Preserver of the World, for advice. He told them, perhaps contemptuously, to "go and churn the ocean!" and the poor gods trooped forth eagerly to do his bidding.

They churned and churned. Many great and splendid things came foaming up, and they seized them with avidity, here a wonderful elephant, there a princely horse, again a beautiful wife for some one. Each was only greedy to be first in the handling or the next delight, when all at once something black began to come. Welling up and up, and then spreading over the whole ocean, it came. "What is it?" they asked each other in horror. It was poison—death to them, death to the world, death to the universe. It came to their very feet, and they had to retreat rapidly in fear. Already they were in the midst of darkness, and there was nowhere that they could flee, for this dense blackness was about to cover all the worlds. In this moment of mortal terror, all the gods with one voice called on Siva. He had taken no part in the receiving of gifts, maybe He would be able to help them now. Instantly, the great White God was in their midst. He smiled gently at their dilemma and their fear, and stooping down He put His hand into the waves, and bade the poison flow into the hollow of His palm. Then He drank it, willing to die, in order to save the world. But that which would have been enough to destroy all created beings was only enough to stain His throat, hence He bears there a patch of blue for ever.

Perhaps one of the most characteristic myths that have clustered round the name of Mahadev is the Legend of the Boar-Hunt. As we read it, we stand on the snowy heights of the third range of the Himalayas, and seem to watch a mighty snow-storm sweeping through the ravine before us.

Arjuna, one of the principal heroes of the Great

War, and the second figure in the dialogue of the Gîtâ, had gone up into the mountains, to spend three months in worshipping Siva, and invoking His blessing. Suddenly one day as he was praying and offering flowers before the lingam, he was roused by a wild boar, which was rushing forward to attack him. It was only an instant, and Arjuna, the practised archer, had seized his bow and shot the animal. But at the self-same moment a shout of warning was heard, and simultaneously with Arjuna's a second arrow pierced the body of the beast. The hero raised his eyes, and saw, coming towards him, a formidable-looking hunter and huntress, followed by an innumerable retinue of women, attired for the chase, and attended, at some distance, by a dim host of shadows—the armies of demons and hobgoblins. A second later, the whole hunt had come to a stop before him.

"The quarry was mine!" cried the Hunter—and his voice sounded like the winter-blasts, amongst the mountains—"the quarry was mine. Mine is the lordship of these forests! How dared you touch it?"

At this address, Arjuna blazed with anger, and picking up the bow and arrows that he had thrown aside before returning to his worship, he challenged the Hunter to a personal combat.

"Accepted," was the reply, and the duel began. But to the hero's dismay, he seemed to be attacking some terrible phantom, for, one after another, his good stout arrows disappeared into the person of his antagonist, working him no harm.

"Let's wrestle then!" shouted Arjuna, and casting aside his bow, he flung himself upon his foe. He was met by the quiet touch of a hand on his heart, and fell to the ground stunned.

"Well, come on!" said the Hunter, as he recovered himself a few seconds later, and turned aside from

the contest. But he seemed almost intoxicated. "I must finish my worship first," he said, in a thick voice, taking up a garland of flowers, to fling about the Siva-lingam. The next moment the eyes of Arjuna were opened, for the Hunter towered above him, blessing him, and the flowers were about his neck.

"Mahadev! Mahadev!" cried the worshipper, flinging himself on the ground, to touch with his head the feet of the God. But already the hunt had swept on down the valley, and the Hunter and Huntress had disappeared, with all their train.

Such are a few of the stories told of Siva, so deeply loved by all his devotees. To them there is nothing in the world so strong and pure and all-merciful as their great God, and the books and poems of Hindus are very few in which he is not referred to with this passionate worship.

Sometimes He is entirely a personification of the Himalayas, as when the Milky Way is made to fall upon his head, wander round and round amongst the tangled locks, and issue from them at last as the Ganges. Indeed, the imagination of the people may be said to make of their northern ranges one vast shrine to Him; for it is far away, they say, across the frost-bound heights, where the Himalayas are at their mightiest and India passes into Thibet, that the Lake Manasarovar lies, at the foot of the great ice-peak of Kailash. Here is the reign of silence and eternal snow, and here, guarding the north, is the holy home that Siva loves.

He is the very soul of gentleness, refusing none. Up here have gathered round Him all those who were weary of earth, having found no acceptance amongst the fortunate. The serpents, whom all the world hates and denies, come to Kailash, and

Mahadev finds room for them in His great heart. And the tired beasts come—for He is the refuge of animals—and it is one of these, a shabby old bull, that He specially loves and rides upon.

And here, too, come the spirits of all those men and women who are turbulent and troublesome and queer, the bad boys and girls of the grown-up world, as it were. All the people who are so ugly that no one wants to see them; those who do things clumsily, and talk loudly, and upset everything, though they mean no harm, and the poor things who are ridden by one idea, so that they never can see straight, but always seem a little mad—such are the souls on whom He alone has mercy. He is surrounded by them, and they love and worship Him. He uses them to do His errands, and they are known as Siva's demons.

But Siva is more even than this. He is the Self-born, the eternally-existent postulate of freedom and purity and light. He is the great teaching soul of things. His function is to destroy ignorance, and wherever knowledge is achieved, He is. His name of "Hara! Hara!" ("The Free! The Free!") was the battle-cry of the Mahrattas. More yet, He is Rudra, the Storm, the Terrible; and it is under this aspect that Hinduism raises to Him its daily cry:

> Evermore protect us,—O thou terrible!—
> From ignorance, by thy sweet compassionate face.

For, after all, a human quality is always limited to one of two, the Divine must be lifted above good as well as evil, above joy as well as pain. We have here the Indian conception of same-sightedness, and perhaps its devotional significance is nowhere interpreted as in the Hindi song of Surdas, which is here repeated as a nautch-girl was heard to sing it in a Rajput Court:

O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,
By Thy touch, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me pure.*

One drop of water is in the sacred Jumna,
Another is foul in the ditch by the roadside,
But when they fall into the Ganges,
Both alike become holy.

One piece of iron is the image in the temple,
Another is the knife in the hand of the butcher,
But when they touch the philosopher's stone,
Both alike turn to gold.

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,
Make us both the same Brahman.

Literally, Make us both the same Brahman—*i.e.*, Let the Singer—low dancing-girl as she may be—become one with God Himself in the Supreme Essence, Brahman. The theological conception here is so difficult for Western readers that I have preferred to use the simpler alternative translation also furnished by my Master, the Swami Vivekananda.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED ONE

We worship Thee, Seed of the Universe,
Thou one unbroken Soul.
We worship Thee, whose footstool is worshipped by the Gods.
Thou Lord of the Saints,
Physician of the World-disease,
To Thy lotus-feet our salutation, O Great Soul!
Hindu form of salutation to a Divine Incarnation.

I

It is told of a certain Bodhisattva that, all his struggles done and illumination reached, he was about to pass over into Nirvana. But as his feet touched the threshold of supreme blessedness there rose to his ears the sound of the sorrowful crying of humanity. Then turned that great soul back from Nirvana and entered again into life, declaring that till the last grain of dust in the universe had passed in before him, he would by no means go into salvation. And this Bodhisattva is he who sits on the throne of the Dalai-Lama in Tibet, watching the world of men with eyes of divine pity from afar off.

Called by various names, arrayed in widely-differing garb, we come constantly in Hinduism on the attempt, as here in the story of the Dalai-Lama, to express the idea that in the great Heart of the Absolute there dwells an abiding charity towards men. It would seem as if, to the religious instinct

of humanity, the dream of "the pursuit of the soul by God" is a necessity; and the Hindu, well aware of the impossibility of giving it logical expression, veils his effort in mythology. Whence the stories of the Avatars. For our conception of the doctrine of reincarnation is only complete when we understand that now and again the Eternal Love is represented as projecting itself into the sphere of manifestation, taking shape as a man, in order to act as a lamp amidst the darkness of delusion, a counter-magnetism to the attractions of desire.

It is absurd, says the Hindu—whose imagination can never be charged with provincialism—to think that such an Incarnation, supposing it to occur at all, could visit the world only once. Is respect of persons a divine attribute? Or is the need of mankind at any time less than complete? Can we believe, again, that the power of creative energy to assume and throw off the shell of personality is exhausted in a single effort? Rather must the taking upon Himself of mortal form and limitations be to the all-pervasive "as the lifting of a flower's fragrance by the summer breeze," a matter of play; or like the shining of a lamp through the window wherein it is set, without effort—nothing more.

The orthodox Hindu is thus usually in no position to deny the supernatural character of the Babe of Bethlehem. He is only unable to admit that the nature of Christ stands alone in the history of the world, holding that his own country has seen even more than the three—Rama, Krishna, and Buddha—who were His brothers. Still more cogently does he claim sometimes that all these and possibly others of whom he has not heard, are but one soul, one expression of Godhead coming back at different times to lay hold on the hearts of men. And he quotes in support of this contention the familiar

words of Krishna: "Whenever religion decays, and when irreligion * prevails, *then* I manifest myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, for the firm establishment of the *dharmma*, I am born again and again."

It is natural enough to the Hindu intellect that around each such forth-shining of the Divine should grow up a new religious system or Church. But each of these is only a special way of expressing the one fundamental doctrine of Maya, a new mode of endearing God to man. At the same time it is thought that every one, while recognising this perfect sympathy of various faiths for one another, should know how to choose one amongst them for his own, and persist in it, till by its means he has reached a point where the formulæ of sects are meaningless to him. "For it is good," say the people, "to be born in a church, though it is foolish to die there."

In this sense—somewhat different from the religious partisanship of Europe—the popular and growing belief of the Hindu masses consists of various forms of the worship of Khrishna. It is this creed that carries to those who need it, a religious emotionalism like that of the Salvation Army or of Methodism. In the hottest nights, during periods of "revival," the streets of a city will be crowded with men bearing lights and banners, and dancing themselves into a frenzy to such words as:

Call on the Lord,
Call on the Lord,
Call on the Lord, little brother
Than this name of the Lord,
For mortal man,
There is no other way.

* Literally, dharmma and a-dharmma. The prefix here adversative—dharmma and non-dharmma. See p. 276.

Khrishna, like Rama and like Buddha, is considered to be a special incarnation of Vishnu, God the Preserver. It is therefore pertinent to appeal to Him for the goods of life, for consolation in sorrow, for deliverance from fear. He is known as the Holy Child, born in humility amidst cowherds by the Jumna; the Gentle Shepherd of the People, the Wise Counsellor, the Blessed Lord, tender Lover and Saviour of the human soul; and by other names not less familiar to ourselves. It is an image of the Baby Krishna that the Indian mother adores as the Bambino, calling it "Gopāla," her cowherd. His name fills gospels and poems, the folk-songs of all Hindu races are full of descriptions of Him as a cowherd wandering and sporting amongst His fellows; and childish literature is full of stories of Him, curiously like European tales of the Christ-child. To the ecstatic mystic, He is the Divine Spouse.

If we dip into His history we shall think it a strange medley. So many parts were never surely thrust upon a single figure! But through it all we note the predominant Indian characteristics,—absolute detachment from personal ends, and a certain subtle and humorous insight into human nature.

His main spiritual significance for India does not, perhaps—with one exception—attach to that part of His life which is related in the Mahabharata, but rather to what is told of Him in the Purānas—works not unlike our apocryphal Gospels. But the one exception is important. It consists of no less an incident than that conversation with the chieftain Arjuna which comprises the Bhagavad Gitā, or Song of the Blessed One. Of this little poem—only some three or four times the length of the Sermon on the Mount, and shorter even than the Gospel of St. Mark—it may be said at once that amongst the

sacred writings of mankind there is probably no other which is at once so great, so complete, and so short. It provides the worship of Krishna—and incidentally all kindred systems—with that open door upon abstract philosophy without which no cult could last in India for a week. But it is by no means the property of the Vaishnavas exclusively. From Kashmir to Cape Comorin it is bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of all forms of religious thought.

Its ideas are unmistakably Indian in colour: its *feeling* is just as unmistakably universal. The voice that speaks on the field of Kurukshetra is the same voice that reverberates through an English childhood from the shores of the Sea of Galilee. We read the gracious words, "Putting aside all doctrines, come thou to Me alone for shelter—I will liberate thee from all sins, do not thou grieve." "Fixing thy heart on Me, thou shalt, by My grace, cross over all difficulties," and we drop the book, lost in a dream of One who cried to the weary and heavy laden, "Come unto Me." We certainly now understand, and cannot again forget, that for the Indian reader the eyes of the Lord Krishna are most kind, His touch infinitely gentle, and His heart full of an exceeding great compassion, even as for us are the eyes and the hand and the heart of Him Who spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd.

Like our own Gospels, the Gîtâ abounds in quaint and simple metaphors. "As a lamp in a sheltered spot, not flickering," must be the mind. All undertakings are surrounded with evil, "as fire with smoke." The round of worship is "as a wheel revolving." So great is wisdom that though thou shouldst be "even the most sinful of all sinners, thou shalt cross safely to the conquest of all sin by the bark of wisdom alone." One of the most beautiful, referring to those perceptions which constitute the Universe as we know it, says, "All this

is threaded upon Me as gems upon a string." Nothing is mentioned that would not be familiar to the poorest peasant, living on a fertile plain, diversified only by a river and an occasional walled city.

And indeed it was for these, labouring men, unlettered and poor, that the Gîtâ, with its masterly simplicity, was written. To those who had thought salvation and the beatific vision as far beyond their attainment as a knowledge of the classics—to these humble souls the Divine Voice declares that, by worshipping God and doing at the same time the duty of his station, every man may attain perfection. "Better for one is one's own duty, however badly done, than the duty of another, though that be easy." Again and again, as we read the Gîtâ, we are driven to the conclusion that we hear an infinite mercy addressing itself to a people who had imagined the knowledge of God to be the monopoly of priesthoods and religious orders, and bidding them be of good courage, for the true monk is he "who neither hates nor desires," the true worshipper any one who "offers to Me with devotion even a leaf or a flower or a cup of water." No wonder that the Indian people, saluting a Divine Incarnation, call Him *the Physician of the world-disease!* Never did speech know how to be more interior. "Those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as supreme, meditating on Me with entire devotion, for them whose thought is fixed on Me, I become ere long, O son of Pritha, the Saviour out of the ocean of this mortal world." . . . "For I am the abode of Brahman, the Immortal and the Immutable, the Eternal Substance, and the unfailing Bliss." We kneel in a vast silence and darkness, and hear words falling like water drop by drop.

Nothing is omitted from the Gîtâ that the uncon-

soled heart requires. There are even the tender promises of daily bread, so dear to the anxious; "They who depend on Me, putting aside all care, whatsoever they need, I myself carry it to them," runs one verse. Of this a beautiful story is told in the villages. The Brahmin sat copying the text, but when the word "carry" had been written, he felt a doubt. "My dear," he said, turning to consult his wife, "thinkest thou not it is irreverent to say 'carry' here? Did not our Lord not mean 'send?'" "Beyond a doubt, beloved," answered his wife, "it is as thou sayest. Let the word be 'send.'" Then the man took his penknife and erased the word he had just written, substituting his own emendation for it. A moment later he rose up to go and bathe. But his wife stood before him with troubled face. "I told thee not," she said, "that there is no food in the house, and nought have I to cook for thee." The Brahmin smiled gently. "Let us call upon our Lord to fulfil His own promise," he replied quietly; "meantime, I shall go and bathe," and he passed into the next room. Only a few minutes had he gone, when his wife was called to the door by a beautiful youth, who stood there with a basketful of delicious foods, ready for eating. "Who sent me this?" the woman asked in amazement. "Your husband called me to carry it," said the lad carelessly, putting the basket as he spoke into her hands. But to her horror, as he lifted his arms, the housewife noted cuts and gashes above his heart. "Alas, my poor child, who hath wounded thee?" she cried. "Your husband, mother, before he called me, cut me with a small sharp weapon," was the quiet answer. Dumb with astonishment, the Brahmin's wife turned away to bestow the viands he had brought, and when she came back to the door the youth had gone. At that instant her husband

re-entered the room, having returned, as she supposed from bathing. Her wonder about the food was forgotten in indignant sympathy. "Why," she cried, "didst thou so hurt thy messenger?" The man looked at her without understanding. "Him whom thou sentest to me with food, as thou didst go to bathe," she explained. "To bathe!" he stammered, "I have not yet been!" Then the eyes of husband and wife met, and they knew both who had come to them, and how they had wounded the heart of the Lord. And the Brahmin returned to the sacred text, and once more erasing a word restored it to its original form, for there can be no doubt that the true reading is, "They who depend on Me, casting aside all care, whatsoever they need, I myself *carry* it to them."

Such are some of the associations which cling to the little image of Krishna that the children about Calcutta can buy for a few farthings. It is made of lime, and painted blue—for just as white, to the dweller amongst northern snows, signifies purity, so blue, the colour of sky and ocean, to the child of the South, is the token of the Infinite. The left hand of the image holds a flute to the lips; the right carries a thin golden scroll, referring to the Gîtâ. The feet are crossed carelessly, like those of any strolling peasant-player, and the head is crowned. Simple toy as it is, there is hardly a detail of the composite figure in which a devotional system does not centre.

"O Thou that playest on the flute, standing by the water-ghats, on the road to Brindaban!" sing the lovers of Krishna, and their hearts melt within them while they sing, pierced as by S. Teresa's wound of seraphic love. Of all its elements, however, there is none which has the unequalled importance to the world of the scroll in the right hand, both as throwing light on Indian habits of thought

and as an exposition of the science of religion. The questions, therefore, On what fundamental experience does the Gītā base itself? To what does it appeal? What does it single out in life as requiring explanation? What is its main imperative? are of singular interest. That place which the four Gospels hold to Christendom, the Gītā holds to the world of Hinduism, and in a very real sense, to understand it is to understand India and the Indian people.

II

It is believed by Hindus that when great forces are in action, on occasions such as those of battle and earthquake, a certain state of etheric vibration is produced, which makes it easy for minds trembling on the verge of supreme knowledge to vault the barricades of sense and find illumination. Perhaps this is because a great intensity of experience has to be found and transcended. Perhaps the conditions, apparently simple, are really more complex than this. At any rate, the story of the Bhagavad Gītā is of the coming of such beatitude to a young soldier named Arjuna, some three thousand years ago.

Incidentally, the opening of the poem presents us with an impressive picture of an ancient battlefield. On the great plain of Kurukshetra, already the scene of the prayers and austerities of saints and pilgrims for hundreds of years, two armies face each other. The leaders of both sides occupy chariots drawn by white horses; over each waves his personal ensign; and each carries a conch-shell, by way of trumpet, to enable him to give signals and enforce attention to his commands. Both armies are represented as great hosts, but indications are not wanting that that of Duryodhana, the usurper, under the leader-

ship of Bhishma, is the larger and stronger. And this is natural, since Duryodhana, rightly or wrongly, is still suzerain of the whole country, while the five Pandava brothers, his cousins, are only bent on the recovery of their rights from him. We have to call to mind that this is an ancient battle, consisting of an immense number of small fights, before we are able to give our thoughts calmly to the narrative, for we are told that from all parts of the field and on both sides the white conch-shells have been blown, giving the signal for assault, and that already "the discharge of weapons" has begun, when Arjuna requests Krishna, who is acting as his charioteer, to drive him into the space between the two hosts, that he may single out those with whom he is to enter into personal combat during the fray.

The sight of the foe, however, has an extraordinary effect on the mind of the chieftain. Instead of looking on his enemies with an accession of faith in the justice of his own cause and a heroic determination to struggle to the last in its defence, he seems to realise for the first time the consequences of the attack. Amongst the foe stand all he has ever loved or honoured—Bhishma, the head of his house, the adored grandsire of his childhood; Drona, to whom he owes his education, and for whom he cherishes a passionate reverence; and cousins and relatives innumerable besides, of whom the very worst is an old playfellow or a gallant combatant in tourney. The path to victory lies through the burning-ghat of the dead! The ashes of all he loves are scattered there! As he realises this, Arjuna's great bow slips from his hand, and he sinks to the floor of his chariot in despair. We must remember that this is no mere failure of courage. The soldier has been tried and proved too often to be open for a moment to such an imputation. Neither is he represented as entertaining the slightest doubt of ultimate

triumph. To the fortunes of war he gives not a thought, assuming, as do all brave men, that they must follow the right. He simply realises that for the sake of a few years of dominion he is about, with his own hand, to rid the earth of everything he loves. He realises, too, that this widespread slaughter will constitute an enormous social disaster.

This feeling of Arjuna's finds religious expression. "I desire not victory, O Krishna, neither kingdom nor pleasures. . . . It would be better for me if the sons of Dritarashthra, arms in hand, should slay me, unarmed and unresisting, in the battle." Surely the moral situation is finely conceived! A prince, of the proudest lineage on earth, is eager to be offered up as a sacrifice rather than accept empire at the price to be paid for it. On the battlefield of life does any case need better stating? Yet this thirst for martyrdom, which looks so like renunciation, is really quite another thing. "Thou art grieved for those who require no grief, yet thou speakest words of wisdom," says Krishna. For, instead of the actual indifference to the world and to his own part in it, of one who perceives that all before him is unreal, Arjuna is betraying that determination to maintain things as they are which belongs to those who hold that affection at least is a very actual good. It is on this distinction that the whole treatise is based.

At first, indeed, the charioteer affects to meet the chieftain's hesitation with all the contempt of knighthood for panic. "Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha!" he exclaims. "Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this base weakness, and arise, O terror of foes." It is not till Arjuna, with a touching acknowledgment of grief and confusion, makes a supreme appeal for intellectual enlightenment, that Krishna, in the character of divine teacher, enters on that immortal pronouncement regarding the Real and

unreal, which ends by sending the knight back to the duty of his birth, unshrinking, with the words: "Firm, with undoubting mind, I obey Thy word."

As the dialogue proceeds, the dramatic element disappears. The echoes of battle die away. We are standing alone in some chamber of the soul, holding that colloquy between human and divine, finite and infinite, which never ceases during life for any one of us, however little able we may be to disentangle it from the voices of the world. At the culminating moment of the interview, when the worshipper receives the sudden revelation of all existing in and by the Lord Krishna, as mere multiform expressions of His sole energy, even at this moment, and during the rapt and broken praise which follows it, we find nothing discordant in the *mise-en-scène*. A chariot of war has become, as only a Hindu pen could have made it, silent as any cell of meditation. The corner of a battlefield has grown as remote from the whirl of life as the inmost recesses of a heart at prayer.

The main argument is, as we might expect, that as all appearances are delusive, action is to the wise man indifferent, and should be performed, once he is sure that he is called to it, without fear of consequences. "Him the wise call a sage—the man whose undertakings are all devoid alike of objects and desires, whose acts have been burnt to ashes in the fire of wisdom." "Never did I not exist, nor thou, nor these rulers of men; and no one of us will ever hereafter cease to exist." Therefore, "Free from hope and from selfishness, without any anxiety of mind, plunge thou into battle!"

The words are addressed to one who is pre-eminently a man of action, a soldier—supposed, saving a due regard for his military honour, to be swayed by the passion for justice, and the impulse to defend it. These things being the stake, throw

for them, and throw boldly, says Krishna, and as results, take whatever may chance to come. "Man has always the right to work: man has no right to the results of work," is as much the heart and core of the Gîtâ, as "Thou hast no right to success if thou art not also equal to failure," is of Stoicism. In application the two doctrines seem identical, but we have only to read, in order to see the advantage which the idea of Maya gives to the Indian thinker. Clear, sharp, incisive as chisel-strokes, are the utterances of Epictetus: like thunderbolts out of a tropical night the words of Krishna.

The Gîtâ, however, does not consist of a single chain of reasoning, moving in definite progression from beginning to end. Rather is the same thing said over and over again, in as many different ways as possible. Sometimes even a form of words is repeated, as if nothing mattered save to make the meaning clear. There is ample scope here for the digressive energy of ages, of which the outcome is the richly-woven texture, set here and there with those strangely-cut Oriental jewels, which must remain amongst the greatest recorded words of religion to all time.

But readers will completely miss the sense of the Gîtâ who permit themselves to forget its first ringing words: "Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it become thee. Shake off this base weakness, and arise, O terror of foes!" The book is nowhere a call to leave the world, but everywhere an interpretation of common life as the path to that which lies beyond. "Better for a man is his own duty, however badly done, than the duty of another, though that be easy." "Holding gain and loss as one, *prepare for battle.*" That the man who throws away his weapons, and permits himself to be slain, unresisting, in the battle, is *not* the hero of religion, but a sluggard and a coward; that the

true seer is he who carries his vision into action, regardless of the consequences to himself; this is the doctrine of the Gîtâ, repeated again and again. The book is really a battle-cry. Spirituality is with it no retreat from men and things, but a burning fire of knowledge that destroys bondage, consumes sluggishness and egoism, and penetrates everywhere. Not the withdrawn, but the transfigured life, radiant with power and energy, triumphant in its selflessness, is religion.

The Gîtâ is to-day the gospel of the Indian Revival. And never was book so well suited to such function. For its eighteen chapters are the expression of an overwhelming national vitality. It is as true of peoples as of individuals, that when the age is full and rich, living is apt to outrun knowing. It is then that large questions press for solution. Great areas of experience require to be related to their common centre and to each other. And so pre-eminently does the Gîtâ do this, that the Mussulman and the Christian can sit indifferently with the Hindu to gather its interpretations.

The nature of all faith, the relation of all worship to worshipped and worshipper, the dependence of knowledge on non-attachment under all its forms: it is with problems like these, and not with any particular *Credo*, that the Gîtâ concerns itself. It is at once therefore the smallest and most comprehensive of the scriptures of the world.

That indifference to results is the condition of efficient action is the first point in its philosophy. But there is no doubt that the action should be strenuous. Let every muscle be hard, every limb well-knit, let the mind sweep the whole horizon of fact; with the reins in hand, the fiery steeds under control, with the whole battlefield in view, and the will of the hero lifted high to strike for justice,

'Arise!" thunders the voice of Sri Krishna, "and be thou an apparent cause!"

It is the supreme imperative. Play thy whole part in the drama of time, devoting every energy, concentrating the whole force. "As the ignorant act from selfish motives, so should the wise man act, unselfishly."

Just as the child sees the sun above his head, and the earth beneath his feet, distinguishing himself from both, while to the man of science, sun, planet, and child are all single points in a great ocean of force-matter, absolutely continuous from its centre to its farthest bounds, so to us all, in the sense-plane of thought, God, soul, and relation exist. Having reached that truth, however, which is the Beatific Vision, any one of them will seem the whole, for all conception of limitation will be blotted out. As we ourselves are seen to be but light transformed; as thought and perception, life and motion, sun and planet, are all but different manifestations of a something that we call Solar Energy, so God, self, and universe, are now known to be only distinctions made by sense in that one, Brahman, "the immortal and immutable, the eternal substance, and the unfailing Bliss."

An account of such a vision gives us the culminating chapter of the Gîtâ. Krishna suddenly bursts forth on the sight of his astonished worshipper as the Universal Form, in Whom all that exists in one. Characteristically Indian in expression, full of the blaze and terror of the cosmos, this great scene can only perhaps be thoroughly appreciated by a Western mind if it has first understood something of the craving that it fulfils, caught some flash maybe of the radiance it describes. Yet if the rest of the Gîtâ were destroyed, this one chapter might take its place, for it makes all its logic actual.

Arjuna's single sight becomes the sacrament of a whole world's hope.

It was midnight when I reached Thaneswar. The fierce white light of a tropical moon bathed the great common in front, where only trees and bushes, with their coal-black shadows, could be seen, and not a single human habitation was in sight. Behind, the dâk-bungalow lay in darkness, and the train by which I had come had passed on long ago into the night. One was alone on the Plain of Kurukshetra with three thousand years.

But the silence did not remain unbroken. Clear and distinct on the still air rose the accents of the immortal dialogue. "Man has the right to work: man has no right to the fruits of work," said, once more, the divine Charioteer. Yet many a memorable battle has been fought, India herself has heard a thousand dialogues, preaching the truths of the Bhagavad Gîtâ. Why, asked my heart, does one come to this spot? For what thing, above all others, does the world remember Kurukshetra?

And then I saw why, never to forget. Kurukshetra was the place of the Great Vision, the field of the Divine Illumination of Arjuna.

CHAPTER XIV

ISLAM IN INDIA

I

THE single continent of the Old World, outside the forests of Africa, is broadly divisible into the agricultural valleys of the East, the sands and steppes of the pastoral belt, and the countries of the European coast-line—and the geographical division is strangely correspondent to the history of its moral development. Civilisation and religion are born amongst peasants, become aggressive amongst sailors, and are passed from one to the other by the nomad races of the desert strip.

For adequate culture-histories of Venice, Genoa, and the Crusades, the world is still waiting. When they are written, men will be astonished to learn both how completely Europe is indebted to Asia, and also how far the Semitic races have been in modern times the stewards of that debt.

It has been administered through the Jew as well as the Mussulman. But the Jew was the spiritual heir of Egypt, and as such could not individualise the desert pure and simple. His religious ideas were too complex, his social system too exclusive, his national sentiment too unfixed. When he ceased to be a peasant in Syria, the world was before him as scholar and trader.

To the Arab, on the other hand, belonged the

shifting constancy of the desert sands. No luxury of cities could fire him with ambition to leave home and kindred, the scanty fare and hardy contests of his youth, that he might eat well and sleep soft amongst aliens. To this day the seamen in the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean will pass those curious, square-sailed boats known as Arab dhows, and will carelessly shout their bearings in answer to the inquiry of the navigators within, who are steering their way on the ocean as they would across the desert, by the position of the sun. But these boats are rude merchantmen merely, not emigrant vessels. They are going out, only that they may return and enrich their own people with the benefits of trade. When the Arab of old did set his eyes upon the capitals of the world it was to possess them. He went forth in his armies, taking his kindred with him, and seated himself in their palaces, upon their thrones. And yet the city where that idea of his own solidarity was born which enabled the Mussulman to ignore petty feuds for a great unifying idea, was the open port of its day and place, and the Prophet himself was more travelled than most of his contemporaries. It is always so. Behind the rise of a world-swaying idea there is always the sentiment of the advancement of truth, the impulse to assimilate all that is newest and best in foreign influences; there is always, too, the power of outlook in more than common degree. Mohammed had reached his burning tenderness for his own people, and his consciousness of a national perplexity, by direct contact with Syrian market-places and Byzantine townsfolk. Long talks beside the caravan fires at night with men of many different nations, had given him his education, setting dim thoughts and mighty longings vaguely astir within him. It is difficult for the modern world to realise the largeness of primitive thought and personality. We

feel that we have triumphed mightily in the invention of the steam-engine and the railway train; and so, along one line, we have. We forget, however, that henceforth the leader of our travel is to be a mere mechanic, managing a few cog-wheels, and superintending water and coal. Once upon a time, in the same capacity, he was something of patriarch, savant, poet, and ship's captain all in one.

Similarly of the personal courage required in war, and the breadth of nature-painting in early literature. The progress of time and thought means the deterioration of these qualities. No modern poet can speak of the sunset like a Red Indian. No user of Maxim guns has the personal prowess of an old-time pirate. Strong individuality is demanded by undeveloped, unregimented conditions, and later civilisation is only a specialisation upon this, growing by degrees more subtle and detailed, in which the man has often lost in proportion as the institution has gained.

Depth of observation, vastness and nobility of hope, and wealth of assimilated experience—all, in short, that constitutes essential education—are often but inversely proportioned to literacy. Therefore there is no room for the library-and-museum learned of the twentieth century to refer to a camel-driver of the seventh as ignorant. The Prophet Mohammed can have been nothing of the sort. With rare beauty and sweetness of nature, he combined social and political genius, towering manhood, and an intellectual culture of no mean kind. As has so often been the case with the initiators of new faiths, he was in a special sense the blossom of the old, for not only were his family the guardians of the Kaabah, but his father had been intended in his childhood to be a sacrifice to the gods, and Mohammed was an only son, early orphaned. Indeed, had he belonged to any city but Mecca, the pilgrim-centre of the Arabian

peninsula, he could not possibly have seen the Islamising of the whole Arab people within his single lifetime.

We think of the Prophet too much as the preacher of a religion, too little as the maker of a nationality. We hear the Name of God so frequently that we forget the love of humanity that is taught. We fail, in short, to understand the Asiatic character both of messenger and message.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

But the word that follows argues little enough, at least in early days, about the Unity of God. After all, this is a fact that we recognise instinctively. No man, least of all the dweller in the desert, in his heart believes that God is two. The Prophet's first task is to give life and vigour to this supreme intuition by making it only the starting-point of a searching appeal to conscience, an authoritative condemnation of insincerity and evil custom, and terrible pictures of judgment and hell-fire. In all this he must only have uttered what was already in the air. Social life in Arabia must have been ripe for change. The sacredness of property, the protection of childhood, and the fixing of woman's status, had already doubtless been felt as necessities by good men of all tribes and cities. But the gigantic power of conviction that could use these very reforms as a means of welding the scattered and divided kinships into a single brotherhood, fired with a common purpose of righteousness and armed with the mighty weapon of a divine mission—this was the sole right of one whose boyhood had been spent among the sheepfolds, and whose manhood had known the solitary watch, with the awful trance of revelation, in the mountain caves.

From one point of view, Islam represents a tran-

sition between Asia and Europe. An Asiatic people takes on the consolidation, the mobility, and the militarism of a European State. It anticipates the West in so doing by many a century. It accomplishes the Napoleonic task of destroying the Persian and Byzantine empires, and setting itself up in their place; and yet, inasmuch as it does all this in the strength of an idea, inasmuch as its sanction lies in one man's superconscious inspiration, it remains at heart profoundly Asiatic.

The relation between the master and his disciples is always one of the most vital elements in the life of Asia. In this case, whole nations are the disciples of a single man. They are taken into his kindred. They form his family. They strive to approximate to his method of life—in dress, food, manners, even to some extent in language. Whenever they pray, they place themselves mentally in Arabia. Such facts make religion in the East a matter of enormous social consequence. The convert in India immediately changes his style of cookery. One can eat a dinner in that country, Hindu, Mohammedan, Parsi, Jain, Jewish, Christian or Buddhist in kind; but assuredly without changing his food no man could be held to have sincerely changed his faith. It is inevitable, therefore, that communities which accept the creed of Islam should become Arabised in every possible way.

This does not mean, however, that they should remake the desert. Mohammed's whole polity made towards settled and industrial conditions. His last great speech, in which he gathers all his people together, knowing not if he shall ever again address them, reminds them of the sacredness of private property, and the rights of women, slaves and children. Nor was there any barbarism about the Mohammedan empires of the next six or seven centuries. Western Asia did not fail to build itself

upon the arts of the Roman Empire, did not fail to assimilate Hellenic culture, and to display an original impetus in science, from the blending of Greek and Oriental elements. The history of the great Spanish schools is too well known to need comment. The splendours of the Abbasside Caliphs at Baghdad were well borne out by the Ommiades at Cordova, and an architecture that deserves to be the wonder of the world was the fruit of Saracenic civilisation. The blasting of Persia, Syria, and Asia Minor, would seem to have been the work of the Mogul invasions of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These invasions sound through the pages of history like irruptions of subterranean forces. They were similar to, but incomparably vaster than, those which brought about the sack of Rome by Alaric and Genseric, and which left the city and Campagna, under the guardianship of monks, to the insidious decay of many centuries. The geographical position of the Eternal City and her surroundings was, however, some protection, whereas the Eastern provinces were exposed to the tramp and re-tramp of every hostile force. Gibbon says of Genghis Khan that he destroyed in four days what five hundred years had not sufficed to restore. The common statement that the blighting of Asia Minor has been the work of Mohammedanism may therefore be put down to historical ignorance and theological prejudice.

The utmost stigma that can attach to Saracenic governments has been that they have not had the energy and patience to bend themselves in such cases to the incredible task of beginning all over again the work of civilisation and polity. But are they peculiar in this? Would France, England, or Italy—were the past blotted out, and all sovereign and responsible persons removed, as at a single

blow—show more courage, more persistence, than the Arab or the Turk? The very grandeur of the cities that had vanished would add to the hopeless inactivity of the generations that found themselves orphaned and despoiled. An additional factor in the case is—not the genius of Islam, whose purely destructive and desolating tendencies may at least be questioned by those who have seen its work in India, but—the nature of all conquests. The whole opportunity of a conqueror lies in the loyal submission of himself to the past of the conquered. Failing this, the structure that he rears must be, if not destructive, at least evanescent. No power remains at its height for ever; and in this decline, the ability to guard with decency and stability what it has created, preserving the hope and possibility of resurrection, will depend exactly on the amount of force that was put into that creation.

It is a curious fact that from the Parthenon to the Taj Mahal, the appearance of a memorable national art has always been coeval with the existence of a powerful centralising consciousness. Pericles adorned Athens with the tribute of the Greek States. Ancient Rome was decorated with the trophies of the world. Mediæval cathedrals and town-halls grew out of the vigorous craft and municipal solidarity. Florence and the Vatican were the blossoms of the Church. The commercial nexus of Venice was an empire wide as the planet. The diggers of Buddhist cave-temples in India, and the builders of Indo-Saracenic palaces and tombs, alike worked under the shadow of imperial thrones, which articulated for them the enthusiasm of the wholeness of things.

But what of a flower without leaf, stem and root? Times of blossom are few and far between, at least equally sacred and important is the task of maintaining and increasing the common life. Even so with

the growth of nations. The humble, mole-like work of developing civilisation through the daily life and the simple home, is still more important than the ephemeral glory of an age of exploitation, and the persistence of a nationality is assuredly proportionate to the degree in which it represents the utmost of such unseen, steady, and joyous co-operation amongst its members.

It may be charged indeed against the flying squadrons of the desert that of such slow-accumulating toil they brought too little to the making of Baghdad, and the ruling of Damascus. It may be urged that in the stimulating union of Chinese, Hindu, Persian and Hellenic elements, over which the Arab there reigned supreme, there was too little intensity of culture and research; that the regal race was content to furnish its universities with translations only of the foreign texts on which so much of their learning was based; that there was too marked a tendency to despise the associations of its subjects; too great a readiness to build its own mosques out of the ruins of their palaces; and finally, that to a struggle so easy, an end was inevitable, a decay as long and inglorious as its triumph had been brilliant and short-lived. Such arguments may be true, but their truth constitutes a reproach against all conquests, not a stain on the Arab faith.

II

No one can stand and face the ruins behind the Kutb-Minar* at Delhi, no one can realise, even dimly, the beauty of Persian poetry, without understanding that Arab, Slav, Afghan, and Mogul came to India as the emissaries of a culture different

* Kutb-Minar, a famous tower or minaret, about eleven miles from Delhi.

indeed from, but not less imposing than, that of the people of the soil. The arches in the broken screen of Altamish, as it is called, which are all that remains of a mosque of the twelfth century, are as perfect in taste and devotional feeling as anything in the Gothic. The complete building must have lacked somewhat in weight and solidity, but it was not the work of ruffians and barbarians, nor were the men who thronged to it for prayer, mere lovers of wanton destruction.

A Hindu historian would have the first right to chant the pæan of the Mussulman faith, for it was upon Akbar, a sovereign of that creed, that the inspiration dawned to make a nation and a nationality out of the peoples of modern India.

The sixteenth century in Europe has been known as the era of great kings. Leo X. of the Papacy, Charles V. of the Empire, Henry IV. of France, and Elizabeth of England, are amongst the strongest personalities to whom thrones were ever given. And if we take the English Tudors alone, we shall find four notable figures, with strong policies of their own, out of the five members of that dynasty. About the last two, there is, however, one peculiarity. Even those who sympathise most strongly with the Catholic Queen would probably recognise that it was well for the country that Elizabeth reigned after her, and not before. Few would dispute the greater statesmanship, and more synthetic character of the policy, of the latter of these two sovereigns. Indeed the fact is well enough proved by the loyalty and enthusiasm with which her Catholic subjects united with the Protestant to repel the Spanish Armada.

The history of India, from the middle of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries, displays a curious parallelism and contrast to this of England during the sixteenth. The reign of

Akbar was contemporary with that of Elizabeth, and, with a still greater statesmanship and breadth of mind and heart, he undertook to inaugurate a vast national, as distinguished from a sectarian policy. Few indeed of the world's monarchs have ever used so marvellous an opportunity with such wisdom and magnanimity as this Emperor of Delhi. An almost equal sympathy with the speculations of all religions, a deep understanding and admiration of the old Indian system, with a desire only to complete and extend, never to nullify it; a love of everything that was national, with a habit of striking swiftly and pardoning generously—all these qualities gave Akbar a place in the hearts of his subjects which makes "Secundra, the Great," a sufficient name for him to this day. He had been born in a Rajput household, and his greatest act, after the modelling of his administration on the ancient "dharmma," was the marrying of a Hindu princess, and making her the mother of the heir-apparent. Aurungzeeb was the first of his successors who was not Indian in this complete sense, of having had a Mussulman father and a Hindu mother.

Akbar's three immediate descendants—Jehangir, his son, Shah Jehan, his grandson, and Aurungzeeb, his great-grandson—were all men of marked ability. They retained intact the empire which his genius had consolidated. But unfortunately, of them all, Aurungzeeb's was the sectarian and somewhat narrowly devotional temperament of the English Catholic queen, better fitted to make him a saint of Islam than welder of the Indian nationality; and Shah Jehan alone had a genius of administration comparable to his grandfather's of initiation. In other words, India had the misfortune in her own case to see Elizabeth succeeded, not preceded by Mary.

Such were the four great Moguls, whose united

reigns began two years before the accession of Elizabeth, and ended at the date of the Parliamentary union of England and Scotland, scarcely yet two hundred years ago. Their Tartar blood, for they came of the race of Tamerlane, gave them unflagging energy and perseverance. Their Mohammedan faith gave them strength and simplicity of creed, unexhausted by the three hundred years' adhesion of their tribes. Their soldierly origin gave them the power to adopt the ruder side of military life at a moment's notice, while, at the same time, all their habits and associations imposed on them the power and means of unequalled splendour. Such were they all; but of them all, Akbar stands unrivalled in liberal statesmanship, and Shah Jehan in personal genius.

In the hands of this last monarch the unity of India became a visible fact, symbolised by the dazzling beauty of his building, and even Leo X. must give way to him for taste. Now it was the Taj, raising its stately head above its jewelled walls and lace-carved windows of white marble, in inconsolable love and sorrow. Again, it was the Pearl Mosque of Agra, vast in proportion and almost unadorned, in severity of creamy stone, of sun-steeped court, and shadowed aisles and sanctuary. Yet once more some dainty palace or exquisite oratory, the baths of an empress or the hall of audience of a king, testified to the fact that a lord of artists sat upon the throne. But it was not only in white marble that Shah Jehan gave the reins to his pride in the Indian soil and the Indian people. He built the modern Delhi, with her red walls, her broad streets, and her magnificent fortress. He made the peacock throne, of gold and jewels, which was removed to Persia by Nadir Shah a hundred years later. He and his court and household were collectors of choice books and pictures. And, like all the

Moguls, he was himself a past master in the art of illuminating manuscripts.

Not the least part of the beauty of his buildings lies in the acoustic properties of their domes, which act as bells, taking up every whisper and groan that may sound below them, and making it into music in the height above. There is no voice so harsh or vulgar that it is not in their presence made rich and harmonious; and if any poor old Mussulman be asked why every mosque is domed, he will answer in bewilderment that he can only suppose that it is to make the name of Allah resound again and again.

In all this Shah Jehan proved himself the monarch, not of some section, but of all his subjects, and as such he is regarded by India to this day. He might not be in active sympathy with every phase of the popular creeds, but there is none who is cut off from sympathy with him. The enthusiasm that spoke in his works is deeply understood. His addition of a third style to the architectural glories of the country is never forgotten. And it is still remembered by the people that, according to the unanimous voice of history, India was never so well administered as in his day.

The Mohammedan brought roses into India. "They are of the caste of the emperors," said a Hindu, sitting near, as two beggars came into my verandah in a southern province and offered me these flowers, "they are of the caste of the emperors. Even their begging is that of kings!"

The remark is significant of a liberalising influence upon social usage wherever the Mogul Empire has penetrated; for orthodox Hinduism is perhaps a little too barren of all luxury, a little too much hemmed-in by strict requirements and consideration of the highest motives. "The West," it has been said, "has mastered the knowledge of the

ways and means of life, and this the East may well accept from her." Mohammedanism is much more than a half-way house towards the point at which such knowledge becomes possible. It is even said sometimes by Hindus that no gentleman can fulfil the requirements of modern life unless he have a Mohammedan servant.

The very courtesy of Mohammedan bearing speaks of palaces and of military life. Were India an independent country, her most important embassies would doubtless be filled by Moslems. The act of salutation is almost as a devotion amongst the sons and daughters of Islam. The pause of reverence, the evident depth of feeling with which the hand of the elder is lifted by the younger to the forehead and then kissed, the beautiful words, "Salaam alaikum!" ("Peace be unto you!"), which accompany a bow—all these things are the tokens of a culture of humanity which produces a depth of sympathy and tenderness not unworthy of that Prophet whose burning love of God found no adequate expression save in the love and service of man. It is a humanity in which still breathes the fragrance of that great pastoral peace of desert and steppe which is the living force and unity of the whole Moslem world, however the accidents of time or place may seem to betray it. The patriarch seated at his tent door welcoming strangers, loving and just in his dealings with wives and kindred, trusted and revered by all his tribe, and giving his very heart, as is the fashion of the men of Islam, to little children, is an integral imagination of the race. There is nothing in the world so passionately tender as a Hindu mother, unless it be a Mohammedan father.

It is this human aspect of the Arab faith that prepares us for its proselytising power in India. It represents to the low-caste Hindu what the Budd-

hist orders once represented—a perfect democracy, in which stains of birth, of blood, of occupation, are all blotted out by the utterance of the formula of fraternity, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet." However low and degraded was a man's past, he may now be and do whatever he desires and can. The word "Sheikh" prefixed to his name indicates that he comes of a family so adopted by conversion; and the vast majority of Mohammedan cultivators, boatmen, and builders in India, are thus Hindu by blood and instinct, and Moslem by creed. The gods of the old faith become the saints or "pirs" of the new. They pray at their tombs *to* the dead, as well as *for* them, and are regarded indulgently by the orthodox and learned of their new faith as illiterate, and therefore superstitious. That brotherhood which is talked of by Christianity is realised by Islam. The message of the Prophet is a message of humanity and freedom to the whole race of man.

Most religions have two phases: one the Puritan, and the other the ornate. The Puritan side of Islam finds expression in the Sunni sect, and the ornate aspect in the Shiah. It is the Shiahs who commemorate the Caliph Ali and the deaths of Hassan and Hussain. They carry the tombs of the martyrs in procession at the Mohurrum, and whenever they are bereaved they mourn for the family of Ali instead of for their own. Geographically, the Shiahs are Persian, and in India are most numerous in Bengal and round Lucknow. The sterner and narrower teachings of Sunni-ism formed the royal faith of Delhi and Hyderabad. Besides these, there is a third sect of Mohammedans in India, known as the Wahabi. This is described somewhat satirically as the religion of those who had one parent a Shiah, and the other a Sunni. It is in fact a modern reform. As amongst Hindus, however, his particular

shade of religion is a matter of the individual's own choice, and the women are even more pronounced than the men, regarding personal doctrinal conviction.

The influence of the Indian environment is felt, further, in many of the social developments of the Islamic community. It is not unnatural that there should be a great aptitude for the formation of castes, and a stern refusal to break bread with those who are not of the chosen group. In other directions also there is an approximation of custom. Many Mussulman families in Bengal would turn with horror from the eating of beef. The wife insists that her own hands and no others shall cook the food eaten by the husband. The re-marriage of widows is discountenanced by the highest standards of taste, and in the royal family of Delhi the life of a widowed princess was spent exactly like that of a Hindu woman who had lost her husband—in austerity, prayer, and study. Finally, that hymn to the Ganges which is among the first things learnt by a Hindu child, was written three or four centuries ago by a Mussulman.

On its divine side, ignoring those dim reaches of Sufi-ism which only the saints attain, and where all saints, of all faiths, are at one, ignoring, too, all sectarian differences as between Sunnis and Shiahs, Islam stands in India as another name for *bhakti*, or the melting love of God. In the songs of the people the Hindu name of *Hari*, and the Mohammedan *Allah* are inextricably blended, and as one listens to the boatmen singing while they mend their nets, one cannot distinguish the hymn from the poem of love.

It was Mohammed's realisation of God's love for man, however little he may have put it into words, that thrilled through the Arab world, and drew the tribes as one man, to fight beneath his banner. His

was no triumph of the fear and majesty of God. Five times every day, after his ablutions, does the pious Mohammedan turn towards Mecca and say:

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds,
The compassionate, the merciful.
King of the day of judgment!
Thee we worship, and Thee we ask for help.
Guide us in the straight way,
The way of those to whom Thou art gracious;
Not of those upon whom is Thy wrath, nor of the erring.

And again:

Say: He is one God;
God the Eternal.
He begetteth not, nor is begotten;
Nor is there one like unto Him.

The prayer and creed, for all their ring of pride and awe, are not the words of beaten slaves, but of loved and loving children, confident of the depth of that mercy whereto they appeal. Something there was indeed in the fierce ethical passion of Mohammed, the basis of his piercing appeal to the conscience of his people, which might look like terrorism. If all men knew of hell and judgment, he said, what he did, there would be little laughter and much weeping amongst them. But all this is on behalf of conscience and the voice of righteousness. A nature itself so radiant in compassion for women, for the poor, for slaves, and for dumb beasts, could not long remain in contemplation of the terrors of the Divine. Throughout the creation he sees one law writ large, "Verily my compassion overcometh my wrath," and Mohammed, who believes in austerity, but not in self-mortification, feels all the passion of the Flagellant, as he utters the word *Islam*, or uttermost surrender of self to the Truth that is in God.

CHAPTER XV

AN INDIAN PILGRIMAGE

THE old roads of Asia are the footways of the world's ideas. There is a camel-track that crosses the desert from Egypt into "Sooria," broken at the Suez Canal by a ferry. What road in Europe, Roman or barbarian, can compare in charm and pathos with this sandy path? On it we might yet see a woman carrying a child on the back of an ass, and an old man leading them, even as the legends picture the Flight of the Holy Family. By it long ago marched the armies of Egypt to meet those of Assyria in destructive conflict on the borders of Israel. By it Judea sent the streams of her burning thought and fierce ethical emotion to Alexandria, before Christianity was born.

Similarly, all over India, away from her ancient high roads, and thrown like a network across her proudest Himalayas, are little thread-like paths like this—ways made indeed by the feet of men, but worn far deeper by the weight of impelling ideas than by the footprints of the toil-stained crowds.

Such roads must once have connected China with Kashmir. Afghanistan, always a province of India, must by just such paths have sent its wandering merchants with nuts and raisins to the South, as long ago as the days of Solomon. Even now it is by ways unpaved, deep-trodden, that the long-haired

goats scramble down with their loads through the snowy defiles from Bokhara and Thibet, to be sheared in the sunny valley of the Jhelum, and furnish wool for its famous shawls. Which comes first, we wonder, commerce or pilgrimage, the trade route or the palmer's path? Would it not appear that the utilities of exchange draw men from their homes to points organically related, and does it not seem reasonable to believe that associations of beauty, arising spontaneously at place after place on the line of march, give birth to the notion of religious privilege and obligation in making a return to particular spots?

At any rate, it is certain that behind sanctity of pilgrimage lies admiration of place, of art, even of geographical significance. Benares in the North, and Conjeeveram* in the South, are loved and visited in India for the same reason as Durham or Cologne amongst ourselves. They are cathedral cities, rich in architecture, in treasure, and in the associations of saints and scholars. Jagannath† is placed where it is, for sheer beauty of the sea, and perhaps a little also for the old cosmopolitan grandeur of the port through which flowed the Eastern trade. Allahabad is sacred, because there two mighty rivers join their waters, making her the strategic key to two vast basins, inhabited by different races, with diverse traditions, hopes, and folk-lore. It is the solemn beauty of the Himalayas that makes them the refuge

* Conjeeveram.—A town in the Madras Presidency, which contains some of the most beautiful specimens of Dravidian architecture. Often called the Benares of the South. Ramanuja lived here, and Sankaracharya visited it.

† Jagannath.—Or Juggurnath—Lord of the Universe. The famous place of pilgrimage, and the "Car of Juggurnath," on the coast of Orissa, at Puri. This temple is distinguished for the fact that all castes eat together of its consecrated food. The oneness of all men is the religious idea which is associated with it.

of holy men. The four most meritorious pilgrimages* of the Hindus are the four extreme points of India —North, South, East, and West—knowing which the country must be known. The worship of the Ganges, and the reverence that makes a Dekkan villager journey, as an act of piety, to look on the face of one who has seen any of the seven sacred rivers, amongst peoples less poetic, would be simply called the love of place. How large an element in Hinduism is the folk-lore of the country! To the student who is looking for this, it appears to be past all computing. The Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas are to a great extent the outpouring of passionate fancy in local interpretation. In the story of Sati, the perfect wife, who can miss the significance of the fifty-two places in which fragments of the smitten body fell? "And one finger fell in Calcutta, and that is still the Kalighat. . . . And the tongue fell at Kangra (Jowalla Mukhi) in the North Punjaub, and appears to this day as licking tongues of fire, from underneath the ground. . . . And the left hand fell at Benares, which is for ever Onnopurna, the Giver of Bread." No foreigner can understand the crowding of associations into these few sentences.

Even the Pole Star has its Indian myth in the legend of the child Dhruwa, whose heart was the steadiest point in all the universe.

Nor is the historic element lacking, in this unconscious worship of country. Like that of some Indian Bernadette is the story told at a beautiful Southern temple of a cowherd who had one cow that gave no milk. He followed her into the jungle, and found a natural lingam in the rock, over which she poured her offering freely, of her own devotion.

* "The four pilgrimages," which constitute the Hindu counsel of perfection, are Kedar Nath in the Himalayas, in the extreme North; Dwarka Nath in the West; Rameshwaram in the South; and Puri, or Jagannath in the East.

And, in proof of the occurrence, does the temple altar not consist to-day of that same lingam set in rough living rock? Of such stories the villages are full. Assuredly, a deep and conscious love of place pervades the whole of the Indian scheme. It has never been called patriotism, only because it has never been defined by boundaries of contrast; but the home, the village, the soil, and, in a larger sense, the rivers, the mountains, and the country as a whole, are the objects of an almost passionate adoration. And nowhere are we more impressed by the completeness of Eastern idealism, than in this, its relating of itself to Nature. Norway, with her broken crags and azure seas and sombre pines, her glacier-crowned mountains, and her island-dotted fjords, is surely beautiful. But Norway's memories are always of the heroes, and we miss those voices of the saints that greet us at every turn in every part of India. Brittany, windy and grey, storm-tost and boulder-strewn, is beautiful. Here too the miles are marked with rude *Calvaires*, and the tales of the saints lie like her own moorland mists across the whole Breton land. But this Catholic sainthood never reaches the stern intellectual discipline of Hinduism, and we long in vain for that mingling of mystic passion and philosophic freedom, where holiness merges into scholarship, that at once distinguishes the Orient, and weds its races and all their dreams to their own soil. It might almost have been S. Francis, but it is actually a Bengali poem of the people, that says:

> Oh, Mother Earth, Father Sky,
> Brother Wind, Friend Light,
> Sweetheart Water,
> Here take my last salutation with folded hands!
> For to-day I am melting away into the Supreme,
> Because my heart became pure,
> And all delusion vanished,
> Through the power of your good company:

beauty of place translates itself to the Indian consciousness as God's cry to the soul. Had Niagara been situated on the Ganges, it is odd to think how different would have been its valuation by humanity. Instead of fashionable picnics and railway pleasure-trips, the yearly or monthly incursion of worshipping crowds. Instead of hotels, temples. Instead of ostentatious excess, austerity. Instead of the desire to harness its mighty forces to the chariot of human utility, the unrestrainable longing to throw away the body, and realise at once the ecstatic madness of Supreme Union. Could contrast be greater?

It is commonly said that Hindus derive the idea of pilgrimage from the Buddhist worship of relics. But the psychological aspects of the custom make this appear unlikely. Doubtless the great commercial nexus of the Buddhist period made transport easy, and thus strengthened and stimulated the tendency, just as railways have in modern times opened up the country, and created the possibility of a geographical sense amongst classes who in older days could not have aspired to travel far or often. But in its essence, the institution is so entirely an expression of love for the Motherland, that it must have been anterior to Buddhism by at least as much as the Aryan occupation of India. If one visits the Kennery caves, hidden amongst the jungles to the north of Bombay, this fact is brought home to one. Here are a hundred and eight cells, cut out of the solid rock. They are grouped in pairs; each pair has its own water-supply; and, wherever the view is finest, wherever a glimpse can be caught of the meeting-line of sea and forest, there a staircase and seat will be found specially carved in the stone, for purposes of contemplation. For Nature is the eternal fact, and the landscape from this point a thousand years ago was as beautiful as it is to-day.

Ellora shows at a glance that through century after century it has been a holy place. The Buddhist found it already so, and in due time the Mussulman confirmed the ancient choice, by bringing his illustrious dead to lie in the mighty fane on its hilltop. But why was it first selected? None who has wakened to the dewy freshness of its morning, none who has gazed thence across the sea-like plain, can ask. To all eternity, while the earth remains what she is, Ellora will be one of the spots where the mystery of God is borne in, in overwhelming measure, upon the souls of men, whatever their associations, whatever their creed.

But we are dominated more by the idea that is behind us than by the spontaneous impressions of our senses. To the nomad of the desert, accustomed to the shifting of hot sands, and ceaseless moving of the camp, with what coolness and refreshment must rise the thought of death! Mussulman piety has three motives—the glory of man, the charm of woman, and the holiness of the grave. In very early times we see the august pastor Abraham seeking out a cave in which to place the body of his wife. Death, the fixed, the still, the cold, must be shrined within the steady and imperishable. "The long home," a great rock in a weary land, endless rest, eternal cold and silence, all these are to be found in the grave. Is it not easy to understand that while the peasant, from the banks of the Ganges to the banks of the Tiber, turns naturally to burning of the dead, the wilderness-dwellers bury him deep in mother earth, or build him about with unyielding granite, and thenceforth make this dwelling-house of the beloved as the centre of their own wanderings?

Hence, what the sacred place of pilgrimage is to the Hindu, that the Taj Mahal or the tomb of Aurungzeeb, or the ever-memorable grave at Medina, is to the pious Mussulman. Almost every Moham-

medan village in India, too, has its sleeping-place of some "pir" or saint; and I have seen a poverty-stricken God's acre, where the sole treasure of the people was a gnarled and scarcely-living stump, that marked the last home of a long-remembered holy man. For it is the ideal of the desert—rest from their wanderings and shadow from its scorching sun—it is this ideal, and not the natural dictation of their own birth-place, that has become the guiding-power behind the life and choice of these Moslemised Indian folk. And yet all their old poetry of soil comes out in the spot they choose! The tomb in the village-grove; the Taj at the river-bend; the iris-covered graves on the riversides and hillocks of Kashmir; what pictures do these make at dawn and sunset, or through the long Indian night, with its mysterious voices sighing and whispering about the dead! Surely, by thus adding the pastoral tradition to her own, India grows rich, not poor, in the things that form the true wealth of men.

A pilgrim's camp is like some scene taken out of the Middle Ages Or, rather, it would be like it, but that is so largely depleted of militant elements. The Nagas, or armed friars, are no menace to anything in the modern system, which indeed at this moment they do not understand; and the authority that actually protects and keeps order amongst the pilgrims is to be sought rather in the unarmed district officer, or *tehsildar*, than in anything that could be recognised as forceful by the naked eye. In the South, which is the home of orthodoxy, pilgrimage has gone out of fashion since the advent of railways. Fewer people, certainly fewer widows, visit Benares, since it became easier to do so. And those who have seen a genuine crowd of shrine-farers, in some place remote from steam, cannot wonder at the shock which the pious imagination suffers at the sight of a locomotive. Amongst other

things that the religious traveller has a right to expect is the opportunity of a flight from the New India to the Old, as an actual environment. From any point where many ways meet, and various streams of pilgrims converge upon each other, the road to the sacred place will be divided into regular stages of a day's journey, and at each halting-place a camp will be pitched for the night. Even these rest-camps will be situated as far as possible at spots peculiar for their beauty or interest. Is there a cluster of springs? The place is said to be "holy," and we must halt there for worship. Originally, this referred only to beauty and convenience; but in process of time one cannot doubt that a certain atmosphere of insight and devotion has really thrown its halo about the dust and water of the locality, and in the place where so much simple faith has spent its rapture, the highest love and prayer have become easier to all comers.

But the temples are all visited, the bathing is performed, evening worship is over, and silence and sleep fall upon the pilgrims' camp. The moon grows to the full, for we must arrive at the goal on the fifteenth day. And again, it is the simple beauty of the world which determines the law, that under the young moon shall be the going forth, and with her wane the return home. The moon is near the full, and weariness sleeps sound. At what hour is the first tent struck? When does the first sleeper rouse himself, and take again to the road? Who can tell? Certainly not one who has never been able to rise so long before dawn that others were not up and afoot before her, their tents gone, and little heaps of white ashes from the cooking-fires the only sign of their twelve hours' tenancy of tree-shadow or stream-side.

On go the pilgrims, singly or in groups. Old women, bent double with age and toil, hobbling along

by the help of the pointed alpenstock. Monks of all descriptions are to be seen. Some of them are covered with ashes, have long reddish-looking hair, wear only the yellow loin-cloth, and carry curious tongs and begging-bowls. These may be Yogis, of the order that believes in the mortification of the flesh; or Nagas, the militant monks, who were once ready to defend the Faith at any moment, and who to this day are powerfully organised to meet the shock of a world that has long ago, alas, passed away like a dream. The *sannyasin*, often a man of modern education, decently clad in the sacred salmon-yellow, accepting no alms save food, refusing the touch of any metal, is here, doing the distance cheerfully on foot. Next comes an ascetic, with withered arm held aloft and useless this many a long year. Again, a proud *mahunt*, abbot of some rich foundation, master of elephants and treasure uncounted, is borne past. Or, as one climbs, having abandoned the open dandy that costs such intolerable labour to the bearers on a mountain march, one may be joined in kindly chat by some one or two of the "Naked Swamis"—men who wear neither ashes nor clothing beyond the necessary scanty rag, who wander amongst sunny deserts and snowy mountains alike indifferent to heat and cold, and of whom, when one talks with them, one remembers nothing, save that here are friends of the culture of scholars, and the breeding and rank of gentlemen.

But the crowd is still more motley. In camp, the strips of yellow cloth that so often do duty as a shelter for the religious, stand side by side with tents of all sizes and conditions. And here now are zenana-ladies carried in scarlet-covered palkees; other women, again, on horseback; men and women alike on foot, or in open dandies; householders, widows, sannyasinis in beads and yellow cloth; there are even some, too weak for walking or climb-

ing, who are borne in straw chairs, strapped to the back of a man carrying a stout staff. On and on presses the irregular host, mixed up with Mohammedan baggage-carriers and servants, cooks, and food-vendors of all sorts.

Here the road is broken by a glacier. There it becomes a mere goat-path, running across dangerous crags. Here is the lake into which an avalanche, brought down by their hymn of triumph, once precipitated thousands of returning pilgrims. Now we have reached the heights where the ground is carpeted with edelweiss instead of grass. Again, we are wandering amidst wildernesses of flowers, while every few yards the dominant note in the composition is changed imperceptibly: first the yellow wallflower, then flame-coloured Iceland poppies, again the long-stalked single-headed Michaelmas daisy of the Himalayas. When the journey began, almost the only blossoms were the orchids on the tree-trunks in the region of maidenhair fern. Now we have passed the last of the pine woods. Even the white birches, like smitten silver veining blown sharp and twisted against the mountain sides, are gone: and to-night, when the tents are pitched over purple and white anemones, there will be no fuel save the juniper scrub that clings to the face of the rock in sheltered niches. On the edge of the last glacier, growing beside the gentian, we find an evergreen forget-me-not, unknown to us hitherto, and making the third or fourth new species —from a large crimson and purple myosotis onwards —which our pilgrimage has bestowed.

Our neighbours in the tents about us are not amusing themselves by botanising, probably, but they are communing with Nature none the less truly than ourselves. On the last day, drawing near to the shrine, we shall see them risk their lives to gather the great nodding columbines and the

little Alpine roses growing on the rocks. Their talk is all of Siva. As they are borne along, they are striving, doubtless, to fix their minds on the repetition of His name, or the contemplation of His form. But the awesome grandeur and beauty of the heights about them will always be remembered by them as the Great God's fit dwelling-place. They are in a church. Rocks and glaciers form the sanctuary. Snowy passes are the pillared aisles. Behind them stand the pine-forests for processions of singers, carrying banners, and overhead are the heavens themselves for cathedral roof. It is the peculiarity of Eastern peoples to throw upon the whole of Nature that feeling which we associate only with the place of worship. But is their love less real, or greater, for this fact?

The day of the full moon comes, the last and most dangerous points are surmounted, and the Shrine is reached. Happy the man or woman, who, on this journey to God, is snatched out of life! One false step, and the soul that was struggling to see may be carried up at once in a swift sure flight. Or death may come in other ways. "It is so beautiful! I must be one with it!" sighed a man who stood on a precipice, looking down at the valleys. And before any one could stop him, he was gone. Such things are not premeditated. There is a genuine ecstasy of the soul in which it hears the voice of the Eternities calling to it, and the prisoning body becomes suddenly intolerable. Is it a stain upon Hinduism that it has never called this "suicide while of unsound mind"?

But the Shrine itself—where is it? what is it? Perhaps a temple, placed above some gorge, on a beetling rock, with sister snows in sight. Perhaps the source of a sacred river. Perhaps a cave, in which continual dripping of water makes a stalagmite of ice, a huge crystalline lingam that never melts.

One can picture how such a place would first be discovered. Some party of shepherds, losing themselves and their flocks amongst the ravines on a summer day, and entering the cavern by accident, to find there the presence of the Lord Himself. Men and beasts, awed and worshipping, how dear is such a picture to the Christian heart!

Worship! Worship! The very air is rent with prayer and hymns. From the Unreal to the Real! From the Many to the One! Lord of Animals! Refuge of Weariness! Siva! Siva! the Free! the Free!

Hours pass, and ere dawn next day the descent to the valleys is begun. Wonderful is the snowy stillness of the lofty pass, when, with our faces set homewards, the moon fades behind us, and the sun rises before. The pilgrims march with less regularity now. All are anxious to return, and some push on, while others break off from the line of route. We reach our own village, and say farewell to the acquaintances of the pilgrimage, adding what comfort we may to the provision for their further journeying. The nights grow dark now, and the great experience becomes a memory, marked always, however, in the Hindu's life, by some special abstinence, practised henceforth as the pilgrim's thank-offering.

It is easy to believe that the scenes in which we have mingled are nowadays denuded of half their rightful elements; that once upon a time as many of the travellers would have been Tartar or Chinese as Indian; that the shrine represents what may have been the summer meeting of great trading caravans; that Nagarjuna and Bodhidharmma, going out to the Further East with their treasures of Indian thought, were in the first place pilgrims on some such pilgrimage as this. Even now, many of the functions of a university are served by the great

gathering. Hundreds, or even thousands, of religious men meet, in a manner to eliminate personal ties of friendship and affection, and emphasise and refresh the ideal and intellectual aspects of their lives.

At the vast assemblies of *saḍhus*, which occur once in every twelve years at Hurdwar, at Nasick, at Ujjain, and at Allahabad, there are fixed halls of learned disputation, where, for hundreds of years, Hindu philosophy has been discussed, determined, and expanded, something in the fashion of the Welsh Eisteddfod. Here come the wandering monks from every part of India. Here the householder finds himself in vigorous and renewed relation to his faith. Here fresh voices of learning and devotion are able to win for themselves ecclesiastical authority. Such opportunities must have been the means by which Sankaracharya asserted his undisputed mastery of the world of Hindu scholarship. Did it, we wonder, occur to Alexander that learned Greeks might be sent to such wandering colleges in order to hear and to tell new things?

Sanskrit is the *lingua franca* of this ancient learning. To this day the visitor to a Calcutta *toll** may hear the boys dispute with each other on time-worn themes in the classic tongue, and may picture himself back in the colleges of Thebes or Athens in the long ago. But here in the great *melas* are the crowning achievements towards which are directed the hardier ambitions of those Brahman boys. And we need not wonder at their enthusiasm for such distinction. The great open competition, with its

Toll.—A toll is a Sanskrit school, in which a Brahman lived with his disciples, studying and teaching. The ideal *toll* consisted of a series of mud cottages with wide verandahs, built round a small lake or "tank," with its cluster of bamboos, palms, and fruit-trees. Poverty and learning were the inspiration of the community. These tolls formed the old Indian universities.

thousands of years of the prestige of learning, is like all the learned societies of a European metropolis thrown into one. The canvas city of a few weeks at Nasick or Allahabad serves all the purposes of Burlington House to London. But the system of culture to which Nasick belongs is no longer growing, it will be said. This is, indeed, its defect. The statement is not entirely true, for even now the test of a supremely national personality would still be, for the Hindu world, his power to add to their philosophy. But it is true to the extent that there is nothing left for collective thought to discover. The common mind of India has now to sweep great circles of intellectual exploration in worlds that as yet are virgin as the Polar ice, or India will die. Of this there can be no doubt.

Far away from the noisy throng of learned saints, or taking a humble place in white cotton garb as visitors amongst them, are the men whose lives are passed in the libraries of kings. For the system of patronage is part and parcel of Indian scholarship, and as the Japanese *daimio* or the Italian prince maintained his artists and artificers, so, under the old *régime*, did every Indian palace possess its staff of palace-pundits—men whose lives were made free of anxiety in order that they might heap up knowledge and pore over ancient texts.

The supreme privilege of the great is to foster piety and learning. But, on the other hand, Manu does not fail to point out that there is no crime for the Brahman like the acceptance of gifts from one who is not the lawful king. And it is not royal persons alone who are charged with the duty of supporting scholars. Never a wedding or a requiem can take place amongst the higher ranks of society without the distribution of money to tolls and pundits. For it is one of the postulates of ethical, and therefore of Eastern, economics,

that all great accumulation is for subsequent great distribution.

It is a strange world that has been revealed to us in this camp of pilgrimage, and it is not easy to reach its full significance. Scarcely in any two tents do they understand each other's language, and we shall do better to ask for bread in Sanskrit than in English. Malabaris and Bengalis, Sikhs and Madrasis, Mahrattas and even Mussulmans, dwell side by side for the nonce. Could incongruity and disunion be more strongly illustrated?

Yet it was unity and not disunity that impressed us as we looked. From one end of the camp to the other the same simple way of life, the same sacramental reverence for food and bathing, the same gentleness and courtesy, the same types of face and character, and, above all, one great common scheme of thought and purpose.

The talk may be in different languages; but no matter at what tent door we might become eavesdroppers, we should find its tone and subject much the same—always the lives of the saints, always the glory of the soul, always fidelity to *guru* and *dharmma*. By two formulæ, and two alone, renunciation and freedom from personality, is all life here interpreted.

Other countries have produced art, chivalry, heroic poems, inventive systems. In none of these has India been altogether wanting, yet none is her distinguishing characteristic. What, then, has she given to the world that is beyond all competition? To-day her gifts are decried by all men, for to-day the mighty mother is become widowed and abased. She who has held open port to all fugitives is unable now to give bread to her own children. She with whom Parsi, Jew, and Christian have been thankful to take refuge, is despised and ostracised by all three alike. She who has prized knowledge above all her

treasures, finds her learning now without value in the markets of the world. It is urged that the test of utility is the true standard for things transcendental, and that an emancipation into modern commerce and mechanics is a worthier goal for her sons' striving than the old-time aim of knowledge for its own sake, the ideal for itself.

And the modern world may be right.

But, even so, has India in the past given nothing, without which our whole present would be the poorer?

Who that has caught even a whisper of what her name means can say so? Custom kept always as an open door, through which the saints may dance into our company, thought sustained at a level where religion and science are one, a maze of sublime apostrophes and world-piercing prayers; above all, the power to dream rare dreams of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among men that they may behold His glory—are these things nothing? If, after all the higher transformation of man be the ultimate end of human effort, which has more deeply vindicated its right to exist, the modern nexus of commerce and finance, or that old world on which we have gazed in the pilgrims' camp?

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE LOOM OF TIME

THE essential differences between countries of the Asiatic and European types are as yet but little understood, and a main difficulty in the growth of an understanding is the absence of elements in the English language, embodying any wide power of social survey. The disciples of Auguste Comte have done much to popularise certain important words and conceptions, but the hearts of angels and the tongues of poets would be too little to meet all the necessities of the task.

The word *theocracy*, for instance, which is essential to an understanding of Asia, either territorial or historic, has but an ambiguous sound in English. To the learned Positivist it means "the social system built up on theism"; to the vulgar, it indicates some fabulous scheme of divine monarchy, such as is popularly attributed to Israel before the days of Saul, or to England in the dreams of Oliver Cromwell.

To persons thinking in the latter fashion, the two statements that India is a theocracy, and that it is at present occupied by the British raj, seem incompatible. It is clear that only detailed and penetrative knowledge of concrete examples can build up in our minds such a conception of the essentials of a theocratic system as shall give us the power of handling the term as confidently and

intelligently as we now feel capable of using more purely political expressions. And of such examples it will be found best to take the nearest first.

In the history of the world, the city of Rome occupies a unique position, as the Occidental cradle and battle-field of two opposing forces, the Imperial and the Theocratic, or, as one may prefer to call them, the European and the Asiatic ideas. For it was Rome that first imposed upon the West that notion of organised force which is almost all that is at present meant by the state-empire. And through all the feuds and disorders of the Middle Ages, it was the Roman impulse that was working itself out by the energy of barbarian peoples, to its perfect triumph in the nineteenth century. Cæsar conceived, Napoleon completed, the imperial scheme. Alexander as an individual may have seen what they saw: but Greece was far too near to Asia, and his military designs could but evaporate before their time into mere learned observations, and the exchange of interesting thought.

It was left to Rome to elaborate into fixity of precision that destiny which could not perhaps have been avoided by the peoples of a coast-line, kept militant by the daily conquest of Nature, tempted to aggression by the very habits of their life. For empire in the European sense is a very different thing from the marauding hosts of the East going out to warfare headed by a commander of brilliant prowess. Rome instituted, and modern Europe has inherited, the idea of one *people* exploiting another, under rights strictly defined by law, with an appearance of order which would deceive the very elect.

The Cæsars failed by the strength of the unassimilable elements which their Empire had to meet. Napoleon failed because those whom he temporarily subdued were as strong to re-act in

imitation as to be assimilated. To-day the Roman Empire is represented by some eight or ten emulous peoples and princes, all armed to the teeth, all bent on appropriating the world. But it is the Roman Empire still.

And yet Rome herself is the one character whose part in the drama is completely transformed. For no one yet thinks of her as the metropolis of the juvenile kingdom of Italy. To the imagination of humanity she is still the city of the Church. St. Peter's and the Vatican still form her central point. The Pope still rules. This contrast between her first and second selves is much more startling than the transition by which the brigand-chief becomes the sainted ancestor. Before it happened, it would have seemed far more absurd than it would be to-day to propose to make the name of Oxford or Benares a synonym for the vulgar competition of trade. For Rome, the supreme, the invincible, has actually been conquered by the ideas of the East. The poor and the lowly have taken her by storm. Henceforth is she to be in Europe not the voice of domination, but of renunciation; not the teacher of aggression, but of self-sacrifice; royal in her rank and her prerogatives certainly, but far more deeply and truly the friend of the people than of kings. Henceforth, those who are in a special sense her children will live sequestered from the world, pursuing after poverty instead of riches, after self-mortification instead of self-indulgence; men and women apart, as in the Eastern household. Every simple act that she enjoins will possess a sanctity out of all proportion to its intrinsic value. Her customs will become rituals. Her journeys will be pilgrimages. The simplest ordinances of life, administered by her, will now be sacraments. The expression of her forgiveness will be absolution; of her affection, a benediction. Her very rulers will claim no personal

right to their high places, but will declare themselves simple executors of the divine will. "Servant of the servants of God" will be, to the thinking of the world, their proudest title.

In the eyes of the Church, henceforth, all men are to be equal, at least until one has made himself a saint, and another Judas. The differences of rank established by the world are to be as nothing before her, and even ecclesiastical gradations are to be merely as conditions on which grace can work. Many of the saints will be humble and unlearned. Many a bishop will reach the lowest hell. Rank, at least theoretically, is nothing to Rome. Her children are all to be the sharers of a common supernatural life, of which a religious banquet is the token. A great responsibility is to rest upon them, of living worthily of the name by which they are called. Their life, as related to each other and to her, can be expressed only in terms of the exploration and manifestation of certain ideals, laid down broadly in authoritative writings, known as *Scriptures*, and with less clearness and power in secondary writings and teachings, called *traditions*.

In other words, the Imperial city has transformed herself into a pure theocracy. If we blot out the idea of birth by a sacramental rite, and substitute that of a chosen place and race, keeping everything else approximately the same, the Church is re-transmuted into any one out of half a dozen Eastern countries—ancient Egypt, Judæa, Arabia, modern India—under the government of the religious idea. Here, too, the priesthood dominates all classes equally, and the priestly interpretation of life prevails—the very gifts one brings home from a journey are explained as temple-offerings. Here, too, the political system is extraneous: custom is sacred, so that a grammar of habit takes the place of legisla-

tion; men and women live apart; merit is the sole real condition of social prestige; and so on.

It is due to the purely natural character of the great complexus, that we have in India the—to us so extraordinary—spectacle of a society handed over to the power of a priesthood, without in any way losing its sense of the universal sacredness of learning and freedom of thought. In the case of Rome, where an artificial system was created on the basis of a foreign experience, the crude temper of the old imperialism betrayed itself primarily against mind and thought, which it conceived as the legitimate sphere of its authority. In Catholic Europe, a man might scarcely venture to believe that the earth moves; must apologise for enjoying the cosmic speculations of La Place; could hardly study Plato without grave suspicion. In India, atheism itself might be preached on the very steps of the temple. All that the people would demand of the preacher would be sincerity. In Christendom, knowledge has been so much feared that men have again and again suffered torture and death for no other crime. In India, knowledge has always been held to be beatitude. Abundance of words, in every Indian language, testify to the honour paid to scholars. Persian and English books are held as sacred as the Sanskrit. And we should seek in vain, throughout history and language, for any trace of limitation imposed, or suggested to be imposed, upon the mind of man.

Even the vexed question of the right of literature to reveal more than is permitted to conversation, was

The Charvaka system of philosophy, one of the orthodox schools, is a purely agnostic formulation. I have myself met a Charvaka on a pilgrimage. His statements of belief sounded like mockery of the people about him. The word "orthodox" here only means that by adopting Charvaka doctrines, a man did not cease to be called a Hindu.

foreseen long ago and settled in a flash of wit by the legislator who, writing of defilement by the touch of the mouth, makes three exceptions, in favour of "the beaks of birds, the lips of women, and *the words of poets*."

In fact opinion is so free that religious propaganda is actually discouraged by Hinduism, lest zeal, outrunning discretion, prove mischievous to society. "A man has a right to hold his own belief, but never to force it upon another," is the dictum that has made of India a perfect university of religious culture, including every phase and stage of thought and practice, from that of the kindergarten, where all is concrete, to that of the higher research student, who has direct visualisation of the solutions of problems which most of us cannot even understand.

But freedom of thought in the East has not been the prerogative of religion alone. The deeper we go into the history of Hindu philosophy, the more perplexed we are that with its obviously scientific character it should never have created a scientific movement of the prestige and *éclat* of that of the West. Patanjali,* who wrote his great psychology in the second century B.C., was obviously a physiologist, studying the living body in relation to that nervous system which in its entirety he would call the mind. The action and inter-action of the living neuro-psychosis is a question which modern science, content with a more static view of human structure, has hardly yet ventured to tackle, and students of Patanjali cannot be controverted if they hold that when it is reached, it will only be to corroborate the ancient investigations step by step. But a still more interesting feature of Patanjali's work lies in the fact that

* Patanjali wrote "Yoga Aphorisms." "Raja-Yoga" by the Swami Vivekananda is a translation of this work, with a compilation from some of Patanjali's commentators.

it is obviously the final record of a long research carried out, not by a single individual, but by a whole school, experimenting continuously through many generations. Each man's labour was conditioned by the fact that he had no laboratory and no instruments outside his own body, and there can be no doubt that life was often sacrificed to the thirst for knowledge. The whole, therefore, is like a *résumé* of two or three centuries of the conclusions of some English Royal Society, or some French Academy of Sciences, dating from two to three thousand years ago. And we must remember that, if the terminology of this old science has a certain quaintness in our ears, this is probably not greater than that which our own talk of forces and molecules, of chemical affinities and sphygmographic records, would have, if it were suddenly recovered, after a lapse of two thousand years, by a new civilisation, stationed, say, in Mexico.

What is true of the psychology is equally true of Indian mathematics, astronomy, surgery, chemistry. The Oriental predilection for meditative insight is an advantage in the field of mathematics, where deduction is a necessity. But at the same time its fundamental solidity and originality are shown by the fact that highly abstruse problems are stated by Hindu thinkers in concrete, and even in poetic terms. And it will be remembered that less than a hundred years ago, De Morgan* celebrated the solution at sight of certain hitherto uncompleted problems of "Maxima and Minima," by a young Hindu called Ram Chândra.

The law of gravitation itself was enunciated and discussed by Bhashkar Acharya in the twelfth century. And the antiquity of the Sanskrit word

* De Morgan died 1871. Père Gratry and George Boole were other distinguished mathematicians deeply aware of their indebtedness to Eastern systems.

shunyo, for *nought*, together with the immemorial distribution of the system all over the country, conclusively proves that our decimal notation is Indian, and not Arabic, in origin.

How is it, then, we repeat, that a more imposing scientific activity has not been the result of a faculty so undeniable? Many considerations may be adduced in explanation. There is a vast international organisation of scientific effort in Europe to-day, operating to make an incomparable sum of results. Ancient India knew what was meant by scientific co-operation, but by organisation scarcely. And no one nation, working alone, could have produced the whole of what we know as Modern Science, or even one division of it. Ancient Greece gives us the first word on electricity. What a leap from this to Volta and Galvani! Where, again, had these been without the German Hertz, the French Ampère, the Hindu Bose? And then Italy for a second time takes up the thread of inquiry, and produces the apparatus for wireless telegraphy.

Again, we must remember that in Europe to-day we have renounced almost everything for science. Art and letters are almost at a standstill. In these departments—at least, in every country outside France and Russia—we are living almost entirely on the treasures of the past. In religion we see the same superficial eclecticism, the same absence of genuine contemporary impulse. But India never was in this position. Side by side with the learned man, speculating or experimenting on the secrets of Nature, the builders were raising the village temple, the shuttle flew to and fro in the loom, the clink of the tools was heard in the brass-smithy, the palace pundits busied themselves with their collection of ancient texts, the saints poured forth the rapture of their souls, the peasant waked and slept in the good

company of Nature, rice-field and palm-tree, cattle and farmstead. Faith, art, and industry lived on undisturbed.

After all, is it not possible that we deceive ourselves? The true secret of our elimination of every other intellectual activity in favour of science, is it really the depth of our enthusiasm for knowledge, or is it not rather our modern fever for its mechanical application? How far is the passion for pure truth unimpaired by commercial interests? How far is our substitution of specialisms for synthesis conditioned by finance merely? When our utilitarian ingenuity draws nearer exhaustion, when the present spasm of inventive ability has worked itself out, then, and not till then, will come the time for estimating the actual profundity and disinterestedness of our scientific ardour. Will our love of knowledge continue to drive us on to a still deeper theoretic insight, or will our investigations languish in our hands, lingering on as a mere fashion in learning, even as Aristotle lingered on through the Middle Ages? Till such questions are nearer finding their answer we are in no position to assume that the present period is, or is not, ultimately scientific.

Meanwhile, in India this danger of a mercenary science was always foreseen, and viewed with perhaps an exaggerated horror, so that from the beginning the disciple has been required to seek knowledge for its own sake, renouncing all ulterior motive. The value derived at the present stage of development from incorporating a progressive science in a progressive civilisation was thus lost; although we must remember that in a very real sense such a transition, shorn of its lower elements, has occurred in the East from prehistoric times, whenever new plants and animals were to be domesticated, or new tools invented. On the other hand, it is still open to India, facing the actual conditions of the modern

world, to prove that the innate capacity of her people for scientific work and inquiry has been in no way lessened by this long abstention from its vulgar profits.

In spite, nevertheless, of the relative non-development of natural science in India, it is the perfect compatibility of the Hindu religious hypothesis with the highest scientific activity, that is to make that country within the present century the main source of the new synthesis of religion for which we in the West are certainly waiting. Several nations cannot suddenly come into contact by the use of a common language without a violent shock being given to their prejudices in favour of local mythology. Such an occurrence was inevitable in English-speaking countries under present circumstances, and has been accelerated, as it happens, by the agnosticism born of scientific activity. Christianity, moreover, has been further discredited by the discovery that its adherents possess no ethics sufficiently controlling to influence their international relations, and finally by that worship of pleasure which an age of exploitation necessarily engenders. Thus neither the sentiment of childhood, the reasoning of theology, the austerity of conscience, nor the power of idealism, has been strong enough to maintain the creed of the West against the assaults to which the age has seen it subjected. Everything seems to be going through a transition. Social morality, intellectual formulas, legal and economic relationships, all have broken loose from their old moorings, and are seeking for re-adjustment. The first agony of the loss of belief is now over, but it has only given place to a dreary hopelessness, a mental and spiritual homelessness, which drives some in whom heart predominates into the Church of Rome, while others in whom the faculties are more evenly balanced, try to forget their need in social service,

or in the intellectual and artistic enjoyments of an era of *résumés*.

Protestantism has at last delivered herself of a genuinely religious product of the highest order, in that love of naked truth which finds its voice and type in modern science. For all other forms of non-Catholicism are more or less compromises, mere half-way-houses on the road to this. But, even in this, the environment of spirituality and the communion of saints are apt to be left behind with the Mediæval Church. Is there no way to combine these things? Can the devotional attitude receive no justification from the clear and unbiased mind? Does religion, which has made so much of *faith*, want less than absolute conviction as its basis? Is that sentiment which has produced all the greatest art, and almost all the greatest conduct, to be relegated to the mental lumber-room, as, after all, only a superstition? Surely, if so, there is an eternal inharmony and divergence between the creative and the inquiring faculties of man.

But the very constitution of our minds forbids us to accept this paradox. It may be that we are no longer able to believe in the exclusive authenticity of any single religious system. But we are fast inclining to the opinion that even here there must be some observable sequence; that creeds and mythologies must be as genuine a product of the Unity-of-Things as the animals and the plants; that order and meaning there must be, in the one case as in the other. Instead, therefore, of a contemptuous disregard of all faiths as equally untrue, we are beginning to adopt to all alike an attitude of respect as equally significant.

Only in India has this recognition of law in religious conceptions ever been held in its completeness as a part of religion itself. Only in India have inspired teachers been able to declare that the name

of God, being also an illusion, differed only from worldly things in having the power of helping us to break our bondage to illusion, while they, on the other hand, increased it. Only in India hasit been counted orthodoxy to believe that all is within the mind, that the forms of gods are but objectifications of our own sense of what is best to be attained, that prayer is only the heightening of will. And therefore it is from India that we shall gather that intellectualisation of belief which is to re-establish, in the name of a new and greater synthesis, our confidence in our own past. In this new synthesis every element of our own thought must find a place—the conception of humanity and the worship of truth, of course, because without these it would have no *raison d'être*. But even the emotionalism of the negro must not go unplaced, uninterpreted, any more than that wondrous mood in which the explorer of knowledge finds himself launched on a vision of Unity that he dare not name. Neither the Catholic organisation of monasticism nor the Protestant (taken from the Mohammedan) inspiration of common prayer can be left out. There must be a religious consciousness strong enough to recognise the anguish of denial as its own most heroic experience, and large enough to be tender and helpful to the ignorance of a child.

In that other synthesis which grew up under the Roman Empire, all the Mediterranean peoples and those originally related to them found a part. The doctrine of immortality came from the desert; resurrection, mediatorship, and personal consciousness of sin from ancient Egypt; many elements from Persia and Syria; purity and asceticism from the Asokan Essenes; the basis of ethics to be transcended from Judæa; the spirit of inquiry and the necessary feeling of an intellectual void from Greece, or at least from the Greek elements in

Mediterranean society; the instinct of organisation from Rome; and the all-absorbing renunciation and compassion for the world that alone can give sufficient nucleus for a new religion from one sweet central Personality, in whom each of these various hungers found its own Bethlehem—its house of bread.

Similarly, in the new up-growth of our own days, many preparatory influences now at work are to find fulfilment. All who have felt the love of the disinherited and oppressed, all who have followed truth for its own sake, all who have longed to lose themselves in a paradise of devotion and been refused by the armed reason standing at the gate, all who have felt out for a larger generalisation, as they saw the faith of their babyhood falling away from them,—all these have helped and are helping to build up the new consciousness, to make the faculty that is to recognise and assimilate the doctrine of the future. But the evangel itself will be mainly drawn from India.

And then, having thus renewed the sources of the world's inspiration, we may be pardoned if we ask, What of India herself? The Egyptian delivered up his whole treasure, and where is he now? Buried under many a layer of foreign invasion; tilling the soil as patiently and hopelessly as one of his own oxen; scarcely remembered, even as a name, by those who make so-called plans for the country's good, and are wakened only to a stupid wonder, as at the sound of something familiar from books, when they hear that to kill a cat to-day in the bazaar in Cairo would almost cost a man his life. The Jews produced Jesus, and what have they become? Pariahs and fugitives amongst the nations of men. Who remembers them with any feeling of gratitude for that which they have given? A miserable formula, "the Jews who crucified Him," has taken

the place amongst the devout of any memorial of the fact that they created the language, the thought, the habits of life, and the outlook of righteousness, in which He assumed the garb of humanity.

Is something of this sort to be the fate of India? To give a religion to the world may be a sufficient proof that one's past was not in vain, but evidently it is no sort of safeguard for the future. The process by which the peoples of a vast continent may become mere hewers of wood and drawers of water has already begun, is already well afoot. Their indigenous institutions are all in decay. Their prosperity is gone. Some portion or other of the immense agricultural area is perpetually under famine. Their arts and industries are dead or dying. They have lapsed into mere customers for other men's cheap wares. Even their thought would seem to be mainly imitative. The orthodox is apt to tread the round of his own past eternally. The unorthodox is as apt to harness himself to the foreign present, with an equal blindness. In suicidal desperation, the would-be patriotic reiterate the war-cries of antagonistic sects, or moan for the advent of a new religion, as if, by introducing a fifth element of discord, the Indian peoples could reach unity. Nor does the education at present offered promise any solution of the problem. It is the minimum that is possible to the efficient clerk, and even that minimum is undergoing reduction rather than increase.

In spite of the absence of any theory of history that might elucidate the course of events in the East during the next two centuries, one truth reveals itself with perfect plainness. A nation becomes whatever she believes herself to be. She is made great, not by her relative superiority, but by her thought about herself. It becomes important there-

fore to ask—What conception of her own nature and power forms the inheritance of India?

As Roman Catholicism is but one element inhering in a great whole called Christianity, and as a man may well claim to be a good Christian without being a Catholic, so the religious system of Hinduism is only a fragment inhering in a vast social-industrial-economic scheme called the dharmma, and a man may well and rightly be the servant of the dharmma, without calling himself a Hindu. It is this dharmma, in its large and non-sectarian activity, that determines the well-being of every child of the Indian soil. The word itself is an ancient name for national righteousness or national good. It is true that the Brahmin who bows before one who is not the rightful king is held many times accursed by Manu. It is true that the Bhagavad Gîtâ is the only one of the world-gospels that turns on the duty of fighting for the true sovereign against usurpers. And yet it is also a fact that the person of the ruler is always a matter of singular indifference to the theocratic consciousness. It has been hitherto indeed a mere detail for military persons to fight out amongst themselves. The secret of so curious an attitude is reached when we discover that in the eyes of the Indian peasant, the sovereign himself is only the servant of the dharmma. "If he uphold it, he will stay: if not, he will have to go," they all say when questioned. Little do they dream, alas! that themselves and their children and their children's children may be swept into oblivion also by that same failure to uphold!

Thus, whoever was the master that an Indian statesman served, whether Hindu, Mussulman, or British sat upon the throne, it was the minister's duty, as the loyal and obedient child of an Asiatic race, to use all his influence in the best interests of his people and his country. It is this element in the national system that tends, with its great regard

for agriculture, to rank the cow almost on a level with the human members of the commonwealth, making the Hindu sovereign forbid beef-eating within his frontiers. It was this that made a certain prince, in despair, hand over his salt-mines to the British Government, rather than obey its mandate to tax this commodity to his people, and thus derive personal benefit from their misfortune. It was this that made it incumbent upon many of the chiefs in the old days to provide, not only salt, but also water and fruit free to their subjects, a kind of "noblesse oblige" that has left the wayside orchard outside every village in Kashmir, till that favoured land is almost like the happy island of Avilion, "fair with orchard lawns, and bowery hollows crowned with summer sea." It was this power of the dharmma to safeguard the welfare of its people, through a law as binding upon the monarch as upon his subjects, that brought about the immense network of custom which regulated the relief of beggars, the use of water, the provisioning of pilgrimages, habits of sanitation, distribution of grazing-lands, the forest-rights of the peasant, and a thousand other matters of importance. The mere fact that the king's personal devotions were offered in a mosque could not interfere with his acceptance of the system, in any important measure. It was the language of rule, dominating all rulers alike, by every detail of birth and upbringing, and by the very impossibility of imagining any deviation. Hence it could never be more than a question of time till some new prince had assimilated the whole, and Mussulman co-operated actively with Hindu in the great task of enforcing and extending the essentials of the common weal. We may regret, but we cannot condone, the strange indolence by which the Indian people have permitted themselves to lose sight of these national and civic responsibilities of their

ancient civilisation, and become absorbed in its personal and domestic rites. Nor can we for one moment admit that this substitution of the trees for the forest deserves the name of orthodoxy—faithfulness to the dharmma.

It is, however, an essential weakness of theocratic rule that while it can tolerate any neighbour, it has no idea of dominating and unifying diverse elements round itself. The great mass of its subjects, too, see life indirectly through the nimbus of the supernatural. Instead of subordinating the priesthood in national affairs to the recognised leaders of the nation, exalting it only in its rightful capacity of influence upon the social and individual conscience, a theocracy is apt to require that its leaders move, encumbered by the counsels of the priests.

It was the Prophet's clear perception of these facts that gave its peculiar characteristics to Islam. He established a strong confraternity, and made subscription to a brief and concise formula its sole condition of membership. But Arab blood was comparatively unmixed, and the greater part of Mohammed's work was done for him, in the close bond of consanguinity that united his central group. At one bound, and without any means save that power of personality which is the first demand of the theocratic method, he performed the double task of creating an all-absorbing consciousness of nationality, and carrying his people through the required emancipation of thought. To this day the great Semitised belt that divides Eastern Aryans and Mongolians from Europe, reminds us, whenever we look at the map, of the reality of his achievement. And the history of the origins of European learning remains to attest the enthusiasm of freedom which he conferred on the Saracenic intellect.

Geographical conditions impose upon India the same necessity of unification at all costs, and yet

combine with other facts to make her the meeting-ground of all faces. Especially is this the case in modern times, when the ocean has become a road-way instead of a boundary. She is almost a museum of races, creeds, and social formations, some hoary with age, some crude with excessive youth. Thus her problem is vastly more difficult than that of Arabia before the seventh century. Yet she contains in herself every element of self-recovery.

If the fact had been open to doubt before, the British rule, with its railways, its cheap postage, and its common language of affairs, would sufficiently have demonstrated the territorial unity of the country. We can see to-day that India's is an organic, and no mere mechanical, unity. "The North," it has been said, "produces prophets, the South priests." And it is true that her intellectual and discriminating faculty, her power of recognition and formulation, lies in the South; that Mahratta, Mussulman and Sikh, form her executive; while to Bengal, the country that has fought no battle for her own boundaries, falls the office of the heart, which will yet suffuse all the rest with the realisation of the vast inclusiveness of meaning of the great word "India." Historically the Indian unity is obvious. And if socially it appear doubtful, the country itself could set aside the doubt in an instant by grasping that intuition of nationality which alone is needed to give the spiritual impulse toward consolidation.

But the bare fact of an actual social, historical, and geographical unity, waiting for precipitation as a national consciousness, is not the only possession of India at the present crisis. She has a great past to return upon, and a clearly defined economy for model. Her traditions are unstained. There is no element of national life—art, poetry, literature, philosophy, science—in which she has not at some

time been exceptionally strong. She has organised at least two empires of commanding character. In architecture, three of the most imposing styles in the world have been hers—the Dravidian in the South, the Buddhist across middle India from Orissa to Bombay, and the Indo-Saracenic in the North.

There can be little doubt that her next period will confront India with the necessity of introducing some community of ritual as between priest and people; and this of itself must create fresh architectural needs, a new architecture of the communal consciousness which would be sufficient to make the required appeal to the national imagination, and at the same time give the needed scope to the passion of democracy.

For in looking to the growth of a sentiment of nationality as the solution of Indian problems, we are of course turning away from kings and priests, and appealing to Woman and the People. A similar appeal, in the only form possible to the unmixed theocracy of that day, was made by Buddhism; and the whole history of India, from the Christian era onwards, is the story of the education of the popular consciousness, by the unifying and ameliorating influence of Hinduism, as it was then thrown open. To-day, if we adopt, moral and intellectual tests as the criteria of civilisation, we can hardly refuse to admit that in such issues the East has been more successful than the West. In strength of family ties; in sweetness and decorum of family life; in widespread understanding of the place of the personal development in the scheme of religion as a whole; in power of enjoyment of leisure, without gross physical accompaniments; in dignity, frugality, continuous industry without aggressive activity; in artistic appreciation of work done and doing: and above all in the ability to concentrate the whole faculty at will, even the poorest classes in India,

whatever their religion, will compare favourably with many who are far above them in the West. Such are some of the results of the Buddhist period.

The Mogul Empire fell into decay and failed, simply because it did not understand how to base itself on a great popular conception of Indian unity. It could neither assimilate the whole of the religious impulse of India, nor yet detach itself completely from it. Hence, as a government, it succeeded neither in rooting itself permanently, nor in creating that circuit of national energy which alone could have given it endurance. Nevertheless, it contributed invaluable elements to the national life of the future, and it is difficult to see how that life could hope to organise itself without its memorable preliminary experiment.

The foreign character of the English period produced, as its first effect, a wide sense of bewilderment and unrest, which gave birth to a hundred projected panaceas. There were social reformers, who thought that by a programme more purely destructive than they then realised, their Motherland would be best served. And while we may deprecate the form taken by their zeal, we can but admit that no other testimony could have been given to the living energy of the race which would have been so convincing. If Indian civilisation had really been stationary, as is so sapiently supposed by the West, the embers could hardly have leaped into such flame, at the bare touch of new ideas. If, on the other hand, the country had accepted the superficial theory, and run agate in the endeavour to reform itself, we could not thereafter have conceived of India as possessing sufficient depth and stability to make hope possible. Meanwhile the reformers have not failed to bring forth fruits. They have produced groups of persons who represent what is valuable in Western thought and habits,

without necessarily being denationalised, and they have demonstrated once for all the fact that India contains sufficient forces of restitution within herself to be completely independent of foreign advice and criticism.

Next came political agitators, who seemed to think that by entire deference to an alien idea their country would be saved. There can be no doubt that here also a valuable contribution had been made. The foreign idea can never save India—indeed, the use of the word "politics" in the present state of the country may strike some of us as a painful insincerity—but at the same time, the mastery and assimilation of the foreigners' *method* is an absolute necessity. The education of the people, also, to a knowledge of their common interests, and the throwing of a net of friendship and mutual intercourse all over the country, are great services.

Outside social and political movements, again, there are a hundred emancipations and revivals of religious centres, all of which are noteworthy symptoms of inherent vitality. And still a fourth school declares that the one question of India lies in the economic crisis, and that that once surmounted all will be well.

At this moment, however, a new suspicion is making itself heard, a suspicion that behind all these interpretations—the social reform, the political agitation, religious movements, and economic grievances—there stands a greater reality, dominating and co-ordinating the whole, the Indian national idea, of which each is a part. It begins to be thought that there is a religious idea that may be called Indian, but it is of no single sect; that there is a social idea, which is the property of no caste or group; that there is a historic evolution, in which all are united; that it is the thing within *all* these

which alone is to be called "India." If this conception should prevail, it will be seen that social, political, economic, and religious workers have all alike helped to reveal it; but it can never be allowed that the whole problem is economic, grave as the last-mentioned feature of the situation undoubtedly is. It is not merely the status, but the very nature and character of the collective personality of a whole nation, occupying one of the largest areas in the world, that has to be recaptured. In the days when ancient Egypt made an eternal impression on human civilisation, the personal belongings of her great nobles were no more than those of an Indian cowherd to-day. It was the sentiment of fraternity, the instinct of synthesis, the mind of co-ordination, that were the secret of her power.

The distinctive spirituality of the modern world depends upon its ability to think of things as a whole, to treat immense masses of facts as units, to bring together many kinds of activity, and put them in true relation to one another. This is the reality of which map, census, and newspaper, even catalogue, museum and encyclopædia, are but outer symbols. In proportion as she grasps this inner content will India rise to the height of her own possibilities.

The sacraments of a growing nationality would lie in new developments of her old art, a new application of her old power of learnedness, new and dynamic religious interpretations, a new idealism in short, true child of the nation's own past, with which the young should throb and the old be reverent. The test of its success would be the combining of renewed local and individual vigour with a power of self-centralisation and self-expression hitherto unknown.

But before such a result could come about, we must suppose the children of every province and every sect on fire with the love of the Motherland.

Sikh, Mahratta, and Mussulman, we must imagine possessed each by the thought of *India*, not of his own group. Thus each name distinguished in the history of any part would be appropriated by the country as a whole. The Hindu would prostrate himself on the steps of the mosque, the Mohammedan offer salutation before the temple, the Aryan write the history of Islam with an enthusiasm impossible to those within its walls, the Semite stand forth as the exponent of India's heroic past, with the authority of one who sees for the first time with the eyes of manhood. For we cannot think that a mere toleration of one another's peculiarities can ever be enough to build up national sentiment in India. As the love of David and Jonathan, a love the stronger for distance of birth, such is that last and greatest passion which awakes in him who hears the sorrowful crying of the young and defenceless children of his own mother. Each difference between himself and them is a source of joy. Each need unknown to himself feeds his passion for self-sacrifice. Their very sins meet with no condemnation from him, their sworn champion and servant.

But has India to-day the hidden strength for such developments? What of the theocratic consciousness? What of warring religious convictions?

Whether or not she has adequate strength for her own renewal, only the sons of India are competent to judge. But it is certain that in the nationalising of a great nation, the two theocracies would reach, on the human side, their common flowering-point. Do not all kingdoms of God hold forth the hope of a day when the lame shall walk, and the blind see, the leper be cleansed, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them? The theocratic consciousness is never jealous of the social good, but profoundly susceptible of it. It seeks it indeed as its true goal. What of the theocratic consciousness, what of religion, should a day ever come to pass in

which men discovered that divine revelations were meant to unite humanity, not to sunder it? Surely the question is hardly serious. The old orthodoxy of the Arab would still be the austerity of the Mohammedan. The ancient piety of the Hindu would still and for ever be the church of the devoted life. Yet both would have found new purpose and common scope, in the re-making of the Motherland.

Nevertheless, the question remains. The road is clear, but has India strength to follow it?

Jackals prowl about the buried cities and deserted temples of the Asokan era. Only a memory dwells within the marble palaces of the Mogul. Is the mighty Mother not now exhausted? Having given to the world, is it not enough? Is she again to rouse and bestir herself for the good of her own household? Who can tell? Yet in all impotence and desolation of the present, amidst the ruin of his country and the decay of his pride, an indomitable hope wakes still in the heart of the Indian peasant. "That which is, shall pass: and that which has been, shall again be," he mutters "to the end of time." And we seem to catch in his words the sound of a greater prophecy, of which this is but the echo—

"Whenever the dharmma decays, and a-dharmma prevails, then I manifest myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, for the firm establishment of

THE NATIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

I am born again and again."

PRINTED AT THE COMPLETE PRESS
WEST NORWOOD
LONDON