AN ESSAY ON INDIA

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BY

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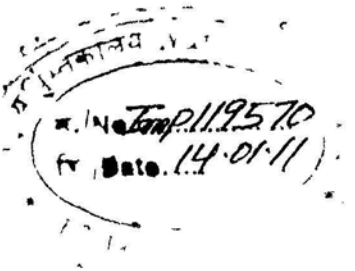

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" Do I call the government of India a perfect government? Very far from it. No nation can be perfectly well governed till it is competent to govern itself."

" There is, however, one part of the bill on which, after what has recently passed elsewhere, I feel myself irresistibly impelled to say a few words. I allude to that wise, that benevolent, that noble clause, which enacts that no native of our Indian Empire shall, by reason of his colour, his descent, or his religion, be incapable of holding office. . . . We are told that the time can never come when the natives of India can be admitted to high civil and military office. We are told that this is the condition on which we hold our power. We are told that we are bound to confer on our subjects every benefit—which they are capable of enjoying?—no;—which it is in our power to confer on them?—no;—but which we can confer on them without hazard to the perpetuity of our own domination. Against that proposition I solemnly protest as inconsistent alike with sound policy and sound morality.

" I am far, very far, from wishing to proceed hastily in this most delicate matter. I feel that, for the good of India itself, the admission of natives to high office must be effected by slow degrees. But that, when the fulness of time is come, when the interest of India requires the change, we ought to refuse to make that change lest we should endanger our own power, this is a doctrine of which I cannot think without indignation. Governments, like men, may buy existence too dear. 'Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas' is a despicable policy both in individuals and in states. In the present case, such a policy would be not only despicable but absurd. The mere extent of an empire is not necessarily an advantage. To many governments it has been cumbersome; to some fatal. It will be allowed by every statesman of our time that the prosperity of a community is made up of the prosperity of those who compose the community, and that it is the most childish ambition to covet dominion which adds to no man's comfort or security. To the great trading nation, to the great manufacturing nation, no progress which any portion of the human race can make in knowledge, in taste for the conveniences of life, or in the wealth by which those conveniences are produced, can be matter of indifference. It is scarcely possible to calculate the benefits which we might derive from the diffusion of European civilization among the vast population of the East. It would be, on the most selfish view of the case, far better for us that the people of India were well governed and independent of us, than ill-governed and subject to us; that they were ruled by their own kings, but wearing our broadcloth, and working with our

cutlery, than that they were performing their salaams to English collectors and English magistrates, but were too ignorant to value, or too poor to buy, English manufactures. To trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would indeed be a doting wisdom which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it a useless and costly dependency, which would keep a hundred millions of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves."

"Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative, by every person who maintains that we ought permanently to exclude the natives from high office. I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us: and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour.

"The destinies of our Indian empire are covered with a thick darkness. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the fate reserved for a state which resembles no other in history, and which forms by itself a separate class of political phenomena. The laws which regulate its growth and its decay are still unknown to us. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws."

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY: Extracts from a speech delivered in the House of Commons, July 10, 1833, on a bill *"for effecting an arrangement with the India company, and for the better government of His Majesty's Indian territories"*.

AN ESSAY ON INDIA

I

THE PROBLEM

AN essay on India, whose purpose is more than a tedious iteration of insolubilities, needs no apology. Redundant it can hardly be, since in modern times it has not been attempted. Being necessarily an essay in the art of omission, it may serve as a complement, or even as an antidote, to the voluminous body of expert and controversial testimony already existing. Its purpose is to generalize and define in the light of history, where this testimony deals in complex and purely contemporary detail. If its material is largely personal, such is the material I have. The reader must himself assess the value of my experiences, and of the deductions I draw from them.

It is a fact little realized in England that India, her peoples, and her problems, have lately begun to arouse a profound interest throughout the reading world. The English justly think themselves better informed than others on this subject. But the very fact of a long connexion distorts their appreciation. As early as the eighteenth century, returned pioneers from Hindustan were regarded as a menace to cultivated society in life and a fit subject for comedy in fiction. Time has not ameliorated their reputation. And for this reason alone the subject is one which

intelligent people often refuse to approach. Furthermore, the problem of modern India belongs essentially to the twentieth century. For the fathers of the present generation it scarcely existed. For its grandfathers, it had been settled for good with the Mutiny. This last belief has been transmitted, and dies hard. Nevertheless, the time has come when the Englishman who is accustomed to maintain a general apprehension of the world about him admits the necessity of revising his outlook. To do this, he must either visit India, or seek enlightenment in books. The latter will offer him a quantity of new information derived from recent experience; but at the same time they will probably make it harder than before for him to arrive at any definite conclusions on the subject.

Generally speaking, the authors of the available testimony fall into four categories: first, the official commentators and commissions of inquiry, which, being prohibited from cognizance of all but the most tangible facts, bring only the trees into view and never the wood; secondly, the retired administrators, whose attitude, though discreetly expressed, is primarily that of the practical ruler without finer shades, and whose knowledge, always extensive and sometimes stupefying, is confined to one department or a few districts; thirdly, the sociologists, professional or inquisitive, whose works, through no fault of their own, are largely read for their revelations in sex; and fourthly, the sentimentalists. The first three classes are allied as honest men and experts; their aim is light, though it happen they increase the darkness. The fourth, British or Indian, poisons the air with a fog of second-hand arguments from the rubbish-heap of political or

economic theory. Its writers' sentimentalism reveres on the one hand the King-Emperor and the unspottedness of white womanhood; on the other, the rights of man and the suffering-plus-profit which is martyrdom. Mistaking the slogans of an advertising age for the ideals of the past, it invests political and industrial forms with divinity, and then appeals to this divinity to support its contentions in the eyes of the world. It has accomplished nothing save to obscure the truth, and to obtain credit in advance for further ill-informed writings.

Another difficulty felt by those who approach the subject from a distance is the lack of first-class works on Indian history, philosophy, art, and architecture, by authors endowed with a sufficient comparative knowledge of other histories and other cultures. These subjects illustrate the verities of any race or country and can, if properly treated, go far towards opening the eyes of those who shun propaganda and are repelled by the bare bones of politics. Histories of Ancient Greece or Renascence Italy which omit to mention art and thought are ridiculous things. Nor are commentaries on St. Thomas Aquinas of great service unless they reveal his effect on the social and political aspirations of his day. Similar deficiencies are found in the great majority of writings on Indian history and culture.[1] Finally, the Indian scene has failed to inspire any body of classic fiction, with the exception

[1] Exception must be made in favour of Lord Ronaldshay's (now Lord Zetland's) trilogy. But here again the writer's cultural experience has been mainly Eastern, and he avows his lack of artistic understanding. It is difficult not to suspect that these books would have thrown even more light on Indian character and hopes, had their author not been fettered by his expectation of further office.

of one admirable book by E. M. Forster, and the works of Rudyard Kipling, the chief exponent of obscurantist sentimentalism on the British side.

It is not proposed that an essay, written admittedly in the light of short personal experience, can fulfil the wants of the existing literature. But it can, perhaps, suggest certain new trains of inquiry into the real issue of the present controversy between England and India. First, therefore, it is necessary to try and discover what the controversy is about.

My sojourn in India was a period of acute intellectual strain. The strain began as I stepped from an aeroplane at Karachi on August 4th, 1929; and it by no means ended when I boarded a P. & O. at Bombay on April 4th, 1930. I went to India, primarily in order to reach Tibet, secondarily because Lord Beaverbrook gave me a ticket. I had never felt, nor wished to feel, any interest in India. Now, having returned from India, I am burdened with thoughts that give me no peace and have destroyed the harmony of my former way of life. The burden is not one of responsibility; I neither feel, nor desire, a mission to humanity. My worries arise because it seems to me that the outcome of the present problem between English and Indians can determine the character of all future civilization. I see the whole philosophy of Western history and culture, already thrown aside in Russia and the United States, undergoing the supreme and ultimate test of its practical value. And if I say selfishly that without this philosophy the world will be no place for me, it is because, in so saying, I reflect the opinion of that small minority within the small

enclave of peoples in Western Europe, with whom alone rests either power or will to preserve the diminishing sanity of the race against a barbarous and rapidly expanding materialism. The problem of India, of all political problems of the present time, is the one most worthy of sustained attention.

The words East and West, though generally employed to cover a multitude of inaccuracies, possess a certain validity as opposites for the purpose of broad historical generalization—particularly if the countries washed by the Pacific are excluded from their scope. In this context, it may be said that while the effort of the East, in civilization, has been primarily metaphysical, that of the West has been social; and that while the West has always held, or reverted to, the opinion that man's betterment on earth must be achieved through a process of continuous political experiment, the East, without necessarily disregarding this process, has concentrated first and foremost on the discovery of good by thought and ecstasy. The "problem" of India to-day is the current and dramatic manifestation of a problem which has existed since history:—What is to be, and who shall determine, the evolution of contact between these two conceptions? The importance of this question can only be appreciated when placed in its proper historical perspective.

In early times, the outstanding achievement of this contact was the city-state of Ancient Greece, where the betterment of man was discussed and attempted equally in its social and metaphysical aspects, and where the resulting theories received a terminology that has remained valid after 2,000 years. Greece can never be identified with Europe or Asia. Her art and

thought, like her place on the map, struck a mean position. At length the area of contact was expanded eastward by Alexander. There resulted a definite political and metaphysical fusion, known as the Hellenistic. Farther West, meanwhile, was arising the profoundly European power of Rome, whose aim was political efficiency, and which first gave meaning to the term "Western".

Rome absorbed the Hellenistic area politically, but herself fell victim to the Hellenistic, the Eastern, thesis that true betterment must be come at through the soul. The atmosphere became speculative, finally religious. Philosophies and cults were sure of a hearing: the beliefs of Persia and Upper Egypt travelled round the Mediterranean basin and beyond it: we find Mithraic monuments in Scotland. But still the East was husbanding her forces, was preparing not merely a fusion but a victory. An obscure people called the Jews were sending emigrants to Alexandria, who, rather than lose their native faith in the prevailing confusion of Hellenistic subtlety, proceeded to restate it in rational terms. The mouthpiece of this process was Philo. Half a century earlier, Christ was born.

The earlier civilization of the city-state had attained perfect expression in Plato. In the third century A.D., the mystic, Eastern, trend of his thought, moving tentatively towards God, produced in Alexandria a school of Neoplatonists, whose chief exponent, Plotinus, accompanied a military expedition against Persia, that he might gain knowledge of new philosophies, Persian and Indian. Buddhism, the profoundest explanation ever made of human purpose and progression, was then alive in India. Whatever knowledge of it, or of

Hinduism, or of Zoroastrianism, Plotinus may have gained, his system of active contemplation, whereby man may discover his own divinity, not in the future, but now, approached the tenor of Eastern thought more closely than the teaching of any other Mediterranean philosopher. Moreover, it satisfied the universal and vociferous desire for spiritual encouragement which the Hellenization of the Roman Empire had brought into being. But it could only be understood by the highly educated; and though concerned with conduct, it deprecated the very existence of the body. For the general needs of an unequal society, Christianity was found more suitable; and in 313 was declared the state religion of the Empire. The East had won. Henceforth, for a thousand years, a religion claimed to direct the thoughts and behaviour of Europe; and the claim, if not always allowed in practice, was generally recognized in theory.

The victory made itself felt in other spheres than the transcendental. Politically, it reinforced the conception of divine sovereignty which Alexander had transported from the Middle East and Cæsar had adopted. This conception found logical expression in the joint omnipotence of Pope and Emperor, a theory which dominated the Middle Ages, and was replaced, on the death of Charles V Habsburg, by the enunciation of divine right for separate monarchs. In art, the victory had originally lain with the West. The ideal of naturalistic representation had been communicated to Buddhism. And the series of Buddhist sculptures discovered in Afghanistan and North-West India, together with the frescoes of Turfan on the borders of the Gobi desert, show that Western influence

on Eastern art was no less degrading in the third and fourth centuries A.D. than in the extant works of Mr. Fyzee Rahamin. But in the eighth century A.D., the anti-representational impulse of the East returned to the assault. An iconoclast campaign was launched in Constantinople. And the Hellenistic ideal was destroyed, to make room for a method of true æsthetic interpretation. Hence dates the inception of European painting. Similarly in architecture, arch, vault, pendentive, and dome, came to displace the eternal pillar-cornice, pillar-cornice of Antiquity. And from the Romanesque style developed the Gothic. Finally, in commerce, Byzantine ships, sailing down the Red Sea, encountered those of China at Ceylon. While precious wares from India and the Middle East, together with the silk-worm, were transported overland and communicated, through Constantinople and the Norman adventurers, to the rest of Europe.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the tide which had so long been flowing from the East began to ebb. The Crusades had already touched Asia. Byzantine enterprise, which had become inert, was replaced by Italian: Genoese and Venetians, Pisans and Amalfitans, became the carriers of the Near East. On land, Marco Polo found his way to China. Missionaries followed him. The Renascence of learning revived the memory of Roman dominion over the known world. And the European impulse to expansion, originally the outcome of spiritual rot and feudal land-hunger, developed a new aspect of glorious adventure, capitalized by the appetites of kings and the growing enterprise of commerce. In 1510, the fleet of Albuquerque appeared off Goa. The first Portuguese

settlers in India were surprised to discover a large community of Christians already established, and claiming an apostolic founder in the person of St. Thomas.

Dutch, English, French, and Danes followed, maintaining precarious trading outposts, quarrelling amongst themselves and with Indian rulers, upholding this cause against that, gaining concessions here, concessions there; until, in the last half of the eighteenth century, the English East India Company, founded on the last day of the year 1600, had vindicated its superiority in force and diplomacy over all the other European outposts in India, and in so doing had embarked, for good and evil, on a course of political domination. None the less, in the eighteenth century, and at the beginning of the nineteenth, the presence of the English in India was primarily commercial in intent, and the English settlers did not hesitate to express their resentment against the accredited representatives of the Home Government in their midst. Huge fortunes were made by administrators, advocates, and merchants, who slaked their thirst in great draughts of claret and lived with Indian mistresses. But with the opening of the Egyptian overland route, English women appeared on the scene in increasing numbers. The Mutiny caught them. And from that incident, and their presence, dates the growth of purely racial antagonism.

Thus far, until the middle of the nineteenth century, the contact between East and West, though incalculably effective in its contribution to thought, art, and politics, had followed a gentle course of evolution, the spiritual influence of the East attaining to Gibraltar

and Ireland, the political and more transient influence of the West reaching India first under Alexander and again with the European traders of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. But at the beginning of the nineteenth, there was germinating in Europe, and particularly in England, a movement which was destined to transform the entire globe in a flash, and to carry Western ideas, with all their material advantages, and all their grossness, over every habitable inch of land in the seven seas. This movement was the Scientific Revolution. With it began the real "problem", the problem that may well rob thinking people of their peace of mind, and whose solution or confusion will be the fate of the human race for the next thousand years.

The early discoveries of the Scientific Revolution had two main effects. By accelerating first transport, and then the conveyance of news to an extent hitherto inconceivable, they so unified the territories of the world as to bring every civilization into contact with every other civilization, and to render every race susceptible to the influence of every other race. Ordinarily, it might have been supposed, the different civilizations and races, feeling their individuality thus threatened, might have erected barriers to protect themselves. Indeed, such attempts were made. But the second effect was to place in the hands of the West a weapon of such demoralizing superiority that no people or habit could withstand it. The West also received a temporary monopoly of force; but this effect was, and is, incidental. It is the moral weapon which has delivered the earth to Western civilization,

and threatens the human race, for good or evil, with ultimate standardization.

The moral weapon consists in the unprecedented power over matter discovered to man by the Scientific Revolution—a discovery which was the logical outcome of all intrinsically Western effort since Rome reduced the Sabines. The mechanical philosophy of the nineteenth-century physicist, that joint incarnation of prophet and engineer, who conceived the principle of the universe as governed by an eternal sequence of cause and effect like that of an engine, now became paramount; and not till half a century later would scientists be found to oppose the visual marvels that engines were daily producing with a theory once more in accordance with the immemorial trend of human speculation. Thus man was translated from the divine pedestal of his thought into a slough of atoms all acting in obedience to previously determined laws; and came to see himself as a negligible and indeed ridiculous entity that had blundered involuntarily into a purely mechanical scheme of creation. He and space, in fact, were arrayed by the physicist in a grotesque hostility. Western thought found itself at last well hoist on its own materialistic petard. And it remains to be seen whether its present mood of repentance will suffice to lay the demon that it has raised up and that threatens to destroy it root and branch.

But if the marvels of the machine were originally sufficient to lead its European creators themselves into such outstanding errors, their effect on the remoter peoples was tenfold reflected. Nothing can better illustrate the moral force of the nineteenth-century

demon than the procedure of Soviet Russia in consciously elevating the machine, with the remorseless logic common to all semi-educated peoples, on to the pedestal formerly occupied by the things of the spirit. It has been asserted that the European has forced his materialism on others by violence. But it is evident that, in the last analysis, this assertion cannot be substantiated. For the Russians, having of purpose and at immense cost severed their connection with the whole scheme of European politics, have immediately hastened to divinize Europe's most remarkable and typical product. And it is not too much to say that upon whether the rest of mankind hastens to a similar divinization of the machine, or upon whether this can still be prevented, depends the retrogression or progress of many, if not all, future generations.

As the symbol of philosophic materialism, however, "the machine" has been so wrought upon by artists, writers, and political propagandists, as to have become invested with a too spontaneous and sinister personality. Among the unspeculative masses, the secret of its influence lies simply in the plain, undramatized advantages that it brings to the individual. The nature of this influence must be examined.

Fundamentally, its effect is economic. Commerce, first in the form of barter, then through a medium of exchange like money or cowrie shells, has existed since man left the ape. But it is the peculiarity of the present age that the influence of a particular transaction in a particular spot is now felt simultaneously by every man, woman, and child on the globe. A cheaper colour-dye is patented in Frankfurt; and the appearance of ladies in the interior of Assam is pro-

foundly affected. Economic laws are the strongest of all laws, because man obeys them involuntarily. And in this age, so have man's needs been expanded by the vision of new possibilities, that neither the Esquimaux nor the Trobianders can pretend to be any longer wholly self-supporting. Once those needs have been diversified by the sight of a safety-pin or an electric torch, once the standard of living has been eased or heightened, the commerce of the world has the savagest community of head-hunters in its grip, and the West is upon it.

But it is not only a question of needs, of cheap Lancashire cottons, or a supply of kerosene in the village shop. It is a question of the moral effect of the first train, of the first motor-car, or of the first aeroplane. If a swarm of strangers arrived on us from the moon furnished with aerial torpedoes at moderate prices, and then converted the summit of Mount Everest into a hive of industry, we ourselves should feel inferior, and wish to reform our way of life in accordance with the new methods. Thus it is with the less advanced peoples. Factories arise, and with them a building of enormous fortunes, whose success depends, not as formerly on the mere exchange of goods, but on their production in quantity. The indigenous industries become absurd. Labour flocks to the cities built by Western enterprise in Western fashion, receives higher wages than before, and gazes with awe upon the interloper's vast system of organized amusement. The native inhabitant may approve, may disapprove, or may, as in the majority of cases, simply accept the situation; he also may make a fortune, or he may remain a scavenger impervious to all hope of advance;

but whatever his opinion, condition, or success, his surroundings are calculated to inspire him with an irrevocable sense of inferiority, and often, if he has enterprise, with a wish to emulate not only the qualities that have brought material success to the Westerner, but his most insignificant and ridiculous mannerisms. Thus baseball has become the national game of the Japanese, and the Indian Congress party must needs invent a flag and national anthem.

The sense of material inferiority thus invoked covers the slower percolation of other, and more reputable, Western ideas, such as justice, representative institutions, medical hygiene, honesty, and punctuality—in fact, of all that the West has hitherto been able to achieve theoretically or actually in its long struggle towards perfect comfort. Before these again, the invaded people feel their inferiority, though with less resentment, if perhaps with more shame, since the qualities that arouse the feeling are more evidently superior. Likewise in technical and scientific education, Western methods open up avenues of knowledge and opportunity which must necessarily displace older traditions of schooling. In art at least, the East can maintain her equality. But even here, with the exception of a rare and highly cultivated minority, she prefers to succumb to the degraded and futile naturalism introduced by the West. Only in the sphere of metaphysical speculation will the West consent, as she has always consented, to receive rather than to give. But in the present age, contact in this sphere, though not inconsiderable, is overshadowed.

The inferiority thus forced upon the Asiatic at every turn of life has its counterpart in the arrogance of the

Western interloper. Proportionately as the Asiatic discards his self-confidence, that of the Westerner increases. White pigmentation of skin, at first only a symbol of material efficiency, assumes, and is paid, the homage of a divine attribute. Ultimately, the expansion of Western inventions, decencies, and ideals, which is really nothing more than an inevitable part of present evolution, assumes in the eyes of its fortuitous movers the mystic character of a crusade—save that, instead of the Cross, its banner is the pale pink tegument of the dominant race. This missionary spirit is no mere sophism of unscrupulous imperialists, as some hold, but a real emotion, typical of the nineteenth century, which gave it birth. It would have horrified Warren Hastings. It can still horrify persons like him. The militant imperialism of the Boer War period is on the wane. But it has been replaced, in the present age, by the American conception of business as an ethical profession. Every car sold, provided it be a good car, is a further step towards human perfection. Thus, not only the administrator, the judge, and the doctor, but even the merchant and the salesman, become inspired with a divine assurance in the righteousness of their activities. To question the divinity of Western inventions, decencies, and ideals, is to question the new Incarnation. Now, as in the past, to swallow the Gospel whole and without demur is the first principle of righteousness. Every white man in Asia is become an apostle, and is prepared to maintain his part in face of all opposition.

This state of things has two direct results. The white man's assumption of his personal superiority, always crudely, and often offensively, expressed, breeds

that most disastrous form of racial antagonism which involves colour. And the white man's assumption of his institutions' superiority leads thoughtful people to examine their practical effects, and to discover that they are not always beneficial, and are not infrequently, particularly in the sphere of commercial exploitation, positively harmful. Some white men may be among the discoverers, but self-interest, community feeling, and the exigencies of "prestige", make them put a bold front on it. The criticism is mainly from the subject race. Such criticism leads inevitably to revolt.

The issue would be simple, and individual sympathy could choose one of two obvious sides, were it possible for the countries of Asia and Africa, on obtaining sufficient power or armament, to follow the example of Tibet, and close their gates upon the West and all its works. It is not possible. Japan tried and failed. China did likewise. Even the Dalai Lama, secure behind the Himalayas, has succumbed to the amenity of a private electric-light plant. The continued expansion of Western ideas is inevitable. It may be regretted. There can be few persons of sensibility whose heart is not with Tibet in her effort to remain the last outpost of purely racial individualism on the face of the earth. But the "problem" cuts deeper. For among the extremest anti-white revolutionaries of Asia and Africa, there is not one who can or wishes to deny the necessity for his people's absorption of Western ideas. In fact, the extremer his fanaticism, the more he borrows of Western political and social ideology, and the quicker he wishes the process of assimilation to be. The conclusion is unavoidable, therefore, that the discontent which permeates the

coloured peoples has its roots in a dislike, not of Western institutions, but of the manner of their introduction; in other words, of the white man's complacent assumption and offensive expression of racial superiority. This dislike is naturally reinforced by the very slogans at present outstanding in the white man's political creed, and liberally borrowed from it: Liberty and Nationalism.

Even with the argument thus far advanced, it seems difficult to avoid the unqualified opinion that the coloured peoples have common justice on their side. For the white man's complacence is the ultimate sin against the Holy Ghost. Thus, doubtless, would my own sympathies have stood before I went to India, had I felt sufficient interest in India to give them logical form. But once in India, with the whole question of contact between East and West clothed in actual reality, obtruding itself, shrieking out loud, every hour of the day, I realized that here was no place for retrospective, sentimental judgment, but a need for the colder light of present and future expediency. By expediency is meant not British expediency, nor Indian expediency, but that of both peoples, and of the rest of the world with them.

The history of contact between East and West has been stated at some length in its general, historic aspect. Before considering the smaller problem, that of England and India, emphasis must again be laid on the general nature of the larger. For it is essential to recognize that the Indian revolt, if it is to be understood, cannot remain isolated as between England and India alone; and that it is actually only the individual expression of a world-wide impulse—an impulse which

threatens the white man with just retribution for his complacence. Pride of conquest, and the innate desire to maintain conquest, must be put aside if our country's past achievements are to bear good. Good name is more than conquest. If her good name is to be preserved, or, as it needs, to be improved, the fact that the issue between England and India is only part of that larger issue which involves the future course of all human effort cannot be too strongly insisted on. For, considering the subservience of the Near East, the decadence of the Middle, and the chaos of the Far, it is possible that on the successful outcome of this smaller issue will depend that of the larger. The larger issue lies not only between chaos and order, between peace and war, or between the submergence or survival of the white man's influence. Its importance lies fundamentally and ultimately in the fact that in this eternal contact between East and West, the West, to maintain its vitality, has always needed, and will always need, the contribution of the East. The instinct of all Western effort towards good is, and always has been, through a rational application of science, equity, and political theory; so that, in ages when these pursuits achieve successful concrete expression, that expression is elevated into a Golden Calf, an aim in itself, obscuring the higher and greater sense of Reality which is the immemorial property of the East. Never was there an age when material success was greater than in this. And already, in the United States, we perceive the nascence of a portentous barbarism, whose clamour before the Golden Calf threatens to obscure even the lesser, purely expedient virtues, such as justice and integrity, of materialistic civilization, and which pays

neither lip-service nor courtesy to the Universal Truth. From this barbarism, already infectious, paramount in Russia and growing in Japan, the true Asia must save us. But first she must save herself, must devise a means whereby Western ideas, instead of extinguishing, may reinforce, her genius. How we, Europeans, shall support her through this difficulty, and thus help regulate the contact of East and West to our own and the world's advantage—this is the larger problem.

The smaller, that of India, can now be seen in proportion. The Indians were the first to rebel against the white man's assumption of superiority. In their subsequent efforts, they have been the most persistent and systematic, and they have attracted the most notice. For these capacities they must be honoured. And yet: is no honour due to the English?

My own mental transformations on arrival in India may serve to illustrate the confusion which necessarily attends any attempt to achieve a detached conception of the problem. The mental strain involved in fitting logical shape to the plain facts revealed by every succeeding minute of the Indian day is overwhelming. The English visitor is faced with a great volume of novelty, a novelty which does not have to be sought out, as in European countries, but obtrudes itself at every footstep and at every word spoken; the effort of absorption is so great as to leave him, sometimes, physically out of breath. He must observe and record the fact of an unfamiliar country which is scarcely less than a continent; of a system of races, religions, languages, social divisions, climates, clothes, architectures, landscapes, trees, animals, flowers, and

fruits, which diversify every point of stoppage to a bewildering extent; and he must endeavour, however superficially, to place each against its evolutionary background. He must seek, starting from the basic impulses of the human character, to penetrate the secrets of a thousand new beliefs, prejudices, moralities, and tastes. To these efforts he must add that of revising all that he has previously been told, and then, having gone too far, that of revising the revision. In addition, his own countrymen and their institutions provide an unexpected source of continuous astonishment. Finally, there is himself to be watched, as different incidents and irritations drive his already inclined opinions towards different extremes and threaten to smother the slowly incubating seeds of truth. The various reactions which, in my case, resulted from these processes of thought, were consciously concerned with politics scarcely at all. But an analysis of their cumulative effect seems, nevertheless, to reveal the fundamental problem which colours all political activity throughout the country.

As I stepped from the aeroplane at Karachi on a hot August afternoon, the gaze of the assembled crowd turned in surprise to my hat; so that on the following morning I hastened to buy a topee. Its presence on my head, together with the sahib-formula of address employed by the taxi-driver, induced a sudden feeling of unreality. Stepping out of myself, I saw myself as a Russian film-producer would have seen me, badged as an Englishman-in-India, a brutal imperialist, a brawny exploiter . . . yet scarcely had I tilted the topee uneasily. On our leaving the shop, my companion suggested jocularly that we should now see a little of

India. Certainly India was not in sight; the view was of asphalt and tram-lines, bounded by rectangular blocks of commercial buildings; the shops were shut, passers-by few; Karachi groaned in silence beneath an English Sunday. The taxi moved leisurely down the main street, skirted a clock-tower encrusted with Gothic pinnacles, then swerved into a tortuous lane. Silence and Sunday were gone. A hive of humanity beset us, chafering before the open-fronted shops and booths, hurriedly removing their persons, chairs, and pipes from the narrow roadway lest our progress should be impeded, idling, contemplative, or hastening on errands, bearing loads, chattering, begging, rescuing their children; but one and all turning, as at a right-dress command, their hundred pairs of eyes in our direction. Without purpose or interest they gazed; but they gazed, and their gaze was the only static element in a cauldron of mobility. I gasped. I am not untravelled. Many surprises have been my fortune in foreign countries. But never has any thunderbolt fallen upon me with quite the unexpectedness of an Indian bazaar. "Indian bazaar" the very words reek of the obvious. And there the obvious was: the "colour of the East, the teeming millions"; the tiny humped cows wandering at will; the awnings and trades, sweetmeats and brassware; fakirs and sadhus, pockmarked, deformed, bedaubed with dung; every feature, every stature that man has evolved; hats, puggarees, shirts, waistcoats, *dhotis*, *lunghis*, trousers, and *saris* of uncountable shapes, colours, and patterns; nose-rings, bangles, and anklets; painted god-marks, teeth and gums stained red with pahn; the fantastic emaciation of one, the astounding corpulence of

another; even the girl-mothers with their wizened babies; every component of the multitude called echo in the memory, an echo from nursery days and nursery literature. And yet, inside me, was something very, very strange. For here was I in a position which I had never conceived nor wanted, a ruler among the ruled. There could be no doubt of it. It was written on every face, and if mine proclaimed a doubt, the topee hid it. I experienced a vague exaltation, an access of racial credit. Simultaneously a discomfort arose. I saw myself for the first time as the white man grasping the earth, focus of the earth's attention. And how should I, who am no stronger than others, resist the assumption of my own superiority, and preserve intact my desire for truth and proportion, solace and palliative of existence, against this distortion-mirror of complacence? I was disquieted, and my companion noticed it, though without divining the reason. "Look at them," he said. "It makes you realize what we're up against here in India." It did. It made me realize that the thing we are up against existed in myself.

Such feelings quickly passed. The situation was not then acute, and my interests were æsthetic rather than political. I could never take India, or myself in India, for granted; the surprise was too profound for that. But I did assume that, India being India, and myself being there, I was one, however humble, of a class of rulers, and entitled as such to deference and consideration. I took this much for granted, partly because deference and consideration were paid me, and partly because, during long journeys and exhausting attempts to see all that opportunity offered, the regent

attitude secured the greatest degree of comfort and efficiency.

Whether or not this attitude must necessarily be confused with, or breed, that of racial superiority is a question which this essay will presently discuss. But that, in the present course of things, the two tend to become identified, and the ruler tends to make his skin the symbol of divine appointment, admits of no doubt. If I ask myself whether I also confused the two, I answer that I did not. But who knows?

Coincident with this observation of myself under strange conditions began that of my fellow-countrymen. Much ridicule, sometimes discredit, has been poured of late years on the men and women who still pass in the home country under the name of Anglo-Indians.[1] And I must confess that my arrival was tinged with disillusion. The flight to India had been the outstanding experience of my short life. To come East for the first time across the territorial deserts, to realize the difficulties of the new air route, to talk with those engaged in overcoming them, to fly through air like hot flames, to come down at a lonely fort full of human bones, to behold from a great height the baleful pallor and desolate ranges of the Persian littoral, to cross the Trucial Oman above the black humps and silver fiords of Musandam, to take a last meal beneath a tent in Baluchistan half a day's camel-ride from the nearest habitation; such incidents, after the ripe pleasures of a London summer, seemed at last to promise a taste of that other world where men do and breathe; such incidents were profoundly refreshing.

[1] In India this term is also one of contempt, being now applied to the offspring of the two races and their descendants.

And then, on the last afternoon, to come upon the mushroom blocks of a self-important municipality; to drive along an asphalt road furnished with English sign-posts; to stay at a club, where, though all was kindness, to be without a dinner-jacket (as I was) was to be debarred from human intercourse; to be entertained at the local university and afterwards, having heard the Principal remark that he liked being in England since he was not there treated as a black man, to be commiserated with upon having been ensnared into a "wogs' tea-party"; to find more dinner-jackets on the cockle that took me to Bombay in a rough sea; to behold Bombay itself, a city where lavish, unrepentant ugliness sits enthroned as the tenth muse; to meet, on all sides, the assumption of racial superiority, unquestioned save for the purpose of scientific exposition; to attempt to disentangle, and so not to offend, the susceptible social grades and conventions of white society; these experiences, and many others, drove me, despite all the hospitality and help that I could ask, to curse the mark of this Western beast, and to feel that even the French, or simple chaos, might have been preferable to the existing desecration of the once gorgeous and remote Hindustan.

The feeling was genuine enough during the first week. But it was largely the feeling of a traveller anxious to be out of his own country, instead of immersed in an exaggerated parody of it. Gradually my discontents were swallowed up. For the very scale of my countrymen's eccentricity invited study rather than hate. And in addition, my æsthetic sense was pleased, not only with India, now discovered, but with an alien work, which, as the highest expression of a

national genius, may justly be called a work of art. This was the English administration. To describe how, through small things, trains, policemen, rest-houses, archæological repairs, water, medicine, flower-beds, ice, shade, the unobtrusive qualities of this monument gradually develop a view of its magnificent whole lies beyond the scope of my argument. And on this subject at least literature is not lacking. Ubiquity and uniformity, in relation to area and population, are the basic qualities to which the admiration leaps. Like the dominant theme in a never-ending symphony, the administration is always present or presaged. Its comfort is mental as well as physical. Indians know this, whatever their politics. Let them take the administration and preserve it. The English remain its artist.

Last of all on my path of first discovery came the beginning of insight into the Indian's attitude towards the English ; an insight which, though still groping at the end of eight months, gradually deepened. To use the word " Indian ", with its thousand implications, in this or any other context is always regarded by experts as impossible. But it is part of my thesis that the term, as applied to all those in the country who are not actual savages or whose individuality has not been crushed out of them by disabilities of caste, has an intelligible meaning, like the terms American or Britisher. The attitude of the Indian towards the ruling race as a corporate entity, symbolic of the West, has necessarily been defined as one of moral subservience. But his attitude towards the individual of the ruling race, is, if that individual will permit it, that of man to man. He recognizes the ruler ; but if

the ruler is not engaged, at that moment, in ruling—a pastime in which I seldom indulged save when a sleeping-berth had been improperly reserved—then the Indian becomes no longer the ruled, but his buoyant self, free to employ subtlety or frankness, chatter or reserve, according to his temperament. Unfortunately there are too many English whose work only brings them into contact with a limited number of Indian subordinates, and who, even when not engaged in command, cannot or will not dissemble their assumption of superiority. Before such people, the Indian withdraws his personality. But in his soul, as one human being faced with another, he has no more feeling of real inferiority than an aristocrat before a king or an employee on a nobleman's estate. This feeling springs to life, and is gone, with the other's claim, not to rule, but to incarnate a higher form of creation.

Were this otherwise, the problem would be without hope, and India would be the most hateful country in the world. In fact, the Englishman meets, wherever he goes and so long as he remains impervious to the disease of his race, a charming desire to smooth his path and to perform spontaneous kindnesses for him. Intercourse between the two races has its exasperations: the Indian seems to us often lazy or absent-minded or over-proud beyond the right of sinful man. But at bottom he is, if calm, reasonable and fair-minded. And it cannot but be assumed that if these qualities are for long in abeyance, the fault must lie with causes outside his control, and his complaint must have a measure of right in it.

I have sought to show, in terms of personal ex-

perience, first, how easily and naturally the complacent assumption of racial superiority can overtake the Englishman; secondly, into what arrogance and narrow incongruity it can drive him; thirdly, how superlative is his real work; and fourthly, how fortunate he is in the material on which his edifice rests. The first two experiences reveal the causes that have brought the problem into being; the last two, why its solution is not impossible.

To summarize:—The contact between East and West is not new. From it the West has gained as much in the past as the East is gaining now. Furthermore, the materialistic tendencies of Western civilization to-day show that, if the East can be saved from those tendencies, she can again prove the benefactor and saviour of the West. Meanwhile, the Western man's assumption of racial superiority has rendered him odious to the East. And the only means which the East has devised of resisting this assumption are, either to swallow his materialism whole and undigested, or else to take a little of it and rebel against him forcibly. Japan has tried the first course and is losing her soul; China the second, and relapsed into chaos. India remains, holding in her precarious balance the residue of hope. And the problem for English and Indian alike is so to regulate the contact between East and West as to avoid these two extremes, and to find a way whereby the East may accomplish the assimilation of Western ideas to the furtherance rather than the destruction of her spiritual gifts; just as, in the past, Europe assimilated the Eastern ideas that had crystallized in Christianity.

The problem demands of the unprejudiced observer

a high degree of intellectual application. He cannot help seeing that if the contact between East and West is ever to be regulated for the profit of mankind, the English in India are furthest on the way to success. At the same time, he cannot help sympathizing with a people of deep and original attainments who find it no longer possible to acquiesce in the Englishman's assumption of racial superiority—an assumption which becomes increasingly offensive in proportion as the Englishman's own pronounced conception of human dignity is assimilated by the Indian. Thus the unprejudiced observer finds himself in substantial accord with two opponent interests: a political achievement of incalculable importance to the future of the race; and the wounded self-respect of men who represent one-fifth of the world's total population. That this opposition exists is the chief fact of the moment. And the observer must ask himself how far it is inherent in the system of English rule, or by what means it can be eliminated. The answer lies not with politics alone. For it is plain that, however satisfactory a device of autonomous government may result from the recent consultations, however cheerfully the Hindu lamb may be induced into the bosom of the Mussulman wolf, however generously the Princes may agree to surrender power to the interest of a national federation, the peace of India will remain disturbed, and Asia bereft of guidance, until the Englishman resident in India learns that he has brought the trouble on himself and resolves to make amends.

II

THE INDIANS

I. THE UNITY OF INDIA

BEFORE attempting to discover how well or ill the Englishman in modern India fulfils the responsibility that has descended on him, some effort must be made to realize what India is. Expert opinion holds that, but for a veneer of nationalism engendered by a uniform administration, India is not: "There is no such thing as India," runs the parrot-cry. In the same breath, the same political dogmatizer will remark on the change that has come over India during the last half-century; thereby implying the existence of an entity subject to change. Point this out, and your informant will reply that the Indian entity, in so far as it may exist, has been created by the English. Here again he confuses the real issue. For the difference between the Indias past and present lies not in the fact that India did not exist before and does now, but in the recent capacity to express and consolidate her existence which she has obtained from the English administration.

The word "India" is primarily a geographical term. Such terms imply not necessarily uniformity within, but an essential separation from the world without. Among the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula, this separation and distinction have always been keenly

felt. Thus the whole of Hindu philosophy is woven with references to the Himalayas and the uplands beyond them, seat of uncharted wisdom. The very consciousness of such a mountain barrier, of such an array of glittering peaks strung along the whole of the country's land frontier, enables every Indian, whatever his creed, tongue, or race, to speak of himself as an Indian, and as one with other Indians of other creeds, tongues, and races. Furthermore, it is only necessary to read the accounts of travellers from beyond those mountains, such as that of Hiuan-Tsang in the seventh century, to realize that, throughout the centuries, India has always seemed to outsiders more of a composite entity than ever did, for example, the Roman Empire. The Emperor Babur, in a section of that unique Asiatic document, his memoirs, written about 1519, gives vivid expression to this sentiment:

"The Empire of Hindustan is extensive, populous, and rich. On the east, the south, and even the west, it is bounded by the Great Ocean. On the north it has Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar. The capital of all Hindustan is Delhi.

"Hindustan is situated in the first, second, and third climates. No part of it is in the fourth. It is a remarkably fine country. It is quite a different world compared with our countries. Its hills and rivers, its forests and plains, its animals and plants, its inhabitants and their languages, its winds and rains, are all of a different nature. . . . You have no sooner passed Sind than the country, the trees, the stones, the wandering tribes, the manners and customs of the people, are all entirely those of Hindustan. Even the reptiles are different. . . . The frogs of Hindustan are worthy of notice. Though of the same species of our own, yet they will run six or seven gaz on the face of the water."

Finally, after a category of animals, flowers, trees, and fruit, the arrogant Central Asian humanist sums up with his famous description:

"The country of Hindustan has few pleasures to recommend it. The people are not handsome. They have no idea of the charms of friendly society, of frankly mixing together, or of familiar intercourse. They have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manner, no kindness or fellow-feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning or executing their handicraft works, no skill or knowledge in design or architecture; they have no horses, no good flesh, no grapes or musk-melons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread in their bazars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick. . . . For their buildings they study neither elegance nor climate, appearance nor regularity. The peasants and the lower classes all go about naked. . . .

"The chief excellency of Hindustan is that it is a large country and has abundance of gold and silver. . . . Another convenience of Hindustan is that the workmen of every profession and trade are innumerable and without end. For any work, or any employment, there is always a set ready, to whom the same employment and trade have descended from father to son for ages."

To this description, Sir Lucas King, the most recent editor of Leyden and Erskine's translation, appends the following note: "Babur's opinions regarding India are nearly the same as those of most Europeans of the upper class, even at the present day." Unfortunately he is right, and his note explains much of that harsh absence of sympathy in the English which so disquiets those of them who think otherwise. But like Babur, he too vindicates the conception of India as a single country —a conception which the Emperors Asoka, Harsha,

and Babur's grandson, Akbar, though separated by long intervals of time, did actually invest with political reality. It must be remembered that all the great warriors and rulers of India have at all times sought to emulate this success; and that the recollection of those three reigns, though sometimes exaggerated by nationalist historiographers, has preserved political unity in the Indian consciousness as a proper and desirable condition.

Nevertheless, it must be evident to the blindest supporter of the new aspirations, that India presents a scheme of social, political, philosophical, and artistic disintegration without parallel in human history. The cause of this condition seems, at first sight, not difficult to trace. For ages the more energetic races of the North-west have poured down to the Indian plains through the comparatively easy passes of the Hindu-Kush. In a lesser degree, the west coast has proved hospice to countless traders and refugees from religious persecutions of the Middle East. Yet most countries in the world have received invaders and colonists; and have, in time, assimilated the strangers into their own schemes of life and thought. India has not done so. Her scheme, from before history was written, has been too diffuse. The cause of this is more difficult to determine.

The key to the understanding of this national idiosyncrasy lies with a branch of historical science which has, hitherto, scarcely even been stated, save by the classical *genius loci*, and has never been developed at all. This science is the calculation of the visual effect of landscape on human activity. In nothing is India more distinguished from the rest of the planet than in

her appearance. In general, the country is flat, yet perpetually broken into small, mean formations; nature is suburban; "the country and towns of Hindustan are extremely ugly", says Babur; "all its towns and lands have a uniform look . . ."; only the occasional rivers, of vast breadth and volume, tell suddenly of the area that has given them birth. Thus, solid political units have not been induced by the physical geography of the country. Philosophically, it is the same; the root cause of India's genius for disintegration has sprung from the unknown past with the roots of her thought. And anyone who has pondered the birth of reason on the classic shores of the Ægean, or the birth of Monotheism amid the opalescent sands of the desert, or the birth of music beneath the colourless crags and pines of northern Europe, will know how intimately the development of thought is bound up with visual surroundings. Save in the minute details of animals and flowers, the Indian scene lacks both colour and form to an extent whose totality is almost frightening. The light, steely grey, destroys them. The newly arrived visitor is dazed to find himself moving about a world of two dimensions, from which all hint of recession or mass is absent. Between eleven o'clock and three it is impossible to take a photograph; there is nothing to take; the shadows, where the vertical sun permits them to exist at all, have been destroyed by the light refracted from the ground; and the developed negative displays a bemused blank. Thus, just as the Indian architect has never attempted that play of masses with which the European gains his effects, and has been obliged to develop a novel (and hitherto misunderstood) principle

of creating architectural form by an intricate play of millions of small shadows arranged in structural patterns; so likewise the Indian thinker has reared a system of a thousand possibilities, ranging through the whole continuum of the universe, and immensely subdivided in accordance with a profound conviction of human inequality. From this conviction springs that innate sense of propriety, decorum, and acceptance of status, which is the Indian's most remarkable social gift—a gift which, if ever it be allowed to fructify within a stable political framework, may prove a far greater advantage to the world at large than the spiral hungering after "success" which has enthralled the West and the vassals of Western thought. This loosely built, non-dogmatic system of speculation permits a universal belief that it is every man's proper function, be he sufficiently endowed with the power of thought, to pursue an individual quest of Reality, and to practise, in order to attain his end, a strict bodily and social discipline whose degrees may vary, but which can never be subordinated to considerations of greater political or social convenience.

Thus we are presented with a country geographically as distinct from the rest of the world as Australia; thickly inhabited and possessing a high degree of civilization; too large ever to have attained permanent political unity before the advent of mechanical transport; too featureless geographically to have split up into a permanent agglomeration of national units; too formless visually to have evolved schemes of rational inquiry such as the Greek, or of monotheistic governance such as the Jewish; and supporting a people or peoples who, for these very reasons, have circumscribed

the purpose of being within a framework of religious individualism and of increasingly complex religious custom.

Upon this fluid scene have swept, since history was first written, two chief invaders. First came the Moslems, who, while preserving intact their culture and religion, though not their tongue, have seen all their efforts towards political integration perpetually and permanently frustrated, and who have become as individualist and divided as the Hindus they sought to rule. On their heels followed the English, to give, at long last, actuality to the dream of a permanently unified India. But in estimating the English achievement, one peculiar condition attaching to their advent must always be remembered—a condition which explains their past success and perhaps their inadequacy for the future. For the English have never, owing to the climate, or perhaps to some intuitive lack of sympathy with the country, colonized India. The stream of English efficiency has flowed undiluted from its native source; its exponents have come out from England, and eventually, their task completed, have returned thither; while their children, whether destined for the same service or not, have been sent home at an early age before the Indian scene has affected their characters. Thus India has had no opportunity of exercising her disintegrating genius on her white rulers. And thus, at the same time, those rulers have never been able to transmit their sympathies and understanding to the younger generations who eventually take their place in the commerce or administration of the country. Though an Englishman spend his whole adult life and capacity in India;

though his personal genius has found full and satisfying expression there; though he will be miserable, and knows it, on retirement; India never becomes his home. His thoughts are always toward England, a place which, in fact, he detests, and where, far from being "somebody", he is usually an object of ridicule. And the visitor will observe that he habitually refers to the land which has given him happiness, wealth, and position, and which he regards as an artist regards his pictures, as "this bloody country". Thus, though he has been the means of giving expression to Indian national unity, he has, *of his own choice*, no part in that unity. Rather, he tends and upholds it. It is the property of Indians alone, and as such can only be the outcome of long dormant potentiality, a potentiality conjured from the visual and geographical peculiarities of the country with their concomitant modes of thought and their resulting racial and political fluidity. This latter quality may appear, from the European standpoint, the very negation of unity, potential or actual. But when it is considered that over no comparable area in the world are so many peoples of so many races, creeds, and tongues, so inextricably commingled, it is evident that "Indians", who deserve that appellation by their consciousness of a common fate, may hold the seed of a more exemplary and more permanent unity than the hard, prejudiced, and aggressive states of Europe and America.

Such are the ancient verities which constitute the Indian entity. Round the spirit of that entity the English have begun to erect a concrete body. Meanwhile, the spirit itself has been so reinforced by the ideas of the modern world as to have now become the

most potent force alive in the country. And the future history of India will be determined by whether this force, once it ceases to be invigorated by the struggle against foreign repression, will collapse before the eternal instinct towards disintegration, or will exchange, while there is still time, the gaudy nationalism of the moment for a course of true co-operation with the English, and between all Indians, in the completion of the political body. The seed has taken root. And however unreal the hot-gospel of the nationalist fanatic, who seeks with flag and anthem to convince both himself and the stranger that here is a ready-made fascisto-patriotic nation only waiting political emancipation to dazzle the world with an uplifting array of temperance movements, midwifery classes, and athletic triumphs, the means of nourishing the seed have been created in real enough form by the English administration. The administration, in this context, has accomplished two great things. It has provided the country with a *lingua franca*; so that members of all communities and districts can meet in intelligible discussion. And furthermore it has provided, by its railway system, the means, and by its centralized bureaucracy and legislatures, the necessity, of their doing so. Thus, for the educated classes, India has been transformed, in fact as well as in spirit, into a single country. General tariffs, currency, postal system, and in some cases taxation, combine to increase the sense of national unity among all those who have the intelligence to concern themselves with politics at all.

It is important to distinguish the reality from the unreality of modern Indian nationalism. The un-

reality, which, even among those who recognize the full benefit of the English administration to the cause of unity, is at once the part-cause and whole weapon of the present discontent, derives from India's suddenly acquired capacity to regard herself, through the eyes of the outside world, and to judge herself by universal standards. On arrival at Karachi, I happened to ask the High Commissioner in Sind what, in his experience of thirty years, was the greatest change that had come over the country. He replied that it was only during and since the War that Indians had come to look on themselves as anything more than people self-contained within their own boundaries, oblivious of outside interest or opinion, and content to achieve contact with the West through the English only. Realizing with a start that the world was looking at them, they have begun to look at themselves. Self-confidence or self-acceptance have given place to self-consciousness.

It is easy to imagine what the Indian must have seen when once he had embarked on this process of historical introspection. While on every side the peoples of the world were busy consolidating and rearranging themselves in accordance with their real or imagined national identities; while it was patent that the narrower and more jealous the identity, the more power and respect it commanded; and while this whole system was accelerated at the end of the War, was imposed from above on Arabs and Jews, and was validated from below by bloody insurrection in Ireland; only the Indian, of all the great nations, could be observed in passive acceptance of a foreign rule and administration, which, though welcome for its material benefits, had been imposed by conquest and maintained by force.

In his former isolation, the Indian might or might not have tolerated his position as member of a subject race in perpetuity. But to find himself regarded, in the eyes of the world, as a member of a subject race, on a level, for all political purposes, with the negroes of Africa, was insupportable. His troops had fought in the War and had been largely responsible for the conquest of Mesopotamia; his representatives had attended the Peace Conference. In addition, the other British dominions, already self-governing, were now about to dispense with even the form and letter of English authority. Yet still he, product of an older civilization than the European and endowed with intelligence above the common lot, but encased and damned within a coloured skin, was consigned to the whims of an alien bureaucracy and denied all effective share in shaping the course of his national destiny. Throughout the Western world, national self-determination was being preached as the highest purpose of humanity. And was not the world being made safe, and had not Indian troops helped to make it safe, for democracy? Yet there seemed small hope to the Indian that his country would be permitted a share in this general distribution of political advantage. Dyarchy was tried. Grudgingly bestowed, it was grudgingly accepted, and did little to obliterate the prevailing sense of national humiliation.

This reflected sense of national identity had been growing, among a small minority of the intelligentsia, for the past three decades. The first national Congress assembled in 1885 at the instance of Mr. A. O. Hume, a retired civil servant. Soon after, the Bengal terrorists took the initiative in violent outrage. The result of

the Russo-Japanese War was received with the wildest acclamation, as showing for the first time since the eighteenth century that Europe in conflict with Asia was not necessarily invincible. Five years later the question of the admission of Indians, on equal terms with white settlers, to British colonies, had become acute. But it was only during the War and after it that the desire for recognition, not only by the English, but also by, and because of, the world in general, of the Indians' right to an effective national identity in accordance with modern ideas, became urgent and obtained the support of the whole educated class throughout the country, irrespective of racial or religious differences.

Superficially, the chief result of this widespread movement has been to infect the educated population with an acute distemper of touchiness and vanity; to engender a disregard for written or spoken truth, repellent in its completeness; and, worst of all, to furnish the rising generation with a false and contemptible set of materialistic standards, by adhering to which it may hope, as it thinks, to stand well with the Americanized Western world. But such disabilities were perhaps inevitable on closer contact with a grossly imperfect but morally irresistible civilization. For on probing beneath the surface, it is apparent that this same movement has actually given forcible, if sometimes incoherent, expression to the real unity of the country, to the consciousness of which the traveller, as he travels, becomes gradually aware, that India, despite her system of racial, religious, and social disintegration, possesses a soul and personality as tangible and definite as a jury of English

grocers or a row of English elms. If the false standards induced by the false ideology of the modern world are allowed to pass, and this real emotion, born with the trees and flowers and scents of the pallid Indian soil, is preserved and purified in its new and positive form, then and then only, will the struggle and misery of recent years not have been wasted.

Corollary to this over-sensitiveness to Western opinion is the present almost universal belief that the English government and the English people are engaged in an active propaganda to discredit the Indian races in the eyes of the outside world, and to prove them unfit, both physically and mentally, for the bestowal of political autonomy. During my voyage from Karachi to Bombay, while the rest of the ship's passengers were staggering out of the saloon to be sick over their shirt-fronts, I came into conversation with a young and widely travelled Parsi, who informed me, to my great astonishment, that of course he and every one else knew that *Mother India* had been published under the auspices of the English government. When I tried to recall for his information the extreme distress occasioned by that book's appearance in official circles in London, he assumed a smile of tolerance and pity, as though he had just rebuffed a confidence trickster and bore no malice. Those who wish to gauge the intense resentment aroused by *Mother India* must read *Uncle Sham*, a respondent exposure of God's (and Miss Mayo's) own country, compiled from the statistics of Judge Lindsay and the records of Chicago gangsters, and still on sale at every station bookstall in India. Miss Mayo has been largely discredited by her careless use of long superseded authorities such as the Abbé

Dubois. Actually her revelations are true of certain sections of the population; though in what proportion it is difficult to ascertain. But when the national honour is affronted, the virtue of truth ceases to be of account. Nothing could have shown more clearly the genuine worth and realism of Indian national sentiment than the attitude of my Parsi. Not for one moment would Miss Mayo have ventured or wished to impute to the highly disciplined Zoroastrian community any of the practices she so graphically describes, nor would any Zoroastrian venture to defend those practices in others. Yet the Parsi was outraged. He was outraged because, although a member of the smallest, richest, most racially foreign, and most religiously distinct community in India, the Indian nation, of which he felt himself to be a part, had been held up to the execration of the Western world; and because, in his belief, this fortuitous publication undertaken by an inquisitive female from across the Atlantic, was neither more nor less than part of an official conspiracy to discredit the very real and admirable patriotism that burned within him. There may be no such thing as an Indian nation. But there most certainly exists an Indian nationalism which transcends not only the differences of race, class, and creed, but even the shallow ideology of industrial and political slogans imported from the West.

But though a nationalism dictated by the critical gaze of the modern world provide the will to invest the spirit and individuality of India with a concrete mechanism, the power is yet wanting. The ingenuity of constitutional theorists, combined with the accumulated experience of the most capable administrators in

history, may succeed, eventually, in constructing a perfect scheme of autonomous government. The motive power must be found by the Indians themselves. And always looms that spectral, primary instinct towards disintegration, born of the light, which pulverizes Indian thought into centrifugal sparks, destroying its objectivity and its power of devising practical means to an always emotional end. Politically, by comparison with his other attainments, the Hindu is naturally incompetent. We may give him materials and plan ; we may cast the parts and erect the machine ; but who will keep it working and repaired? It is here, in the immediate future, that the growing urgency of contact between East and West must justify itself ; must do for the Indian what Buddhism once did, and furnish him with that humanist capacity to co-ordinate thought and convenience which he so disastrously lacks. For Buddhism was the offshoot of Hinduism. And if Buddha could renounce the subjective emotions of the ascetic for the objective regulation of conduct in society, and could thereby set his face towards a higher and more single truth than could ever be attained by the innumerable postulations of individuals, so may the example and patience of Western reason and constructive effort, instead of vitiating Indian thought with a superficial materialism, succeed in bringing to life a second Indian humanism. Unless and until some such defence against the sun and the evil genius of the country is devised, the house of self-government, be it never so beautiful, will be founded on sand and will dissolve into sand.

2. THREE FACTORS IN THE MODERN COMMUNITY

The general moral effect of Western civilization on Asiatic has been outlined in Chapter I. Its particular effects on particular Indian institutions have already been subjected by so many writers to such exhaustive analysis, that to recapitulate them were to obscure still further the fundamental verities of the problem. In Chapter II it is desired mainly to attempt some account of that momentous body, the modern Indian intelligentsia, who are the trustees, for good or evil, of the Indian national consciousness. Yet any such account of what is, numerically, so small a minority of the population must necessarily derive its reality, in the mind of the reader, from the background against which it moves. This background contains, roughly speaking, four main forces : first, the financial and commercial interests ; second, the warrior peoples of the North and West, Sikhs, Punjabis, Kashmiris, Pathans, and, in lesser degree, Rajputs and Mahrattas, whose bent finds employment in the Indian Army ; third, the ryots or cultivators, comprising the great mass of the Indian population ; and fourth, the Princes, whose territories lie contiguous to, and sometimes inside, every province of British India, and who are now stepping forward to suggest that the spirit of their treaties be honoured before they consent to participate in the proposed Indian federation. The financial and commercial interests differ little from those of other countries ; some indication of their attitude to present problems will be found in the following chapter. The warlike peoples, who can and will fight to prevent their subjection to professional politicians drawn from

races they despise, may hold or destroy the peace of India in the future. At present, however, it remains to be seen whether they cannot be satisfied, and their pride cannot be assuaged, by the devices of representative government. In any case their part in the Indian equilibrium has been so often stated, and at such length, that it is unnecessary to repeat it; the curious reader need only glance at a recruiting map to understand it. But the personalities of the ryot and the Prince, though much has been written of them, in their institutional aspect, have remained obscure, perhaps for this very reason. They deserve, possibly, some further elucidation.

(i). *The Ryot*

The writer on Indian affairs never fails to stress, with exemplary insistence, the crucial fact that nine-tenths of the Indian population live in the villages and are supported by them. His object in this insistence is twofold. If he is a nationalist, it is to illustrate the perennial poverty and financial oppression to which the great majority of the inhabitants are subject. If he is an Englishman, it is to reveal the intelligentsia as wholly unrepresentative of the quiescent, non-political masses, whose sole desire is to till their fields in practical assurance of livelihood and justice. Each exposition contains the germ of truth. But between them, the personality of the cultivator is swallowed up. To the European reader, anxious for information, he exists only as an economic factor, and not as a human being.

In Western society, "the job" is the symbol of security; to be out of a job is to invite the sympathy

of the community. In India, the equivalent symbol is land. In relation to land, at least, the Indian maintains a practical sense of affairs. A small proportion of the landed population seeks employment in the large towns; in Calcutta, whose permanent population is more than a million, not more than a quarter of the inhabitants regard the town as their home; their thoughts and purpose, like their wives and families, are with the land; and during the intermittent crises of land settlement or land reassessment in their native districts, not even the threat of permanent dismissal by their present employer will keep them from returning to their villages, there to reinforce their claims to those ancestral tenures which give so potent a continuity to the lives of each succeeding generation. Wherever the village-born Indian goes, wherever his occupation may take him, this tenure, its maintenance and possibly its extension, supersede all other considerations. In sickness or holiday, for marriage or the birth of a child, it is to the village he returns; and thither, during his period of employment elsewhere, is dispatched a large proportion of his wages.[1] In old age, he settles down on the land once more. And his savings, should there be any, go to the land and give him advantage over the majority of his fellows who have passed their lives in the fields and, probably, in the thrall of extortionate money-lenders.

The tenure of land is the most constant and socially

[1] In the Hooghly jute mills (Calcutta), employing about 400,000 men, the average yearly wage is £19 10*s*, of which £3 6*s*, or one-sixth, is dispatched to the villages. Thus the total value of money orders issued by the post offices in the jute mill area (where the number of other workers is insignificant) during 1929 amounted to Rs 1,76,29,387 2. 6, or approximately £1,322,204.

binding factor in Indian life. No large political calculation can ever be valid unless it first surveys the possibility of this tenure's being upset. By that means, and that alone with the exception of a religious persecution, could the masses be called into play as a revolutionary instrument. And on this tenure rests, and always has rested, the edifice of Indian finance. Of the £72,320,000 which comprised the total revenues of the British Indian provinces for the year 1929–30, £26,610,000, or considerably more than one-third, were contributed by land revenue. The present method of collecting this revenue is inequitable, irregular, and obsolete. The assessments are still largely determined by the executives responsible for the meeting of financial ends. And while the large landowners are frequently protected by direct agreements with the Crown, agreements which were lavishly distributed as political bribes during the early part of the last century, the weight of budgetary expansion is left to fall on the small proprietors. Hence the under-current of discontent which can always be stirred to life in the villages by a sufficient exposition of political improbability.

The divergencies of land tenure vary from the estates of the large zemindars, often held under the agreements mentioned above, through the intermediate stages of small farmers and proprietors, to that of pure villeinage. The larger zemindars enjoy enormous incomes, and in many cases are far wealthier than the smaller princes, whose revenues are absorbed by the needs of their states. But the mass of the cultivators, free or bound, live very close to subsistence level. Nor is the land revenue their only share of the financial

burden. It is they who pay the salt tax and the excise duties, which comprise respectively the third largest source of revenue to the Central government and the second largest to the Provincial governments. And it is they again who bear the chief incidence of many of the customs' duties, particularly from the ever-increasing charge on foreign cloth. For the Indian politician, who rails with all the sentimental fervour of a Clydeside leader against the Indian Government's salt and drink monopolies, does not hesitate, in his Lancastrophobia, to make the poorest of his compatriots pay more and yet more for his cotton clothes, in order to subsidize the incompetent and extravagantly managed mills of Bombay, whose war-time profits, if conserved with discretion, might have tided them over decades of industrial adversity.

The traveller in India, and, for matter of that, the educated resident, English or Indian, seldom leaves the ordinary channels of communication. As the motor traverses the main road, or the train flashes through the eternal scene of little fields and ditches broken by the sharp blue-green of parky trees, he looks from the window and then leans back again, knowing that India is all and always the same. Sometimes the tower of a temple, the dome of a mosque or tomb, or the outline of a ruined fort blurred with pestiferous creepers, breaks the horizon, to recall the activity of remote individuals. But the recollection is dissolved. as the motor draws up to refuel, or the train to re-water, by the uniform stares of a seething humanity born out of nothingness, to gaze for the moment before expiring into nothingness. Who are all these men and

women, where do they live, what do they do and think about, why do they sit there, where are they going, and why? It is they who are India, they who have built the temples and mosques and worshipped in them, they who have tilled the fields, dug the ditches, and reaped the crops. And if they are India, what does the traveller know of India? This question I asked myself at every station during 16,000 miles of railway journeys. Though I am far from having answered it, circumstances enabled me to visit a few at least of India's half a million villages, and to impress the outward reality of the people's existence on my mind.

A village on a road is an exceptional village, and is probably, despite appearance to the contrary, a local metropolis, boasting an intermittent market, one or two shops, and perhaps even a post office. The real village, where lives the majority of the population, lies in the midst of the fields and must be approached on foot. The houses, irregularly placed, are of mud, the earth around appearing to have risen up into low rectangles. Overhead, the great architectural trees of India spread a grateful shade. The approaching visitor will have been observed. And the headman will be standing outside the village to receive him and conduct him down the narrow six-foot alleys between the mud walls. Or perhaps he may come upon the village worthies, three or four grouped together round their hereditary chief on a mud platform, seated on string bedsteads, and, if some business is on hand, engaged in watching one of their number laboriously trace hieroglyphics in sticky violet ink on a bit of exercise-book paper.

All the world over, villages have at least two things in common: a shop and a church. In India the shop is closed most of the day behind carved double doors set in a mud wall. At dusk these open, and women come gliding up to fill their kerosene bottles. The church, temple or mosque stands round the next corner, offset by a small space, whose mud walls are tidied with a little whitewash.

My time was always restricted. I never learnt to speak even that imperative dialect habitually employed towards servants. And even this would have been of little use in the villages. Therefore I cannot pretend in any sense that I entered at all into village life. But as my advent was generally regarded as a momentous occurrence, the headman probably attributing it to some machination of Government; and as I was therefore received with deference and hospitality, I sometimes asked to be shown an ordinary village house, where I could see the people at home. The headman, if he thinks me mad, is pleased to exhibit his authority, and, proceeding down the mud alleys, leads the way into a mud courtyard. Beyond a tethered bullock, whose peace is disturbed by a flock of chickens, squat a group of men round a hubble-bubble, near whom, yet apart, a woman squats also, at her spinning. On my approach, she interrupts her movements to draw her *sari* from her forehead down to her chin; then, blinded, continues. It is evening. Suddenly a dull light glows from the open doorway of the mud house at the side. The woman rises and moves her apparatus within. With a glance to obtain the headman's acquiescence, I follow. Inside, the mud walls enclose a hurricane lantern and a string bedstead or two, if

the owners are prosperous, but more probably nothing but a small fire of sticks in a corner, over which another woman shreds a pat of dry dung. Unable to thank either of them, I emerge, to find the darkness complete.

On one occasion I made my way to a village in the Punjab after nightfall. The headman was found and conducted me to his own spacious residence. A door in a wall twelve feet high gave entrance to a large court lit by a hurricane lantern. Within, the house disclosed two rooms, the larger twenty feet long and fifteen high, its roof supported on a single crutch pillar. The faint light of a wick floating in vegetable oil disclosed a double row of string bedsteads ready for any visitors of sufficient status. In the other room, a party of women were again crouching over a fire on the floor, preparing the headman's evening meal. Against the wall stood a stack of sugar-canes, one of which the headman offered me as his only possible form of hospitality. I sat on a bedstead and sucked it. Afterwards we made a tour of the other houses of the village, whose inmates were merely dazed by my sudden apparition out of the night.

One last scene remains unforgettable. In addition to shop and church every village has its well. Standing beneath the shiny dark-green leaves of a spreading tree late one afternoon in Sind, I gazed in fascination upon the ingenious mechanism of a Persian wheel: the bullocks, coupled and blindfold, treading out their antique circle; the tortured interaction of the wooden cogs, each carved from a whole tree-stump; the long iron band with its burden of pots falling for ever and ever into the black orifice, and for ever rising out of it a-drip with cold silver water; each pot, before follow-

ing the heels of its predecessor into the depths again, emptying its water into a narrow groove of clay; the groove giving on to an embanked stream; and finally the stream, running swiftly down an incline, branching out into a myriad capillaries over the surrounding fields. The shadows were lengthening. A chestnut pony fidgeted on its tether. As I stood, engrossed with the perfect beauty of the scene, a line of women defiled through an opening in a high bank and made towards the stream. Poor women they were, cultivators since childhood; some old, some young; their hands, had I shaken them, would have felt horny and calloused. Yet as they walked, walking as all Indian women do, it was with such aristocracy of movement, such evidence of measureless tradition, such absolute control of every muscle, yet with such absolute flexibility, that I might have watched with less profit a passage of Louis XIV through his court, or a performance of the Imperial *Corps de Ballet* before the Tsar. From the head of each flowed a *sari* of dull crimson dotted with black circles, beneath which was revealed a black bodice, short-sleeved, tight-fitting, and powdered with small pieces of mirror that glinted gently against the falling sun. On the head of each reposed a jar of Rhodian shape decorated in Rhodian fashion. Arms hung bare, save for a casing of bangles above the wrist. Round the ankles, hoops of massive silver drew the eye to the source of poise, the slow-moving, flat-spread feet.

The silence remained unbroken. One by one each came to the stream, took her jar from her head, bent down, filled it, straightened up, replaced the jar on her head, and moved noiselessly away. The impression

of them will never fade. Just a year later I attended a charity ball in a London hotel, at which the beauties of contemporary England consented to exhibit themselves in procession upon a raised platform. One by one they too came forward, but staggering and strutting like marionettes on a string, their arms and legs flying this way and that, their bodies propelled with jerks and starts, their eyes goggling and their lips wriggling. I remembered the women of Sind, and I asked myself, as I shall always ask myself, why and how the cultivation of an Indian field should produce such taste and beauty, and what effect that beauty must exercise on those perpetually in contact with it.

Beyond the event of one headman's begging to assure me that he was a loyal supporter of the Raj and that they—pointing to the assembled village—were all contented and happy, I received no indication of the ryot's political instincts or inclinations. Actually, these scarcely exist. But, apart from the gradual infiltration of manufactured commodities, there are signs, faint as yet, but increasing, that the villager may soon begin to achieve some kind of contact with Western ideas and Western economic theory.

The germ of the new movement lies in the co-operative principle and the credit society. The Indian cultivator has at present no object beyond the immediate support of himself and his family with the bare necessities of life. His agriculture is therefore almost wholly of a self-sufficing type, and notwithstanding the fact that this provides him with occupation for only half the year, he is perforce content to live at

bare subsistence level. Were the marketing of produce organized in village centres, and thence transferred, by means of motor transport, to the towns, the ryot's effort might be rewarded, not only by his continued existence, but by a margin of profit, and at length by a heightened standard of living. To enter upon details of the attempts being made to organize some such system would be tedious. A first step is to deliver the ryot from the greed of his local usurer by the provision of proper credit facilities. Already in British India, and the nine states where statistics are available, there exist 110,000 co-operative societies which boast a membership of 4,500,000 and a capital of £75,000,000. A second step is the introduction of agricultural machinery on a co-operative basis: the tractors and pumping-engines being hired out at regular rates per acre or gallon either by interested companies or by zemindars with sufficient capital or enterprise to purchase them. On several occasions I attended demonstrations of tractor-ploughing in remote districts, at which the whole village was present to appraise with open mind but fundamental dubiety the advantages of mechanical power over that of bullocks.

Landed folk are proverbially conservative; capital is scarce; the very inaccessibility of most villages constitutes a serious difficulty; and the immediate acceptance of such innovations by any substantial proportion of the Indian population may seem an event of the highest improbability. But there is one area where it is hoped that their introduction may be accomplished without opposition and within reasonable time. This is the four million acres that will be

suddenly converted from desert to garden by the opening of the Sukkur barrage in 1932.[1] The immensity of this work must be seen to be believed. It stems a river 1,600 yards in width; it will gladden, as the Persian wheel gladdens a furlong or two of ditches, 6,211 miles of distributaries; and it will have cost £15,000,000. If this expenditure is to bring adequate return, the introduction of mechanized ploughing and co-operative marketing is essential. To this fact the Government of Bombay is by no means blind, and has before it the example of the Sudan, where such methods have been adopted with flourishing success.

I have mentioned this possibility of the rationalization of agriculture because, though but a shadow on the horizon, it suggests a solution to a problem usually regarded as insoluble: namely the creation of a responsible and fully representative Indian democracy by the breakdown of village isolation and the improvement of the villagers' standard of living. Whether an Indian or any Asiatic democracy is not an absurdity beyond contempt may well be wondered. But that, if representative institutions are to be established in India for all time, they will rest on a firmer and more durable foundation the more closely they are related to the great mass of the population with its tradition of conservative propriety and its indifference to the emotional slogans of the West, admits of no question. And it is conceivable, and indeed probable, that until the franchise can be extended to all those enjoying the status of peasant proprietors, autonomous Indian

[1] The whole area under command is 7,500,000 acres, of which the new distributaries will embrace only 5,900,000 2,030,000 of these are already irrigated by the old methods

Governments will have their being in the realms of economic fantasy and borrowed prejudice.

The Religious Masses

The religious instinct of India, like that of the Middle Ages, is a commonplace. That Islam there preserves in all its power a faith which, in Turkey, Mustafa Kemal has apparently eradicated with one stroke of his pen, is proof of the peculiar genius of "India" as an entity. This instinct, of recent years, has attracted most notice in the outside world by the casualties of recurrent Moslem-Hindu riots. It is often observed, as though to fasten the accusation of *divide et impera* on the British, that such riots are unknown in the States. The reason is obvious: with the growth of representative institutions in British India, each community in districts where it is not electorally preponderant, sees itself threatened with impotence in the provincial legislatures; and this rivalry filters down from the intelligentsia to the masses. But this much-advertised clash of interests, which provides the most formidable obstacle to the institution of fully responsible government, is actually as much temperamental as religious. Its nature is illustrated by the story of an English resident of Calcutta, who, at the invitation of the English Principal, a friend of his, went to live within the precincts of a Hindu university, accompanied by his Moslem servant. The latter, after several minor incidents, became seriously embroiled with the students; so that the principal found it necessary to conduct an inquiry into his and their behaviour. The students admitted their aggression, but pleaded provocation on the

ground that they *disliked the way the Moslem walked.* Such an accusation does credit to their honesty, but reveals their weakness. Many Hindus cannot conceal their resentment of Moslem poise and self-confidence, qualities which often enough degenerate into swagger before those whom the Moslem feels to be, and who frequently are, his physical inferiors.

But while, among all but a proportion of the westernized intelligentsia, the activities of daily life in all communities throughout the country are circumscribed, complicated, and determined, by customs whose ultimate force resides with the extra-terrestrial, the religious genius of India finds its truest and oldest expression in Hinduism; and one suspects that the continued vigour of Moslem belief is largely a psychological reflection of the Hindus' ineradicable theism and consequently of the desire for differentiation in that respect. The traveller in India, beholding for the first time the towering ornaments of the great Hindu temples of Dravidia, or the artistry impressed on every stone of the Black Pagoda at Kanarak, begins at length to grasp the universal dedication of the people. But in buildings, the traveller is living in the past. To discover the reality of popular religion in the present he must look about him, must observe the habits of his servant or such daily sights as that of a pipal-tree growing from under the foundations of a neo-German office next the Calcutta Stock Exchange and daily refreshed with small offerings. Then, by degrees, other and more dramatic incidents will obtrude on him, particularly if he is fortunate enough to visit any of the famous religious centres or witness any of the big pilgrimages. Only in such surroundings will he be

able to sense the spontaneity and devotion of the Indian masses and the electric forces of human will that underlie them.

Since the cartridges of the Mutiny, it has been a first precept of English policy and behaviour in India never to offend, in the smallest degree, the religious susceptibilities of the people. On two occasions I disregarded this precept—not of set purpose, but accidentally. In neither case was anything like a popular frenzy aroused. But the results of these mild adventures were interesting as showing how trivially such a frenzy could have been aroused, and how pertinent was the exercise of a little tact and politeness on my part in averting it.

The first was at Bubaneshvar. The largest and most remarkable of the many temples in that place is closed to non-Hindus. It can be photographed from a neighbouring roof. But to record its astonishing detail it must be drawn. Discovering an open postern in the courtyard wall, I borrowed a chair and seated myself on the threshold with sketch-book and pencil. It was early; but as the morning proceeded, the sun came round and struck my back. In order to obtain the shadow of the heavy lintel, I moved forward, placing my feet over the threshold. A crowd of Brahmins, who were standing round in the hope of charity, now protested, conscious of English scrupulosity in these matters and their own rectitude. I was pressed for time, and my faculties were concentrated on my drawing. The clamour increased; likewise the Brahmins; till some began to try and draw me back by force. Others took my side; argument ensued; till at last the whole population of the place seemed to have

collected to join in the squabble and air their opinions. The noise was deafening, and unable to fix my attention any longer I was about to give way, when a stately procession emerged from the temple itself and came towards me. This, I presumed, must be the chief Brahmin. Raising my hat, I explained my dilemma, pointing to the sun and then to the convenience of the shadow, and begged his permission to infringe the sacred precincts by the length and breadth of two shoes. He replied, in courteous English, that now he understood, of course there would be no objection. The crowd dispersed like a mist. And I continued to draw.

The second incident occurred during the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad. If I digress to describe it, and the accompanying scene, at some length, it is not only because this festival is unique in that it takes place but once in every twelve years and then attracts the largest simultaneous concourse of people, three to four million in number, that ever assembles in the world; but also because there is no foreseeable event which can so reveal, at a single glance, the immensity of the Indian population and the depth of its emotional capacities.

For a year beforehand the authorities had been at work preparing for the pilgrims' advent, staking out encampments, making water available, drafting special police and other law-enforcing bodies, and above all providing for the prevention of those disastrous epidemics of cholera which always threaten these assemblies, and thence are spread over the whole country by the returning pilgrims. At the station, the harassed appearance of the railway officials pro-

claimed the abnormal traffic. Special trains would disgorge a million pilgrims in a single day. In another day, a million pilgrims would take their departure. From all over India they had travelled, days and nights together, to celebrate this duodecennial feast. Like them I held myself lucky to be alive and in India in February 1930.

The objective of the whole excursion is a triangular spit of sand, two miles and more from base to apex, along whose sides the holy rivers of Ganges and Jumna flow to union at the summit. The scene which confronts the new arrival as he tops the sandy ridge that constitutes the base of the triangle and separates the river shores from the surrounding country, is that of a desert suddenly peopled. The sun, pallid through a haze of dust, beats threateningly upon an endless vista of temporary dwellings, amongst which the pilgrims in their millions pulsate and subside with the indeterminate movements of cheese beneath a microscope. From far away on the horizon come two gleams of water, one from the left, the other from the right, the holy rivers whose uniting receives every twelfth year the personal homage of twenty millions of people. Fleets of small boats, loaded to the water-line, dot their sacred flux. The apex of the two shores, the actual point of confluence, is hidden by a swarm of humanity, a mere shadow in the distance, beneath whose serried feet land and water have no margin.

Fantastic contrasts meet the eye. Over to the left, the pink iron skeleton of a railway bridge thrusts into the sky. Above it circles an aeroplane, giving ten-rupee trips to view the crowd. Down the great central way, two miles of beaten sand, which leads through a

street of carving masts and bright floating pennants to the confluence, there lumbers an elephant, resplendent in plush and golden sequins, and bearing aloft three ragged figures, wealthy zemindars, who have momentarily cast aside the trappings of this world. Moving in the opposite direction a car contains a wealthy lady, who feeds 500 *sadhus* every day. The car is a cheap American vehicle. But above her head a disciple holds a cloth-of-gold umbrella; while another fans her with a peacock fan. In a miserable booth by the side of the central way, a jeweller has set up shop with furniture of solid silver and a chandelier of solid gold. Outside, the *sadhus*, exponents of destitution, clamour for the unwanted anna, exhibiting, if they are fortunate enough, the mutilated stumps of absent limbs. Monstrous creatures they are: A dropsical Falstaff, belly pouching over to conceal the strand of rope that is his only decency, straddles to the camera, his face broken by an ivory smile and a garland of rich yellow marigolds falling down over his dusky paps to the quivering navel beneath. Another, emaciated as the Fasting Buddha at Lahore, chignon plastered with dung, body smeared with ashes, salaams with a sword between his teeth, ready to hire himself for miracles and horrors. A third is only a head, a matted football on the sand, that I avoid by stepping quickly aside, remembering those fearful tales of African Bedouins who leave their prisoners to die, buried to the neck, with food and water placed within their sight. Farther on, a circle of admirers surrounds a three-foot dwarf, a pug-nosed bearded Hindu Xit, strung with wooden beads, and whirling on his podgy Chippendale legs to the clash of tiny cymbals.

Accompanied by a Parsi, I made my way towards the confluence. As the waters' edge came in sight, humanity thickened in its effort to reach the sacredest point of all. Family parties, holding hands like Alpine climbers in terror of separation, jostled past. Out in the waters stood countless immobile figures, imbibing virtue. Beneath tumbledown shacks on the sloping sandbanks Brahmins ministered to those who had bathed. Through a haze of blown sand, yellow and sinister as a London fog, the midday sun, invisible, thrust its battery of heat and light. Odours and cries, the soft tramp of innumerable bare feet, the insistence of hurrying bodies, broke upon my dazed consciousness. Humanity was pervaded by an intense emotion, nebulous and universal as the sand in the air, as though the nerves of the throng, strung tighter than violin strings, were emitting sound in a key beyond the human ear. At length the crowd grew so congested that further progress was impossible. We bore down to the right bank. In front, in the water, stood a number of women, with their *saris* drawn up above their knees. Since these gave point to the foreground, I paused to photograph the curving line of shore with its forest of masts and pennants.

At that moment, a nondescript Indian in semi-European clothes, who had been standing close at hand, broke into voluble protest. Not only were Europeans forbidden to approach within a mile of where I stood, he said, but cameras were taboo on the whole spit of sand. He himself was a watchman appointed by a Hindu fraternity to maintain the observance of this rule. Before he could proceed, my Parsi companion, who was responsible for my safe conduct, broke into

furious abuse, whose tone and language were modelled on those of a choleric English major restrained in the exercise of his prerogatives. The other, an officious person anxious to catch an Englishman in the wrong, but originally polite and even obsequious, now in turn lost his temper. A competition of shouting ensued, attracting a crowd. I became apprehensive. Naturally no other European was in sight; the police had disappeared; and the prospect of a sudden surge of mob emotion was by no means welcome. I too was roused to ire, begged my companion to hold his tongue since we were both in the wrong, and desired the Hindu to lead the way to the nearest outpost of his community or the police, where I would attempt to explain matters. Trudging back as we had come, we reached a tent, beneath which a venerable religious, an Indian sergeant of police, the Parsi, and the informer broke into such a babel of contention that I could only seat myself in a corner to gaze, till they should subside. Eventually I tendered my apologies, pleaded ignorance of regulations, and pointed out that if the informer had been as zealous in the cause of religion as in his wish to embarrass an Englishman, he would have uttered his complaint before and not after my unloosing of the shutter. Indians are strangely susceptible to reason. They grasped my point, and the sage, who had been delivering sententious platitudes on the wounded dignity of the Indian nation, now poured his wrath on the informer. But it was still a question of confiscating the camera. This I would not allow. Nor would I surrender my earlier pictures. But cutting out the offending exposure from the film-pack, I handed it them as a peace-offering. At this

they were delighted, and we fell to discussion on the importance of religious observance in all countries. Until, having shaken hands with the chief actors and with a crowd of spectators who had drifted in, I ultimately escaped.

On returning to the car, which had been parked at the foot of the sandy ridge, I was incensed to find that my servant, who had begged to accompany me that he might bathe with the rest in the holy waters, had not yet reappeared, though it was an hour past the agreed time. For twenty minutes my anger continued to foment, and I cursed the linguistic impotence that would prevent my expressing it Suddenly, lifting his *dhoty* like a du Maurier lady her skirt, he came scurrying out of the crowd. Contrition was in his gait. This alone would not have stoppered my resentment. But on his face, freshly smeared with red and white god-marks, shone such a pleasure, such an expression of happiness in good achieved, that on observing it I would as soon have cast him down as poke my umbrella through the Rokeby Venus.

So the car, containing the Parsi, my servant, and myself, moved off in silence, encountering, as we topped the ridge again, a troop of Hindu boy-scouts, mainly bearded and some grey, who were marching down to add themselves to the precarious forces of order. A few days later I read in the papers of a riot organized by hungry *sadhus*, which had resulted in several casualties.

To this largely personal and wholly inadequate survey of the Indian masses, I must finally add that the custom of ceremonial ablution, such as my servant

had just performed, is but the reflection of daily habit. It is not unusual to hear the resident Englishwoman advertise her horror of the "natives'" dirtiness. Certainly the Indian body exudes an odour slightly disconcerting to European nostrils. But the effluvium of a cinema filled with Indians on a hot night is considerably less repulsive than that of an audience under similar conditions in the low quarter of an English industrial town. Though ideas of hygiene are primitive, though temples are blood-spattered and houses verminous, though dung is a household commodity, though even Miss Mayo has scarcely revealed the full horror of midwives' methods among some classes of the population, there cannot exist a people in the world who pays such scrupulous and frequent attention to bodily cleanliness as the Indian. Huian-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim of the seventh century, gives the classic text of Indian observance in this respect, which the modern traveller must needs endorse and cannot improve :

> "They are very particular in their personal cleanliness and allow no remissness in this particular. All wash themselves before eating, they never use that which has been left over (from a former meal); they do not pass the dishes. Wooden and stone vessels, once used, must be destroyed; vessels of gold, silver, copper or iron, after each meal must be rubbed and polished. After eating, they cleanse their teeth with a willow-stick, and wash their hands and mouth.
>
> "Until their ablutions are finished, they do not touch one another. Every time they perform the functions of nature they wash their bodies and use perfumes. . . . Before offering their religious services and petitions, they wash and bathe themselves."

(ii) *The Princes*

The independent states of India are so widely disseminated that no exact estimate has yet been reached of their number; or if it has, no two authorities are agreed on it. The rulers of 108 states, which enjoy a total revenue of more than £51½ million pounds and a population of 60 millions, sit by right in the Chamber of Princes. The rulers of 127 smaller states, enjoying a total revenue of £2,767,500 and a population of 8 millions, delegate twelve representatives to sit in the Chamber of Princes. The remaining territories which distinguish themselves from British India are said in some quarters to number 327. Their proprietors are simply the owners of estates who exercise some such independent jurisdiction as attached to the Lords of Manors in mediæval England. The whole system grew up side by side with the British dominion, by means of a haphazard series of treaties concluded only too willingly with those rulers who made their submission early. These treaties are now said to be inviolable.

The rulers of the Indian states, in whom the individuality of each state is actually vested, are neither more nor less distinguished than the royalty to which we are accustomed in Europe. They throw off monsters, spendthrifts, patriarchal absolutists, conscientious nonentities, and men of ability, in the same proportions. But however great the natural endowments or incapacity of those at present enthroned, even a generation of rulers congenitally insane could scarcely fail to perceive, and to seize, the extraordinary advantages of their present political position.

The status of the Princes since the Mutiny may be

not unfairly compared with that of prefects at an English public school. The prefect has authority in his own sphere; and though he does not necessarily do so, he can misuse that authority to any extent so long as he is not found out. But he is still a boy, and as such liable to peremptory punishment if he is found out. His case, however, differs slightly from that of other boys, in that punishment is generally inflicted with some regard for his personal dignity. Thus the expression, frequently heard in India, that "such and such a prince has gone up to Delhi to have his behind smacked by the Viceroy", is not an accurate metaphor. None the less these visits to receive admonition have hitherto been frequent occurrences; the royal dignity is disregarded, sometimes threatened; and if the threat is sufficiently severe, the Indian temperament usually prefers abdication to commissions of inquiry by other princes or to limitations of sovereign rights. Such was the preference of the Maharajah of Indore not long since, though he was almost certainly innocent of any implication in the murder that led to his downfall. Only in one particular does the analogy of the prefect not hold good. For the Central Government maintains in each state a political officer, at once informer and guide, who keeps a close eye on the administration and registers complaints in Delhi if it grows rusty. These political officers are usually men of remarkable ability and tact, whose assistance is welcomed by the good prefects that are anxious to compete with one another in the probity and modernity of their rule. Even so, relations are not always of the happiest. In 1928, for example, His Exalted Highness the Nizam, India's premier prince, constrained his local

newspapers to announce the resignation of his resident political officer, with whom, following a visit to Delhi, he had seen fit to take umbrage. This gesture of impotence was followed by hasty denials.

It can be seen, therefore, that until the immediate present, the position of the Princes in relation to the paramount power has been a dubious one. Many of the outward privileges of sovereignty, such as particular currencies or issues of postage stamps, have been curtailed if not wholly abolished. Any infringement of the general Indian customs' regulations calls forth retaliation which it is impossible to withstand. Treaties have been strained, sometimes unjustifiably, in favour of British Indian convenience. And the rulers themselves have been, and are, subjected to written instructions couched in the language of direct authority and softened by no semblance of reasoning or explanation. Lord Curzon, in whom the doctrine of paramountcy found its grandest and most ruthless exponent, was responsible for many of these stringent communications. Their model was followed by Lord Reading in his notorious letter to the Nizam on the subject of Berar.

The question necessarily arises why a government so highly centralized as that of India should so long have tolerated the existence of what seems, at first sight, an astonishing system of political anachronism. Previous to the Mutiny, the policy of absorbing the states was being gently but firmly pursued. And though, during the Mutiny, it was the help of certain loyal states that saved the English dominion, it was equally the help of other states, or the indignation aroused by their maltreatment, that gave the mutineers

a large part of their force. If it was felt, after the struggle, that the progressive alienation of Indian opinion in this respect, to have caused the Mutiny, must have gone too far, this consideration, and even the memory of the loyal states' assistance, would not have prevented the continuance of the original policy, at least in the case of the smaller principalities, where the exercise of political pressure or financial inducement on indolent and greedy rulers would have attained a large degree of success without direct violation of treaty. (It is only lately that we have begun to talk of the inviolability of the Princes' treaties with conviction.) The truth is that the preservation of the states has saved the British administration considerable trouble and expense. Thus, two of the largest and most powerful states, Kashmir and Mysore, have been, in their modern form, creations of the Central Government to suit its convenience in the years 1846 and 1881 respectively. While that of Benares was brought into existence as recently as 1911. Nor, when the gigantic size of the British Indian Provinces is recalled, is it surprising to discover that some of the states are in many respects the best-administered territories in the country. Travancore, for example, shows the highest percentage of literacy of any political unit in India. I can say from personal experience that its roads and rest-houses compare favourably with those I met elsewhere.

For India's good or ill, the states have descended into a very different political atmosphere from that which prevailed or was ever foreseen when they were first confirmed in their autonomy. Instead of "bejewelled and bedecked princes and chiefs—poor, sad-

hearted and voiceless soul—playing the gilded automata at the behest of the inevitable Residents and Agents", as an India newspaper described them during the Curzon Durbar in 1903, the rulers of those states find themselves in a key position between the opposing forces of an Anglicized bureaucracy and the determination of the educated Indian to puff his chest to the world as master of his own destiny. The English are fond of indulging in a theory of the Princes' inalienable devotion to the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress, whose signed photographs occupy the place of honour in every palace drawing-room, and whose wooden portraits, executed by Indian copyists, poison the meals of every palace dining-room. This devotion is simply that of a lesser royalty to the fount whence he draws his royalty, his stars, his guns, his manners, and the pattern of his court. Thus used the Byzantine Emperors to invest Balkan princes with the uniforms, privileges, and the title of Cæsar. In modern times, the British throne is the last great fount of sovereign dignity; and lesser sovereigns, as long as circumstances allow, will be unwilling to loose their connexion with it. Within practical bounds the devotion of the Princes is real enough. But within these bounds it stops. Once their royalty is assured, the Princes are first and foremost Indians, as sensible of the white humiliation as the rest. Though they and their subjects do at present wish to maintain the British power in India, a fact which admits of no doubt, they are actuated in this wish not by the kind of sentiment that overtakes the Anglo-Saxon mob when the King is ill, but by the British connexion's ability to ensure the preservation of their identities. Were an in-

dependent India to offer greater insurance, for an independent India they would work, and would undoubtedly prefer to work. At present this is not the case. But it may become so.

The strength of the Princes' present position, both in relation to British India and the paramount power, lies in the resistance offered by the intrinsic and growing solidity of the states to the Indian genius for disintegration—a genius which will again come into play proportionately as the rigid executive control at the centre is relaxed. During the rapid advance of political thought that has swept over the world during the last two decades, the very existence of the states has been growing more and more eccentric. They stand apparently, or till the end of 1930 have been standing, in opposition to the two strongest political forces in India: the desire for national unity and for responsible democracy. And their rulers have necessarily looked towards the future with puzzled apprehension. Now suddenly has been unfolded, thanks to their prescience, the roseate vista of federation between the British Indian provinces and themselves in a joint government at the centre. Hitherto, the British Indian provinces have been growing in independence; while the states have been subject to a system of progressive political depression. Under the proposed federation, the status of states and provinces would be equalized, save in so far as provincial representatives would have a numerical majority at the centre—a majority which the Moslem-Hindu cleavage must overshadow. Thus the Princes, by their patience and foresight, have at length created for themselves an opportunity of establishing their power on a firmer basis than before; no small oppor-

tunity in a world of ever-increasing democracy and in a continent where democracy is now obtaining the same religious hold on the educated imagination as it enjoyed in the Europe of the last century. Surprise has been expressed that the Princes should accept, and still more put forward, as they have done, an idea which must necessarily subordinate some of their interests to those of British India. But this idea they do not in theory accept, nor will they in practice accept it, unless their position with regard to British India is equalized, and with regard to the paramount power regularized. In that case, they will seek with all their power to translate the idea into fact. This accomplished, the rude doctrine of paramountcy, having sanctioned so nice an equilibrium between the solid and the fluid, will be content to resign many of the pretentions at present so injurious to their personal feelings.

The prime advantage to the states of incorporation in a federal system would be the assurance of their continued existence not merely by treaties of precarious definition, liable to strained interpretation by the English contracting party and to actual repudiation by any power that might replace the English, but by the fact of their inclusion as a vital part of the political structure of the country; so that without them, the structure would fall to pieces like a bridge suddenly deprived of a part of its girders. And the second advantage would be the inevitable and permanent formulation, in black and white, of the precise extent and limits of sovereignty attaching to those Princes who enter the federation. Persons of exact mind, accustomed to our national genius for the codification

of precedent, will find it hard to believe the chaotic indefinacy of the Princes' functions, powers, and rights, as laid down, or not laid down, under the present doctrine of paramountcy. If their attitude towards the Viceroy is that of a body of prefects towards a head-master, anxious to stand well with him as a body while conscious that some of their number are not wholly righteous, the blame must lie with the arbitrary power exercised over them by the Viceroy and his executive. That this suzerain power ought necessarily to be to some extent effective, the political realists among them agree : it supports as much as it limits their rule. But that the present conditions of its employment produce a most undesirable state of affairs, in which personal ingratiation is apt to play far too large a part and to cover far too many sins, is undeniable. The present case of the Jam Sahib and his port may be instanced for those who care to inquire into its details. This ruler, known to a more intensive civilization as a cricketer, had expended large sums of money on harbour works. To attract ships, he proposed to lower the state customs' dues. The authorities at Delhi, seeing the tariff unity of the country thus menaced, threatened him with an embargo on all goods crossing his frontiers in the event of his not accepting a certain compensation. Whether the compensation suggested is an adequate one, or which party has moral justice on its side, does not concern us. The significance of the case lies in the manner of the negotiation. On the one side is a sovereign Prince, guaranteed as such by " inviolable " treaty with the British crown. On the other is an official, or a group of officials, in Delhi, responsible to no one but the Viceroy, and acting with-

out precedent or advice save in so far as their personal good sense allows them to accept either. Their good sense may be of the highest quality; their decision of perfect justice. But such a position is scarcely consistent with the guaranteed maintenance of a ruler in his sovereign rights.

From this case, which is only one of many, it is evident that the Princes will never consent to inclusion in a federal union without a previous categorical admission and definition of their proper rights and without the creation of a permanent machinery for the settlement of questions between them and the Viceroy and between them and British India in the full light of day. It is this they have been asking ever since the Chamber of Princes brought them a corporate political sense. If their conditions are fulfilled, then not only will their sovereignty be assured in perpetuity, but also the attributes of that sovereignty. These attributes may continue to vary with the different states as they do at present. They may even be further limited than at present. But the limitation of power on a recognized legal basis will be more welcome than the ever-present threat of limitation on a personal and arbitrary basis. For this reason the Princes may well be as anxious as the nationalists for the creation of a federated and autonomous India, of whose foundations they will form an intrinsic and irremovable part.

The picture of the princely lion embosomed for ever with the democratic lamb within the fold of federation, while the viceregal shepherd lays down his bureaucratic plaid and military crook to snore, is of such dazzling and unexpected beauty that the future dissolves in a

rainbow mist. But rainbows mean rain. And the proposed association, by which the Princes have everything to gain and almost nothing to lose, will bring into close relation with the intelligenstia of British India an outlook and temperament which cannot be wholly sympathetic to it—as the presidential addresses to the Congress of Mr. Srinavasa Iyengar in 1926, and of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1929, testify. As human beings, the Princes provide a curious study.

With few exceptions, all are of warrior descent; so that the Hindus among them are not of the highest caste. They maintain such troops as their finances will allow. They enjoy honorary rank in the British Army. But these mild pretences afford them little scope for the exercise of their hereditary vocation. As a body, they lack occupation. Their culture is small. Having first gone out into the Western world at the end of the last century, their taste is execrable, save only in the matter of jewels, which they pursue with a persistence and discrimination worthy of an eighteenth-century milord. Their royal sensibilities have been rendered the more acute by the bad manners of Europeans, who often ignore the first rules of ordinary politeness. When talking English, they address one another as "Your Highness" not once, but in every sentence and in lieu of every pronoun or possessive. They treasure their quotas of guns with jealous pride, despite the expense of these extraordinary salutations. Simultaneously they have acquired the true virtue of royal hospitality: to be their guest is to experience comfort organized at once on a grand scale yet with perfect thoughtfulness. But the pattern of their royalty, like that of their palaces, is Western. And

to Western habit they turn for an outlet to their natural vigour.

Each Prince is granted a stated allowance for personal expenses from the revenues of his state. This is one of the rules of paramountcy; likewise his obligation to spend a certain proportion of his time in India. Within these limits he is free to model himself, as far as he can, on the modern sporting millionaires of the West, and to attract to himself a crowd of unscrupulous European satellites, secretaries, nurses, mistresses, trainers, grooms, and chauffeurs, who can seldom resist the temptation of abusing his generosity. Possibly he has been educated, by wish of the India Office, at an English public school and university, thus gaining, in return for the loss of his native language, an appreciation of the team spirit and the best champagnes. In any case, once he has begun to travel, he discovers that, whereas in India, though his pigmentation is to some extent mitigated by his powers of financial patronage, he is debarred from all intercourse with respectable English society in the big towns, in England and Europe he is received everywhere without prejudice or askance, and his person is accorded by other royalties the respect due to an equal instead of to a potentially disobedient prefect. Small wonder, therefore, if India, despite its tigers, pig, racing, and polo, bores him. The administration of his state, ably overlooked by the English resident, functions admirably without him. Thus all circumstances tend to lead his tastes and spirit farther and farther away from the land of his birth. He becomes a bored cosmopolitan. And since the income enjoyed by the ordinary Prince, judged by American standards of expenditure, is by no means

always a large one, his financial affairs are apt to develop a series of crises, during each of which he receives severe and undignified admonishment from the paramount power.

This picture, though inapplicable to the great majority of minor rulers, is in some degree apposite to nearly all those of major importance. And it is obvious that the resulting human product must be temperamentally unsympathetic to the ideals of Mr. Gandhi and to the ardent, if shallow, thirst for martyrdom which pervades the extremist youth of British India. However upright and conscientious a Prince may be, once he has passed beyond his native shores, those shores, for him, are apt to become overcast with the shadow of provincialism. Certainly his inclusion in a federal system and his consequent investiture with the fact as well as the letter of power, must give more room for his responsible instincts to develop. But it is clear that once that system is in being, and he has achieved a definite formulation of status and rights, he will become increasingly susceptible to irritation at any attempt on the part of British Indian democrats to dictate his or India's policy or to criticize his internal government. That such attempts will be made cannot be doubted by anyone who has come in contact with the missionary fervour of the British Indian democrat. At present, in the states themselves, democracy has shown little life, beyond the recent attack on the Maharajah of Patiala. But should it take root, and call for assistance to its exponents in British India, the call will not go unanswered, Federation may prove only a deadlock.

Furthermore, there is always the possibility, as

among all royalty, that a Prince here and there may revert to the type of lunatic despot, traditional in Asia. Thus at present one of the greatest Moslem rulers in India suffers from Midas-mania of an acute and would-be oppressive form. While the stories current of a man who is politically one of the ablest Hindu Princes in India, are mildly illustrated by the following:—Conceiving a grudge against his Commander-in-Chief, this ruler invited him to dinner, inebriated him, and then showed him to a dark room, where, according to his host, a woman awaited him. The Commander-in-Chief having, despite some resistance, proceeded to the satisfaction of his natural desires, His Highness then turned on the light—revealing as the object of the Commander-in-Chief's advances, the Commander-in-Chief's own sister. I do not vouch for the truth of this story; I do not even suggest that it is true; I do not wish to imply that it is typical or probable of the worst imaginable Prince; nor, if human beings can devise such horrors, do I think it more likely that such human beings are to be found in any greater proportion among Indians than among the white races. But the fact that this story is repeated, as coming from good authority, by serious people all over India, and that it is generally believed to be typical of its hero, reveals the common acceptance of a degree of princely absolutism to which the democratic idealists will need all their forbearance to adapt themselves.

As a final instance of sovereign authority in India in its pleasanter and quite worthy aspect, the following monologue delivered at the dinner-table by a Prince of very moderate importance, is a fair example; imagine

a portly figure, bred on the East coast but advertising his Rajput descent in tight white trousers; adorned with a heavy moustache, a broad smile, and a rolling eye; exhaling a rather portentous royalty, but graced with perfect manners; and attended outside the front door by his one fawn-coloured Rolls-Royce:—

"No, I missed Laura La Plante yesterday evening. My budget has kept me too busy. My Prime Minister's away, you see. To-day alone I've read sixty files; another forty are waiting for me when I get back to-night. It's terrible how hard I have to work—fourteen hours a day. I begin with squash tennis at five; then work from eight onwards, rest in the afternoon; cinema at six, then work again till bedtime.

"In my state I abolished slavery two years ago. I knew the Viceroy would be pleased. He sent me a telegram of congratulation. There are still eight states in my district where it continues. But the Viceroy was very pleased. Some of my zemindars sent him a petition of protest against the abolition. Naturally he took no notice. It was a wise move on my part. . . ."

At this point a political officer, of long experience on the Western frontier, interrupted cynically: "When I was in Baluchistan, the released slaves went to Karachi to work as coolies. But the pay was so poor, that within a month they were all back again, to work and be fed on the same terms as before."

The ruler passed over this gibe at Progress in contemptuous silence, and having finished his pudding, proceeded with the tale of his exemplary activities:

"In my state justice is very strictly administered. The judges are very clever men. Not long ago five men were tried for murder and all were found guilty. I

suspected that the verdict was unjust. So I disguised myself as a trader in sweets and went down to the bazaar, where I found out the real truth. Three of them were guilty. Those I sentenced to death. The other two I set free.

"At the moment I'm on my way up to the Chamber in Delhi, where I shall move a resolution in favour of the abolition of slavery in all states. All the Princes will vote for it—you will see. But what will they do about it? That's what I want to know, ha! ha! It won't have any effect. But the Viceroy will be pleased. I'm sure he will like it, and so I shall do it. . . . Shall we be going? I've got the seats. Buster Keaton is very funny I always think."

(iii) *The Intelligentsia*

The term "intelligentsia" is here used to cover the whole of that broad class throughout India whose minds have been trained by Western education. who are accustomed to think and reason in Western terminology, and whose conception and ideal of progress have been borrowed from the West. This class, however small its numerical proportion to the whole population, is the voice of India. To the contention that it is unrepresentative of India, many irrefutable arguments may be addressed. But it is India's only voice and only instrument of political activity. And realists, as the English business community in India now realizes, will do best to take it at its face value.

The train of events whereby this class was brought into existence and at the same time was invested with a character distinct from its counterparts in China, Russia, and other Asiatic countries, provide a striking instance of that missionary fervour which illumined the civilization of nineteenth-century Europe and nine-

teenth-century England in particular. Until that century, Europeans, on settling in Asia, set themselves to assimilate Asiatic culture, and to adapt themselves in the greatest degree possible to the habit and customs of their adopted country. Their attitude approached that of the Oriental now arriving in Europe. The example had been set by the Jesuits, who, despite many odious deeds, should always be celebrated for their attempt to effect a compromise, liturgical and almost doctrinal, between the prevailing ancestor-cult of China and the faith of Christ. The Vatican, primed by jealous Dominicans, demurred; and the project came to nothing. But in the light of subsequent events, the attempt stands to-day with many other missionary endeavours conducted in the same spirit, as a supreme tribute to the humanism and understanding of human verities exhibited by Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries in its relations with Oriental countries. A similar generosity of spirit is apparent in all European travel-books prior to the nineteenth century. The traveller may repine at the multitudinous discomforts and inconveniences, may expose the misery and misgovernment of the people, their barbarous customs and cruelties, their pathetic superstitions, or their infantile economy. But, instead of adopting the modern tone of some heaven-sent judiciary, fortified by a rigid code of moral, sanitary, and economic perfection, he does so rather as an equal, conscious that it is not for him to censure the errors of others; and that if those errors appear to him to be greater than those into which his own people have fallen, he may justly count himself more fortunate than the Asiatic but not more righteous. Such was

the attitude of Warren Hastings. Like a Jesuit, he was an efficient man, and was prepared, if circumstances dictated, to put aside the finer scruples in the attainment of efficiency. But his conception of India, even though it was he who made possible the English domination, was always that of an Indian India. Sanskrit and Persian, the classical tongues of Hinduism and Islam, were a matter of deep concern to him. In the latter, which was the Company's official language in India, he was an excellent scholar and widely read. The former he did not understand, but was instrumental in persuading the Brahmins to divulge its key. In his introduction to Wilkins' translation of the Bhagwat-Gita (1785) he wrote :

" Every accumulation of knowledge, and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the rights of conquest, is useful to the state : it is the gain of humanity : in the specific instance which I have stated, it attracts and conciliates distant affections ; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection ; and it imprints on the hearts of our countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence. Even in England, this effect is greatly wanting. It is not very long since the inhabitants of India were considered by many as creatures scarcely elevated above the degree of savage life ; nor, I fear, is that prejudice yet wholly eradicated, though surely abated. Every instance which brings their real character home to observation will impress us with a more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own. But such instances can only be obtained in their writings ; and these will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance."

In Warren Hastings' opinion, the Englishman, to govern India, must indianize his outlook, and must prepare to administer and preserve, rather than to anglicize, India for the Indians. His ideal may have been impossible, and may be still impossible. But it is largely the ideal of the Indian intelligentsia to-day, within the limits of their westernizing programme.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the scope of English rule was still expanding; and in its wake, buoyed on a healthy faith in the beneficence of a likewise expanding market for English goods, followed a new spirit, a religious belief in Western progress, in the omnipotence of scientific explanation by the law of cause and effect, and in the unquestionable superiority of Western man and his institutions over all others. A new outlook had developed in the West, and had been justified, in the eyes of that great majority for whom earthly reward is always the justification of righteousness, by the immense conveniences of scientific invention. It was assumed that a civilization which could invent the flying shuttle must be more than merely fortunate; it must be the *right* civilization. From this train of argument, at first unconscious, but later in the century to be logically expounded, arose the supreme assurance of the nineteenth-century Englishman in the rectitude of his own moral standards and his own acts, which enabled him, in the character of Huc's *diable marin*, to invest the globe with his commercial imperialism and to comfort himself with the certainty that in so doing he was but the harbinger of moral improvement to all the less advanced peoples within his orbit. In the light of more recent events, and of the disasters that have

accompanied the spread of Western ideas by less systematic methods, history will probably admit that in general the Englishman's rôle of benefactor was not unfulfilled; and that his resulting complacence has brought more harm to himself than to others. Throughout the greater part of nineteenth century, moreover, his conviction of divine beneficence was reinforced by the enthusiasm with which many of the Asiatic races, Indians among them, received his inherited culture and recent discoveries in material invention.

If there was any one Englishman, in the 'thirties and 'forties, whose knowledge of the demarcation between Right and Wrong, between Progress and Retrogression, between Benefit and Evil, rested on a firmer basis of middle-class assurance than that of any other, that Englishman was Thomas Babington Macaulay. We English forgive him for his wit, for his prose, and for his ability as a historian. Indians may not. For Macaulay, in order to assure himself of a sufficient fortune in later life, spent four years (1834–8) in an official capacity, in Calcutta, under the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck. And it was during this period, as chairman of a committee on public instruction, that he penned the famous and entertaining minute on the comparative virtues of English and Indian education, whose direct result was the introduction of the system now in force.[1] It was realized then, perhaps more willingly than now, that

[1] "How stands the case? We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. . . . Whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual