tribute which the Muhammadan leader, the late Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, paid to the Bengal Hindus in a speech to his co-religionists at Lahore, 1884:

"I assure you that the Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can be properly proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty, and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can truly say that they are the head and crown of all the communities of Hindustan. . . . In the word 'nation' I include both Hindus and Muhammadans, because that is the only meaning I can attach to it." *

* Quoted by Sir Henry Cotton in "New India," p. 32.

The census of 1901 gave the following ratios of the various religions (British India only):—

Hindus	... 158,601,000 or 68 %	Christians	... 1,904,000 or '81 %
Moslems	... 53,804,000 „ 23 „	Sikhs	... 1,574,000 „ '67 „
Buddhists..	9,411,000 „ 4 „	Jains	... 49,000 „ '2 „

Chapter VI

The Future

WE do not propose to analyse the *character* of British policy towards India: its justice or injustice, its failure or success, its wisdom or unwisdom. In the first place, it would require a volume of some magnitude to contain the result of an adequate survey of any one department in the administration, and these questions have been dealt with at length by R. C. Dutt, C.I.E., in his "Economic History of British India," "Famine and Land Assessments in India," "India under Early British Rule," "India in the Victorian Age"; by William Digby, C.I.E., in "'Prosperous' British India"; by Nairoji in "'Poverty' and Un-British Rule in India"; by Sir Frederick Lely, K.C.I.E., in "Suggestions for the Better Governing of India"; and, lastly, for the whole subject of Indian history we commend Sir William Hunter's splendid work, "The Indian Empire."

In the second place, such a discussion, though of vital importance to British people, is entirely irrelevant to the consideration of Indian Nationalism, the claims of which are altogether

independent of, and unaffected by the quality of, foreign rule in itself.

Yet, though undesirous to enter into political questions as such, we would put forward a few suggestions as to certain inevitable effects produced on the Indian estimation of British intentions towards their country by some phases of the Imperial policy. As rulers, we labour under a perpetual disadvantage owing to the wide divergence between our avowed principles and our practice. This unfortunate opposition between word and action, declaration and fulfilment, places us in an anomalous position and deprives us of any security against adverse criticism. In the days when we were gradually acquiring possession of India, we justified our occupation of that country solely on the assumption that we remained there primarily in the interests of India herself, and that henceforth our policy should be entirely guided by that beneficent principle. Lord Mayo, as Viceroy, did not hesitate to say that

"we must take into account the inhabitants of the country: the welfare of the people of India is our primary object. *If we are not here for their good, we ought not to be here at all.*"

And Macaulay, as we have seen, did not shrink from defining England's proudest day as that on which India, initiated by us into

European constitutionalism, should emerge from our protection a free and independent nation. In 1833, and again in 1858, the higher offices of the administration were thrown open to Indians equally with Englishmen. This was the "Magna Charta" of India. Later, Lord Lytton, when Viceroy, acknowledged that the claim of Indians to share in the administration of their country was founded in the highest justice, and was recognised by the Government of India as "binding on its honour, and consistent with all the claims of its policy."

Although since the first passing of the Act it has remained *practically* a dead letter, it was reserved for Lord Curzon to declare it *theoretically* defunct also. In his official capacity, he has given his *solemn assurance* that it is a fundamental and unalterable principle of the Imperial Government *to exclude* any but native British from the higher administrative offices.* Thus the Magna Charta of India is annulled

* "Let me begin by stating what I conceive to be the general principles that regulate the situation. They are two in number. The first is that the highest ranks of civil employment, those in the Imperial Civil Service, though open to such Indians as can proceed to England and pass the requisite tests, must, nevertheless, as a general rule, be held by Englishmen, for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by up-bringing, and

in one stroke, and the fetters prepared for her perpetual subjection are now openly displayed. The suggestion that we should refuse to admit Indians to the highest offices of the State, lest we should endanger our own power, filled Macaulay and many whom he represented with indignation; it was a slur on England's honour and probity. We, in these days, suffer from no such hypersensitiveness. Lord Morley, too, would apparently deny to India at the present or at any future time a parliamentary system, however greatly she desired it, presumed by in the strong conviction that, although India was developing and maintaining constitutional methods ages before we, as a nation, came into existence, yet that to-day, in spite of hereditary potentialities, she is affected with an inexplicable and incurable paralysis which effectually prevents her from responding to, and incorporating into her own national polity, modern constitutional usages. It may be so, but in the absence of cogent reasons we may be

partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habits of mind, and the vigour of character which are essential for the task, and that *the rule of India being a British rule, and any other rule being in the circumstances of the case impossible, the tone and standard should be set by those who have created and are responsible for it.*—Lord Curzon, Budget speech, 1904-5.

pardoned our suspicions of the parental wish in the presentation of the thought.

Mr. James Caird, in the report of the Commission on the condition of India, 1879, gave a true explanation of the Imperial policy when he wrote:

"We have introduced a system, the first object of which for a foreign Government is necessarily the subjection of the people."

At last we are on solid ground, and have a perfectly straightforward and reasonable statement, and one which is consistent with our actions. Though not ethically justifiable, it has the dignity of honesty, whereas, officially, we weaken and bring into ridicule our whole position by our perpetual reiteration of the highest altruistic ideals, while at the same time we are careful to take every precaution to prevent their ever being realised.

Until the reactionary and repressive legislation of the last few years, together with various official declarations, precluded the possibility of further misunderstandings, the majority of Indians were convinced that it was the real desire and intention of England to govern India primarily in India's interests. England stands before the world the avowed champion of liberty. Freedom and equal rights for every

citizen of empire; irrespective of race, colour, and creed; the fundamental right of constitutional self-government; the right of the taxpayer to control expenditure; the right of every man to take his share in the service of his country, subject only to the limitations of his own capacity, are principles which England, through long struggle, has established, not as a concession to a peculiar people," but as the natural, legitimate right of man; and it follows, therefore, that it is contrary to her standard of justice to exclude any from lawful participation in them.

"All persons being His Majesty's subjects, inhabiting within the said island, and their children, and their posterity, from within the limits thereof, shall be deemed free denizens and natural subjects, *as if living and born in England.*"*

We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by *the same obligations of duty* which bind us to all our other subjects."†

Any attempt, then, to check, divert, or arbitrarily define the energies of Indians in any lawful direction of growth and development is contrary to our most cherished principles. We frequently justify our occupation of India on the grounds that the education of its peoples is one of the benevolent duties we feel ourselves

* First grant of territorial rights to East India Company

† Indian Councils Act, 1858.

called upon to perform. And what is the recognised object of true education? It is that a nation, no less than an individual, may by such wise stimulus be helped, through the starvation of evil impulses by the encouragement of good, to grow harmoniously and undeviatingly from irresponsible childhood to responsible manhood, *gradually as the controlling authority is deliberately and steadily withdrawn*, taking upon *itself* the ordering of its own life till, perfected in self-control, self-knowledge, and integrity, it emerges a free and self-sufficing unit among the nations of the world, bound to its fellow units not by fear, nor by unwilling compulsion, but by the more lasting ties of reciprocity and mutual respect. In such a conception as this there is no room, no excuse for the practice of prolonging the exercise of authority on the plea that the subject is not yet capable of self-government, for it will be recognised that nations, like individuals, can only become perfected in the science of self-government by the continual practice of the same, and therefore throughout the whole period of education every opportunity will be given to the pupil to experiment in self-initiated activities, and the failures of these will be seen

to be no less important a factor in evolution than the successes.

Now it is, unfortunately, impossible for England or any other Western Power to adopt such a true, educative policy towards a subject people, and so long as it is impossible, so long must it remain true that

"the Government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality, but such a thing as government of one people by another does not, and cannot exist."—JOHN STUART MILL.

We do not believe it to be potentially, but only actually impossible; the reason being that Western nations have not as yet attained to the degree of philosophic insight, wherein it is clearly seen that no nation can profit at another's expense; that an injury inflicted on the one reacts to an equal degree on the health of the other; that the weakness of the one depletes the strength of the other; that none can take without himself being robbed; that none can beggar without himself being brought to destitution; that none can degrade without himself suffering an equal demoralisation. Therefore, since public opinion in England is not sufficiently advanced to demand or even admit of so far-seeing and scientific a policy, we witness the inevitable hiatus between principle and practice, and instead of the benefit

of India being actually our primary care, we introduce "a system the first object of which is the subjection of the people".

As we have said, until the recent reactionary policy of the Government and the whittling away of the Act of 1858 by Lord Curzon, Indians had still believed that England, as a nation, desired to protect the interests and further the welfare of their country; and nurtured on English ideals, as expressed in our own national history and in our classic literature, they could not but feel that, whatever the backslidings of individuals or Imperial councils, Mill still voiced the convictions of the mass of English people when he laid it down that

"it is an inherent condition of human affairs that no intention, however sincere, of protecting the interests of others can make it safe or salutary to tie up their own hands. By their own hands only can any possible and durable improvement of their circumstances in life be worked out."

Their confidence remained unshaken by the admission of Lord Lytton in a private Minute that, while passing Acts for the freeing and strengthening of India's hands, the Government had always contrived to keep them securely fettered.

"No sooner was the Act (1833) passed than the Government began to devise means for practically evading the fulfilment of it . . . we have to choose between prohibiting them and

cheating them, and we have chosen the least straightforward course. The application to natives of the competitive examination system—as conducted in England—and the recent reduction in the age at which candidates can compete, are all so many deliberate, transparent subterfuges for stultifying the Act and reducing it to a dead letter. I do not hesitate to say that both the Governments of England and India appear to me, up to the present moment, unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear."

They had also Lord Salisbury's estimation of these promises as "political hypocrisies" which were never intended to be fulfilled.

Their faith in the assertion that it was our desire to govern India for the good of her people survived many severe shocks. Ever since British occupation they have seen the greater part of their revenues exported annually to England, "without a direct equivalent."*

In defiance of two Acts of Parliament, the honour and salaries of all authoritative posts have been reserved for Englishmen, to the exclusion of their own countrymen.† They have suffered the exploitation of their country by British railway and other companies, whose

* Lord Salisbury, in a Minute (Ret. c. 3086-1 of 1881).

† More than half of the appointments in India are, and always have been, posts on less than Rs. 200 a month. The European element in these was always small, and is now less than 10 per cent.

interest has been guaranteed, against their will, without their consent, from the proceeds of their taxation.

In 1893 the Currency Act was passed, in the interests of the Imperial Government, regardless of protest, and condemned alike by the Treasury and Special Commission because "the relief to the Government would be gained at

Of posts on Rs. 200 to Rs. 300, the native proportion from 1867 to 1904-5 has risen from 51 per cent to 60 per cent.

From Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 from 23 to 43 per cent.

From Rs. 400 to Rs. 500 from 21 to 40 per cent.

From Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 from 9 to 25 per cent.

From Rs. 600 to Rs. 700 from 15 to 27 per cent.

From Rs. 700 to Rs. 800 from 5 to 13 per cent.

"The Rs. 800 line may be said to mark the limit of the Provincial Service. Between Rs. 800 to Rs. 1,000 there were, in 1867, four natives in Government employ; there are now 93. In 1867, out of a total of 648 such appointments, 12 were filled by natives, all Hindus, or a percentage of 2. In 1903, out of 1370 such appointments, 71 were filled by Hindus and 21 by Muhammadans, the native percentage being therefore 7."—Figures given by Lord Curzon in his Budget speech, 1904-5.

These figures are given by Lord Curzon to show "how honestly and faithfully the British Government has fulfilled its pledges, and how hollow is the charge which we so often hear of a ban of exclusion against the children of the soil." Whereas a more striking and irrefutable proof of the validity of the accusation than that contained in these statistics could hardly be given.

See also "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India," Chapters VII, VIII.

the expense of the Indian taxpayer." All classes in India were impoverished and disorganised as a result of this Act, passed over their heads to save an alien Government from the results of its own folly. They have submitted to heavy and unrelieved taxation over the expenditure of which they have had no control; the expenses of wars and expeditions, outside their own country and undertaken in the interests of the whole British Empire, have again and again been charged to them in direct violation, not merely of treaties and Acts of Parliament, but of ordinary justice.* They have seen the whole internal and external government of the country, both civil and military, conducted by means of foreign officials at an enormous expense, and in this, the management of their own affairs, they have been allowed no representation, no voice; their sole privilege has been to pay and to obey. All this and much more, with a charity which till now has never failed, India has borne, hoping all things, believing all things, enduring all things, because she trusted that the errors were those of a particular party or of a well-intentioned but misinformed individual, and

* Hansard, Vols. CCL, CCLI. House of Lords Debates, Vol. XII. See Chapter V, "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India."

not those of the heart of the British nation. Unfortunately, recent events have combined to undermine this belief to a very serious extent. The attempt to threaten not merely the independence, but the very existence, of the Indian colleges, by compelling them to conform to utterly impracticable conditions, was happily frustrated, but it has served to excite grave suspicions in the minds of the educated classes. The abolition of popular municipal government in Calcutta, and the destruction by the new Amending Act of the immemorial rights of Peasant Proprietary in Bombay, has not strengthened faith in British Constitutionalism; the full significance of the latter measure may be gauged by the fact that after the first reading and passing of the Bill the non-official Indian members of the Legislative Council left the hall before the second and final reading, as the most emphatic protest they could make.

Moreover, the water-cess Act of Madras—which empowers the Government to levy any water rate it thinks fit, also gives the collector, firstly, authority to compel the cultivator to use the water so supplied, and secondly, exempts him from any judicial inquiry concerning his interpretation of the Act and concerning the

assessments he is empowered to make in connection with it!--has not raised the prestige of British jurisdiction.

The last two years have witnessed an increasingly repressive legislation, yet except for the ineffectual protests of a few individuals the people of England have not raised their voice; they have shown themselves as careless of the fate of their honour in the hands of their self-elected Government as they are callous to the condition of their fellow-subjects in a distant land.

There is now in operation in India the Penal Code, the new Press Act, the Public Meetings Act, the New Explosives Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and the Bengal Regulation. It will be sufficient to call attention to the last two. By the Criminal Law Amendment Act persons are liable to criminal prosecution merely because they are members of an association which *may* (no conviction is necessary) be engaged in seditious propaganda!

"The provisions of this Act were absolutely unparalleled in this or any other civilised country. It provided that: 'the accused shall not be present unless the magistrate directs, nor shall he be represented by any pleader during any such inquiry, nor shall any person have any right of access to the court of the magistrate while he is holding the inquiry.' Subsequently the accused was tried by judges, without a jury, and if the witness

who had given evidence against him in secret, in his absence before the judges, were absent, and the Court thought that the disappearance was in the interests of the accused, he might then be tried by the judges on the depositions of the witnesses who had given evidence in secret in his absence, and he might be convicted on that evidence which he had never seen, heard, or had any opportunity of knowing anything 'about.'"

The Bengal Regulation goes further; *it dispenses with any trial at all*, and under it persons are deported for an indefinite period without any charge being made against them, and against "whom there may not be *sufficient grounds to institute any judicial proceedings!*" That is to say, any persons whom the Governor-General in Council may suspect can be, at his orders, immediately deported and placed under restraint for an indefinite period without charge, without trial, without defence.

In his preface to "India under Early British Rule", † Mr. R. C. Dutt says of the work of Englishmen in India:

"They have framed wise laws and established courts of justice, the purity of which is as absolute as any country on the face of the earth. These are results which no honest critic of British work in India regards without high admiration."

We are afraid that no loyal Indian and no honest Englishman could say the same to-day.

* Mr. Mackarness, House of Commons, 1909.

† Published by Kegan Paul and Co. 1st edition, 1902.

We have destroyed—perhaps beyond reparation—the faith of Indians in the probity of English law. The conviction is slowly but surely gaining ground that England does not entertain, but will rather oppose by all available means, the idea that India shall attain political freedom; whereas every Indian, unless he be a renegade, must necessarily look forward to and work for the emancipation of his country. While Indians believed that England recognised this aim as an ultimate result of her policy, the inexhaustible patience of the East, with its extraordinary faith in the higher motives of humanity, could forbear beneath mistrust, misjudgment and mistreatment, and await in confidence the mutual understanding of the final consummation. But once it is evident that it is the intention of England to keep India permanently in a state of subjection, the attitude of the latter must change. It *has* changed, but the change, and the only change in the situation, is a psychological one. The forbearance which can endure protracted confinement in order that the basis of future freedom may be more firmly established, becomes misplaced when inaction means the strengthening of a gaoler's hands; the charity that forgives unintentional oppression becomes

cowardice when tyranny is deliberate and aims at the destruction of independence; the patience which in the frozen winter of national life can await the reviving power of a natural readjustment is suicidal when the end is clearly seen to be not re-birth, but extinction.

Unless England will definitely acknowledge political and national independence to be the ultimate destiny of India, there can be nothing but conflict between the two nations. No nation can continue in subjection to another without suffering demoralisation. It suffers because it has no real responsibility, and it is difficult to over-estimate the evil effects of this loss, for there is no more important factor in the development of moral and mental qualities; it is debarred from profiting by its own errors, it is denied the encouragement and stimulus of success, and the gradual paralysis and atrophy of all its higher and most virile qualities is the inevitable result.

In the early days of British administration the moral danger threatening India, as a consequence of our rule, was foreseen and clearly pointed out by Sir Thomas Munro:

"The advocates of improvement do not seem to have perceived the great springs on which it depends; they propose to place no confidence in the natives, to give them no authority

and to exclude them from office as much as possible; but they are ardent in their zeal for enlightening them by the general diffusion of knowledge. No conceit more wild and absurd than this was ever engendered in the darkest ages; for what is in every age and every country the great stimulus to the pursuit of knowledge but the prospect of fame or wealth or power? Or what is even the use of their attainments if they are not to be devoted to their noblest purpose—the service of the community—and by employing those who possess them, according to their respective qualifications, in the various degrees of the public administration of the country? How can we expect that the Hindus will be eager in the pursuit of science unless they have the same inducements as in other countries? . . . Our books alone will do little or nothing; dry, simple literature will never improve the character of a nation. To produce this effect it must open the road to wealth and honour and public employment. Without the prospect of such reward, no attainments in science will ever raise the character of a people. This is true of every nation as well as India: it is true of our own. Let Britain be subjected by a foreign power to-morrow; let the people be excluded from all share in the Government, from public honours, from every office of high trust or emolument, and let them in every situation be considered as unworthy of trust, and all their literature, sacred and profane, would not save them from becoming in another generation or two a low-minded, deceitful and dishonest race. . . . It would certainly be more desirable that we should be expelled from the country altogether than that the result of our system of Government should be such a debasement of the whole people. This is, to be sure, supposing an extreme case, because nobody has ever proposed to exclude the natives from the numerous petty offices. *But the principle is the same: the difference is only one of degree,* and in proportion as we exclude them from the higher offices and a share in the management of public affairs, we lessen their interest in the concerns of the community and degrade their character."

It is this moral degradation to which India is thus exposed under the Imperial Government that forms the Nationalists' chief complaint, and we would here lay particular stress on the fact, not always sufficiently realised, that though all Government posts were filled by Indians, yet under a foreign autocracy, not responsible to the people themselves, the position would be unchanged. A nation of obedient automatons, directing the administrative machinery, but responsible to an alien Government, would still be subject to this demoralisation, however technically perfect that administration might be.

"Nations grown corrupt
Love bondage more than liberty—
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty".

MILTON.

As each individual must by his own efforts work out his own salvation, so must every nation, through the discipline and experience of its own self-rule, build the foundations of its national life, every struggle, every rebuff but instruments for its final perfecting.

India to-day, after a period of latency and disorganisation, is rapidly becoming convalescent, and purged from the seeds of disease and decay, is developing a new and purer

strength. We believe that a process of disruption was necessary in order that, adapting herself to modern conditions, she might reconstruct her whole national life and polity on a new and firmer basis. Can we doubt the recuperative power of a nation whose historical records go back 2000 years B.C.?

Stimulated by the continual irritation of an alien Government, by contact with Western science and civilisation, she is awakening to a new realisation of self-consciousness, and the reactionary policy of the Imperial Government has hastened her recovery by forcing upon her the necessity for self-defence and the urgent need for the preservation of her national life.

The recoil from the first indiscriminate imbibing of Western materialism has unveiled her eyes to the intrinsic worth of her own spiritual conceptions and the need for untrammelled expression in art, science, literature, industry and all lower activities, as a means to the balanced development of the nation as a spiritual unit; while the study of Western ideals of liberty and justice have recalled to her the necessity for Self-Government if any true freedom is to be realised, if any healthy national life is to be maintained.

When we consider the vastness of India's

past, the greatness of her civilisation, the grandeur and nobility of her traditions, the vigorous independence of her ancient peoples, preserving through all vicissitudes their own laws and customs, it would be strange indeed if the hopes of her sons to-day were centred on anything less than the restoration of their ancient heritage to a position of honour among the nations of the world.

When we further consider the characteristics of Indians to-day, how although—partly through adverse circumstances, partly because, unlike ourselves, they still subordinate the means of living to the enjoyment of life itself—they fall far behind us in mechanical and commercial enterprises, in the realm of pure intellect they possess marked superiority; that there is no evidence to prove that their standard of morality is inferior to ours; while as yet no Western nation has attained to so universal a perception—constant in its operation, practical in its effects—of the reality and essentiality of spiritual conceptions, as that which is developed in India, it is unlikely that, conscious of their peculiar qualification in all those attributes which characterise the higher types of humanity, Indians will rest content in the subordinate position assigned them, and

will submit permanently to the mental and spiritual decline such a condition inevitably inaugurates. To acquiesce in the denationalisation of their country under a foreign autocracy would surely be an attitude of emasculated lethargy meriting the contemptuous pity of all self-respecting peoples.

Count de Wesselitsky, in describing the future of Russia, summarised the points upon which he believed all Russians were agreed. These, he said, would constitute a national programme, and we quote them here, as they comprise those essentials of national life which Indians, in common with all civilised peoples, must necessarily demand if they intend to maintain any position in the future progress of the world :

I. Free development of the individual ; the four necessary liberties of conscience, speech, meeting and association.

II. Social reforms.

III. Unity of the Empire with local and provincial self-government, and equal rights for all religions and nationalities.

IV. Peaceful foreign policy, which may be further defined as abstention from all expansion not justified by the needs of the country and not approved by the nation.

It is because of these considerations that the *character* of a foreign rule does not affect the question of nationalism, which rests on the assumption that when a nation has reached a

certain stage, Self-Government from within, and not compulsion, however wise and benevolent, from without, is a natural and vital necessity of future growth ; and if from any cause that nation fails to achieve the requisite measure of attainment, premature decay inevitably sets in.

Now, perhaps no better method could have been devised for forcing upon a nation the realisation of this law than the one adopted by us in our relations with Indians. By precept, by example, we have continually reiterated not merely that Self-Government is essential to the well-being of civilised peoples, but that complete independence in the internal polity of each is a necessary foundation for the maintenance of any durable and harmonious relation even between such close allies as a mother country and her colonies. Having assiduously preached this lesson, we proceed to put the final seal on our instruction by peremptorily denying our Indian subjects any opportunity of putting it into practice, thereby holding them up before themselves as an adverse example of the validity of our theory, and affording them an irrefutable proof of the gravity of their own position if they continue in a state of dependence. By this means we provide an effectual stimulus to Nationalist

aspirations, and steadily strengthen the determination to accomplish political freedom at all costs. Do we suppose that Indians neglected to read Mr. Asquith's speech at the Colonial Conference? And if they read it, are we to believe that they were oblivious to its obvious application to their own case, or failed to store up against us one more proof of the untenableness of our position? Out of our own mouth are we condemned; out of our own mouth has the Indian Nationalist not merely justification, but unqualified approval:

"Many people have endeavoured to explain in a phrase that which distinguishes our Empire from the other Empires of history, . . . but we shall all agree in a general way that the special feature of the British Empire has been that it has combined, and has succeeded in combining to a degree unknown in any other combination in history, a loyal and affectionate attachment between the centre and parts of the Empire, and between the various parts themselves, with complete, practical, local independence. That is the secret, if we may call it a secret, which we have contributed to the history of the Empire. For the first time in the history of the world we have managed to reconcile what has hitherto been found irreconcilable in every political combination, namely, the completest development of local liberty and independence, without impairing, nay rather with an enhancement of a sense of corporate unity and attachment between the parts and the whole. If that is true, gentlemen, of our Empire as a whole, of its structure, and of its foundations, nowhere is it truer, I think, than in this department of Fiscal Policy. It is by giving, as the Mother Country has done, complete fiscal autonomy to her colonies (I will not say

only by that, but it is partly by that and largely by that) that we have succeeded in arriving at a working Imperial arrangement. We had our warnings; we tried the opposite policy in the eighteenth century; we tried to impose our fiscal system, or at any rate to impose taxation, which was dictated from here, and not from there, on our self-governing colonies on the other side of the Atlantic. We all know the result; we lost them. British statesmen, to whatever political party they belong, have never forgotten that lesson, and during the whole of the empire building and empire developing which went on during the nineteenth century, when every one of the great colonies, which I see represented round this table, one after the other received the grant of self-government, our statesmen of all parties were wise enough to recognise that, unless they gave to those communities complete fiscal independence, they were giving them a boon which in the long run was not worth having, and instead of laying the foundations of a solid and durable empire, they were simply sowing the seeds of future discord and possible dismemberment."*

The principles of honour, of justice, of morality, of progress, with which we have associated ourselves imperatively demand that we should not only recognise the validity of India's claim, but give to it our ungrudging support. By so doing we should recover the respect, the confidence, the friendship of India herself, while our gain in moral strength and dignity, among the nations of the world would be incalculable.

But if, on the other hand, we reject this

* Extract from Mr. Asquith's speech at the Colonial Conference.

opportunity, let us remember that that which the few demand to-day the many will take by force to-morrow; and in wresting from our grasp that which is rightfully her due, India will achieve at once her own emancipation and the disgrace and downfall of the British Empire.

Chapter VII

Legislative Councils

THE East India Company was formed in 1600 for the purpose of trading with India. Elizabeth's Charter gave it full legislative powers, which included the right to acquire ships, men and ammunitions, to make war in India, for the furtherance of trade and the security of the Company's properties. The annexation of territory was found to be specially advantageous, since the revenue raised by severe taxation was greater and more certain than that accumulated by mere trading. The Charter of 1726 gave powers to the Governors-in-council to make laws for their own Presidencies without reference to each other; these powers were supplemented by the judicial and fiscal rights independently acquired by the Company from the native rulers, the business of which was conducted in separate courts.

As time went on the Company increased its territory, its debts, and especially the fortunes of its members and officials so extensively that in 1772 it had to approach the Home Government for a loan. £1,400,000 was granted but

was accompanied by a Regulating Act. The official appointments still remained with the Company, but a supreme court was established at Fort William, Calcutta, which had power to veto the rulings of the Governor-General of Bengal, and his council, while he was given the power of veto over Madras and Bombay. The inevitable friction which resulted ended in the triumph of the Governor-General, who in 1781 was empowered to make regulations for the provincial courts independently. In 1784 the Home Government established a Board of Control composed of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Secretary of State, and four Privy Councillors to superintend and examine into all the business of the Company. It had also power to remove any of the officials appointed to the Company. The Company had in fact become too rich, and powerful to be allowed to conduct its affairs altogether independently of the Home Government.

It must be remembered that for the mass of the people the village Panchayet remained the law court, unless the dispute directly or indirectly concerned the Company, but the powers and jurisdiction of the Company were so continuously extended that the system of general law soon presented a mass of intricate compli-

cations in which Hindu law based on the Shastras, Muslim law based on the Koran English common law and numberless regulations and letters patent which the Company derived from various rulers, all combined to form a kaleidoscope of procedure from which a judgment had somehow to be culled. In 1833 a Regulation Act was passed which deprived the Governments of Bombay and Madras of their legislative power and established a central legislative council, which was given an unofficial Law Member; at the same time law commissioners were appointed to regulate and codify legal procedure. In 1853 it was found necessary to enlarge the Council when it sat in its legislative capacity, by the addition of two English judges of the Calcutta supreme Court, and four officials appointed by the Governments of Bombay, Bengal, Madras and Agra. This was an important step, since for the first time a distinction was made between the legislative and administrative functions of the council. Appointments were no longer in the hands of the Company, but for the first time were thrown open to general competition by open examinations held in London. The next great departure was taken with the Indian Councils Act of 1881. The rising of 1858 had shaken

British rule in India to its foundations, and a policy of propitiation on the one hand and of centralisation on the other was drawn up. The Act restored to the Governments of Bombay and Madras the legislative authority which they lost by the Act of 1833, with the proviso that all laws passed by them must have the assent of the Governor-General in Council before coming into operation. Similar councils were provided for in the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, though these did not come into being till 1886 and 1897 respectively. The Council of the Governor-General was enlarged by the nomination of not less than six and not more than twelve members, nominated for two years. Not less than half of these members must be non-officials and for the first time a small proportion of these were Indians. These councils were strictly legislative; they could not enquire into grievances nor was it their business to criticise the conduct of the executive.

"The legislative power of the Governor-General in council was extended over all persons, whether British or Indian, foreigners or others, within the Indian territories now under the dominion of Her Majesty, and over all courts of justice and over all places and things within the said dominions of Princes and States in alliance

with Her Majesty. This Act also gave legal force to all the Miscellaneous rules and orders which had been issued in the newly acquired territories of the Company (known as the non-regulation provinces, or frankly by the executive authority of the Governor-General in Council." * This act also authorised the Governor-General to promulgate orders without references to his council when emergency required it. Such orders to remain in force for not more than six months.

The Indian Councils Act of 1892 was important as foreshadowing the elective principle. By it the majority among the non-official seats were allotted to selected nominees from the delegates of chosen representative bodies, such as Chambers of Commerce, Landowners, Municipalities, Universities etc. In the Governor-General's Council of twenty-five members, one seat was allotted to the nominee chosen from among those of the Calcutta Chambers of Commerce, four to the nominees of the non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Councils of Bombay, Madras, Bengal and the United Provinces, the remaining non-official members being nominated by the Governor-General. The Councils were also given the right to ask

* Report on Indian Constitutional Reform.

questions, discuss, —but not to vote on the budget after it had been formulated.

The Morley —Minto reforms of 1907 introduced an indirect elective principle. The Governor-General's Legislative Council was increased to 60: of whom five were nominated by the Governor-General: twenty eight were official members, while of the twenty-seven elected representatives of specially created electorates, twelve were elected by the non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Councils, four by Chambers of Commerce and Indian business interests, while the rest were divided between landowning and Muslim interests. The Provincial Councils were similarly enlarged and had extended functions, and in the Council of Bengal, there was an elective majority. They could discuss and move resolutions on the budget before it was settled and on all matters of general importance. As a check, any resolution might be disallowed by the President on the ground that it was against the public interest that the resolution should be moved. The whole aim of these reforms was "to create a constitution about which conservative opinion would crystallise and offer substantial opposition to any further change. They anticipated that the aristocratic element in society and the

moderate men, for whom there was then no place in Indian politics, would range themselves on the side of the Government and oppose any further shifting of the balance of power and any attempt to democratise Indian institutions."*

The result was not happy. There was a perpetual gulf fixed between the official English members and the Indian elected members. The latter found that the increased opportunities for discussion in the moving of such resolutions as were permitted held no promise that these would ever get the power, even when in a majority to have those resolutions put into operation, with the result that their discussions, divorced from any prospect of responsibility, increased in bitterness with the persuasion that their position was futile when viewed from within the councils, and ridiculous when viewed from without by those whom they were supposed to represent. The Legislative council had not control of the Executive which consisted of five or six members directly nominated with the Governor-General as supreme Head, and the Commander-in-Chief as an extraordinary member. All that was given to the Legislative councils was a facility for discussion

* Report on the Constitutional Reforms. 1918.

and protest, and even this was at the discretion of the Governor-General-in-Council.

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. Some time after Mr. Montagu was appointed Secretary of state for India, and after his return from India, he appointed two Committees—one, a “Functions Committee” presided over by Mr. Feetham to find out whether the time had arrived to transfer the control of certain subjects to Indian ministers, and if so, in what manner it could best be effected, how the money was to be found, and what was to be the basis of co-operation between the non-official ministers and the executive councillors. The other, a Franchise Committee, presided over by Lord Southborough, which sat in the various cities and towns of India, to find out whether a limited electorate on a property or literacy basis could be discovered to form constituencies which should send representatives to the Legislative Councils. As a result of their report about two and a half per cent of the population of British India were enfranchised on a property qualification. The result of the investigations of the Functions committee was to draw up a scheme of devolution, which purported to bring Indians into closer responsible relations with the Government by means of

a division of services in the executives of provincial governments.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Act may be summarised thus:

(1) The Government of India preserves its autocratic authority in everything relating to peace, order and the maintenance of good government, and is the final arbiter.

(2) The executive council has the addition of three Indian executive councillors, nominated by the Governor General. These are the Hon. Mian Mohammed Shafi (portfolio of education) the Hon. Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru (portfolio of law) and the Hon. B. N. Sarma.

(3) The Legislative Assembly to consist of 100 members, two-thirds of whom are elected by the new constituencies, the remaining one-third nominated by the Government.

(4) A Council of State consisting of 50 members, of whom two-thirds are official and one-third a nominated Indian element. It was originally proposed that this council should possess the power of assent and veto: then that it should be a revising body: as it stands, it is shorn of all power and is simply a deliberative assembly.

(5) The Governor-General retains his authority to promulgate extra-ordinary ordinances,

and his right of veto over any bills passed by the legislative council, with the proviso that in such case he must within six months deliver his reasons to the Secretary of State in London that the veto may be finally upheld or revoked by the King in Council.

The Provincial Governments. Each province has a Governor with executive and legislative councils. The executive council consists of two or more officials of the Indian civil service in charge of the reserved subjects and responsible to the Governor for the proper discharge of their respective functions. Indian Ministers selected from among the elected members of council, have been put in charge of the transferred subjects, for the administration of which they are directly responsible to the Legislative council, and ultimately to the electors of the newly formed constituencies.

The much criticized principle of diarchy resolves itself into the division of administrative functions into official responsibility and popular control.

The administration of the reserved subjects, which are in the control of the executive officials, are the first charge on the provincial revenues. The transferred subjects will have certain sums allocated to, or budgetted for them out of

the residue which remains after the reserved subjects have been provided for. In order to make up the deficiency the members in charge of the transferred subjects have the authority to impose limited taxation subject to the approval of their councils.

In theory the British officials and the Indian councillors must co-operate harmoniously, with a view to eliminate friction and to ensure administrative efficiency. In practice the whole scheme labours under abnormal disabilities because---

(1) The taxable capacity of the people has already been exploited to the utmost to pay for the reserved subjects.

(2) The position of the newly appointed Indian ministers is precarious because while they are critically regarded by the Government as untried and inexperienced subjects of experiment, to their own people they appear as officials who may impose a further burden of taxation to that already laid on them by the Government; and whereas the Executive Councillors are not supposed to do more than represent the old system of bureaucratic control, the new Indian ministers are looked upon as reflecting a new democratic order.

(3) The Non-co-operation movement reduced the elections to a mere stage performance.

110 The Significance of Indian Nationalism

49335
Those who in normal circumstances would have stood for election refused their candidature: the majority of voters boycotted the polls, with the result that the returned ministers are in no sense representative of their constituencies.

(4) The councils are not functioning, on account of the dead-lock and the main activities of the legislature which should be busy with constructive reforms, are employed in opposing the Boycott and what they regard as its revolutionary tendencies.

In conclusion, the Reforms which the Montague-Chelmsford Act embodies are nothing but skilful devices for hypnotising the people into a belief that at long last the power is passing into their hands, whereas in reality the Act is a means to stabilise the power and authority of the Government, while diminishing the responsibility of the bureaucracy. It is an attempt to impose foreign ready-made institutions with a democratic sound on a people, while denying any control by the people over those institutions. The reforms are not indigenous: not parliamentary: not controlled by the nation: not formulated by the representatives of the people. The sole supreme power the power of the purse, the power of police, . . .