

THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF INDIA

A STUDY OF THE ASPIRATIONS
OF EDUCATED INDIANS

A PRIZE ESSAY

BY

H. P. MODY

BOMBAY

WITH TWO OTHER ESSAYS COMMENDED BY
THE ADJUDICATORS

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON MCMVI



PREFACE

THE leaders of current political movements in India focus their aspirations upon SELF-GOVERNMENT, and all thoughtful people—except a few who, prompted by personal or what they conceive to be British interests, find it convenient to trample upon all aspirations—ask themselves if it be possible that the heterogeneous races of India can be welded into one community capable of successful autonomy. If so, how and when? Recent deplorable events prompt the further inquiry how violence and outrage, the greatest hindrances to progress, can be effectively suppressed. With a view to obtaining expressions of opinion on these points from all sections, I offered, while on a recent visit to India, a prize of two thousand rupees to be competed for under the conditions stated on another page.

The essays received in accordance with these conditions were carefully read and adjudicated upon by the following gentlemen:—

Mr. James Kennedy, formerly of the United Pro-

vinces Civil Service, Treasurer of the Royal Asiatic Society, and well known for his Indian historical researches. He was a contributor to the recently published historical volume of the "Imperial Gazetteer of India." (14, Frognal Lane, Finchley Road, London, N.W.)

Mr. C. E. Buckland, C.I.E., formerly Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government, author of "Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors," and compiler of "The Dictionary of Indian Biography." (61, Cornwall Gardens, South Kensington, London, S.W.)

Mr. F. H. Brown, who has been in Anglo-Indian journalism in connection with leading papers both in this country and India for many years. (Dilkusha, Westbourne Road, Forest Hill, London, S.E.)

My own views as to newly-awakened aspirations in India are of little moment, and I do not propose here to define them in any detail. I would only say that I have lived too long in the Dependency to approach these difficult problems otherwise than as a humble inquirer. I have known something of our great Indian Empire at first hand for over thirty years, and many of its people with whom it has been my lot to come in contact I shall ever regard with feelings akin to affection. I have from an isolated position been able to watch impartially

the working of the Government machinery on the one hand and the lives of the people on the other. In all lands and in all ages education has given a broader outlook to its recipients, and with an enlarged horizon has come a keener sense of power and a fuller and juster estimate of personal and collective possibilities. India is no exception to this rule. The "movement" which we find in India to-day, in common with other countries in the East, is closely connected with a very natural development of the human mind. It is but the awakening to self-consciousness of minds emancipated from the darkness of ignorance, minds brought into the glare of noonday, with the whole world, past and present, suddenly brought within their ken. The map of a new world has been spread before the East. The movement inspired by this new world vision has been mothered by education and vivified by the flash of the Japanese sword which repelled Russia, and is fanned by uplifted hands that stretch out after liberty and progress in China, Turkey, Persia, and Egypt.

We cannot go on turning out thousands of highly educated men from our schools and colleges without rendering inevitable far-reaching changes in the social and political life of the people. The man with his back to the wall ready to thrust aside

all progressive movements must be regarded as hopelessly blind and deaf to all the teachings of history. There can be no justification for a desire to keep the Oriental for ever in swaddling clothes just because he is an Oriental, or because the enlightened and capable are a mere fraction of their race. The existence of millions of illiterate Indians is no reason why we should be oblivious to the claims of the literate ! It is hard to say which is the more dangerous amongst our countrymen—the man with his back to the wall, or the warm-hearted enthusiast who would travel towards great constitutional changes in a sixty horse-power motor regardless of the condition of the road or of the many gardens destroyed by dust.

There is ample room between these extremes for moderate men both in this country and India to help forward great reforms on safe and permanent lines, and it must be a great satisfaction to all such to find that the hand of the present Secretary of State is neither being forced nor hindered by extremists. Our business in India to-day, while suppressing crime, is not to check political movements, but to guide them into proper channels. "Wise men hasten slowly," but has not the time fully come for us to discard the *ekka* and the bullock-cart ? A fifteen horse-power car may

suffice for the present to carry us safely along the path of progress, and before we attempt to exceed the speed limit we must be sure that there are no awkward bends in the road and no obstructions in the way.

The questions propounded, with conditions of competition, are followed by an able and interesting report by the adjudicators. The essay of Mr. Mody, the prize-winner, is published with two others of special merit. It should be explained that while the arguments adduced are unchanged, the essays have all been subjected to editorial revision by an expert, and repetitions or redundancies and points of altogether minor interest have been eliminated or curtailed, while misconceptions or mis-statements of fact have been editorially noted. In this slightly abridged and revised form the essays are published in the hope that they may help in some small degree to enlighten inquirers in this country as to the nature of the great problems which are to-day agitating the minds of so many of our educated fellow-subjects in India, and that they may encourage those of the latter who believe that good political progress can be obtained on strictly constitutional lines.

R. LAIDLAW.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

December 5, 1908.

THE COMPETITION

The following notice was sent to intending competitors :—

A prize of Rs. 2,000 is offered for the best reasoned answers to the following three questions :—

1. Is it possible for the diverse races of India to become one united self-governing community ?
2. By what steps and in what period of time can this consummation be attained ?
3. How can encouragement best be given to legitimate political aspirations, and sedition most effectively suppressed ?

RULES AND CONDITIONS.

1. Papers must not exceed sixty thousand words. Must be typewritten on one side of the paper only, and must reach the undersigned not later than July 1st next.
2. Papers must not be signed by the writer, but bear a *nom de plume*, and a sealed envelope containing the full name and address of the writer must be securely attached to the paper.

3. The papers will be judged and award made by three Europeans of long Indian experience and of no specially pronounced political views. Their decision to be final.

4. The undersigned will be at liberty to publish the successful paper in book form or otherwise; the name of writer will, however, not be disclosed without his permission. No other papers will be published without the consent of the writers, and in any such case a fee will be paid. No unsuccessful manuscripts will be returned.

5. Decision of the judges will be announced in the *Pioneer*, *Times of India*, *Madras Mail*, and *Statesman*, Calcutta, at earliest possible date.

REPORT OF THE JUDGES ON MR. LAIDLAW'S COMPETITION

The competition has elicited nearly 50 essays, but only 35 of these have complied with the prescribed conditions and been considered by the judges. The essays range from 2,000 to 50,000 words, and vary as greatly in ability as in length. One is exceptionally able; several are excellent; others are merely dull; a number are confused in thought and defective in expression.

The value of the essays consists in their illustration of the currents of political thought which are at work among certain sections of Indian and Anglo-Indian society. The identity of the essayists was, of course, unknown to us, but they usually state or betray their nationality, and it is easy to infer from the technical use of words or the special knowledge displayed with what part of India the essayists are acquainted. Fifteen appear to be Englishmen or Eurasians, while the twenty Indian writers include three Mahomedans, one or two Parsis, three Theosophists, a follower of the Arya-Samaj, and at least one Indian Christian. Some

of the Indian essayists are thoroughly Anglicised, but the majority belong to the less educated middle class which knows some English. The Bombay Presidency and Hindustan proper contribute the larger number. The fighting clans have no representative. Burma is excluded from the discussion. It is therefore apparent that while Anglo-Indian opinion is well represented, the expression of Indian opinion which is reflected in these essays must be taken with some reservations.

The competitors are all agreed on certain points.

1. With the exception of a single Extremist writer, not one of them intentionally desires to be revolutionary. The more simple-minded expressly say that they do not propose to drive all Europeans from the country, and one essayist who thinks all railway employes should be natives propounds a scheme for turning Europeans into agriculturists, to be settled at Lyallpur in the Punjab under the supervision of the clergy.

2. All are agreed that any form of government which may supersede the present "bureaucracy" must be maintained in its place by the British army.

3. All are very loyal to the Crown. We are assured that the Hindus are king-lovers by nature, and worship their kings as deities. One gentleman naïvely says that when the millennium (shortly to be expected) comes, "the only thing the people will have to do is to adore the Sovereign, not as a ruler, but as a deity who does not interfere with

men's thoughts, words, or actions." A Theosophist remarks that "the population (of India) are reforming themselves as brethren of one united family under one common white king of England, the emblem of the blessed Vishnu"; and he looks back with gratitude to the day when "Bharat Varsha, under the inspiration of her divine patron, Vishnu, threw the garland of her espousals round the neck of England." A third gentleman, more practically minded, proposes a handsome contribution from India to the King's civil list.

4. Even the best of the essayists, European and Indian, display remarkable political inexperience. They draft paper constitutions lightheartedly, without any recognition of the difficulties in the way or any conception of how their schemes would work.

With these preliminary explanations we proceed to summarise the answers to Mr. Laidlaw's questions.

I. The first question deals with three things—the idea of Indian nationality, the possibility of political union with or without it, and the idea of autonomy.

The European and a number of the Indian essayists deny the possibility of Indian nationality, of Indian political union, or Indian autonomy. It is argued that the peoples of India are separated from each other by creed, caste, language, history, and inherited antipathies; they have nothing in common except submission to British rule and Asiatic prejudice against foreigners.

On the other hand, a small and able minority of the essayists contends that an Indian nationality is already in existence and the possession of a party, few indeed in numbers but full of self-confidence, and prepared to act as the political leaders of the people. The members of this party are united by European education, English ideas, and the habitual use of the English language; also by a common faith in the future of India, a common colour, and a common Asiatic origin; above all, by opposition to the present form of government. They argue that the disruptive factors of caste and religion are falling into the background and becoming mere secondary matters—matters of private life and personal belief; and they add that the Mahomedans have much more reason to unite with them than with the English. The Mahomedan essayists take up a somewhat different position, but they are not quite agreed among themselves. They, too, have an enthusiasm for the future of India, and would certainly prefer Mussulman rule to the rule of a foreigner; but since that is impossible, they have no belief in Indian autonomy, and are somewhat sceptical of parliamentary institutions. One essayist in particular points out that since the days of Lord Ripon the party of Young India is much more divided than it was formerly, and that the prosperity of Mysore and Baroda and the successful working of the Bombay municipality are due to

the energy and tact of individuals, and not to any corporate form of government.

So far we have followed the Anglicised Indians, who are mainly dwellers in the Presidency towns. But the essays also show that, scattered throughout the country, there are many individuals whose English is imperfect, whose thoughts are crude, but who are true patriots after a fashion, each with his favourite nostrum. These we need not here discuss; sufficient to say that all competitors, high and low, are agreed on certain facts. It is admitted that the upper classes, the Rajas, *Raises*, big landholders, and *Darbaris*, are conservative and averse to any national movement. One essayist goes so far as to say that their action will always be retrograde, and that they should therefore never be entrusted with real power or get beyond the status of an advisory council. It is further universally admitted that British rule suits the masses, and that there is no enthusiasm for either municipal or local self-government. The demand for self-government comes from a small but growing number of professional men who have sprung up under British rule and British training. One Indian writer points out that they gain their importance by their access to and power of appeal from those very "bureaucrats" whom it is their object to replace, and without whose help it is impossible that they should succeed. They do not reflect that they are not the natural heirs to the authority which they would overturn.

1. The second question is virtually determined by the first. The majority are agreed that Indian nationality is a chimera, and autonomy under British suzerainty an impossibility. On the other hand, one hopeful gentleman guarantees Home Rule in a couple of years, if the English are subjected to a firm, though friendly, boycott. Another points out that it may easily be obtained by passing a law, whereby only Indians shall be eligible for Government appointments. The Congress essayists think that autonomy may be obtained in a couple of generations, the Theosophists in a thousand years.

There is a general agreement that education must be the chief instrument for improving the condition of the people, and the preliminary of any possible union. On this subject, of which they have had experience, the Indian essayists usually talk excellent sense. They dwell mainly on three things—religious, technical, and vernacular education. The chief want of India at the present day is the encouragement of native industries, and the writers urge the importance of technical education.

European and Indian competitors are agreed that the neglect of religious training has done much harm, and they would make religious teaching at school and college compulsory. Several demand a minimum age for conversions—a man should not have independent religious convictions of his own until he is thirty. Lastly, the more thoughtful essayists dwell

on the importance of vernacular literature, and the study of the vernaculars. Of course, even here we have an instance of the shoemaker and his last. A Bombay schoolmaster advocates the suppression of all grants in aid, the abolition of most vernacular schools, and the establishment everywhere of free English schools, secondary as well as primary. It is noteworthy that the only Government department which Indians do not profess a desire to monopolise is the educational.

III. The third question deals with the measures to be taken for improving the political position of the people and the suppression of sedition. This last must come first, since suppression of disorder must not follow, but precede or accompany reform. Sedition is easily got rid of, says one writer; it is due to the fact that the discontented are not granted what they want; satisfy, therefore, he says, their demands, and repeal the Acts of Lord Morley and Lord Minto. The moderates of the Congress camp part from the extremists with some apologies, and desire a very tender treatment of the vernacular press. The majority, however, of the essayists, Indian even more than European, call for firm government, and approve of drastic measures towards the press. The vernacular press has admittedly been the chief instrument in bringing about the present agitation and inflaming popular passions; it ought therefore to be bound over in heavy securities, and be subject to severe penalties.

For the rest, we have a number of suggestions which may be classified under three main heads.

1. The establishment of Parliaments, Imperial and Provincial, with certain reservations regarding the army, foreign policy, and finance, but with a non-official majority. Regarding the details there is no unanimity—some doubt the advisability of an Imperial Parliament, and would have provincial Parliaments tried as an experiment in one or two selected provinces. Some would provide the provincial Parliaments with a cabinet, subject to the Governor's control and veto. Others wish the district officer to be regarded as the Parliament's executive. Most of the Indian competitors, including those of the Congress, regard it as the future Parliament's chief business to put a curb on the Collector. One writer proposes a representative from every district in order that he may report on the Collector's doings; and another proposes to reduce the Collector to the rank of "a simple citizen." The ablest of the Congress essayists says: "All our efforts are concentrated towards breaking down the ramparts behind which the bureaucratic forces are at work."

Although there is much talk of Parliaments, there is the greatest diversity of opinion as to their composition. The Congress writers resent every restriction which would prevent them from getting all power into their own hands. The claim of the Congress men to be the leaders of the people

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is vehemently defied by others. They insist on the representation of every class by genuine members of that class, and the recognition of the rights of minorities, including native Christians; they declare that the rule of a small educated and Anglicised class would be intolerable, and tantamount to the enslavement of the whole body of the people; that the civilisation of India is in its own way as great as that of England, and for Indian purposes the more important; and they deny that an English education gives any right or ability to rule. We may add that the protesters are not Mahomedans, but Hindus. It is the protest of the non-Anglicised against the Anglicised party.

2. The second suggestion put forward by several essayists is the redistribution of the present provinces into smaller groups. This redistribution should be based on the historic nationalities which exist, and the administrative arrangements should be suited in each case to the character of the people. Much may be said in favour of this proposal, but only one writer has worked it out in detail. He gives an outline sketch of a model State, with an English Governor and a few European administrators, an executive recruited almost entirely from the province, an official language which every one can understand, and an impartial representation of minorities, the English element to be reduced in proportion as the province advances in civilisation and capacity for self-administration. Moreover,

every attempt of any one province or party to interfere with its neighbour should be severely repressed. For instance, racial and religious disputes often take the form of a dispute over the official language, and our essayists afford an illustration. Those who are Anglicised desire English, the Mahomedans advocate the use of Urdu, some half a dozen wish to make Hindi compulsory, and only one stands up for the local language.

3. The great majority of the essayists argue in favour of a much larger employment of Indians in the higher official posts. On this subject little need be said, since the principle has been conceded by the Government of India. Some writers look only to the Civil Service, and demand that one quarter or one half of the appointments over Rs. 1,000 a month should be reserved for Indian officials. Others desire a larger share in all the Government services except the army and education. Several essayists, both Europeans and Indians, urge the appointment of an Indian Legal Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

We do not consider that it comes within our province to criticise the suggestions which we have surveyed in this report, and we must expressly dissociate ourselves from implying approval of, or, indeed, any opinion on the views put forward by the

writers whose essays we recommend. In making our award we have looked to sanity of judgment, moderation of tone, general practicability of suggestion, cogency of argument, literary merit, and careful and exhaustive treatment. Judged by these standards, we are unanimous in considering the essay which bears the signature of "*Dam spiro, spero*" to be the best. It is a singularly able presentation of the views of the moderate party in the Congress. On its publication some small mistakes of fact should be corrected. But although it is certainly the most powerful and "best reasoned" of the essays, it is scarcely advisable to publish it without any indication of other points of view.

It appears to us to have much special pleading, many false analogies, assumptions which will not hold, and obliviousness of some fundamental facts, while the writer appears to know little of India outside certain limits, and much of what he asks is impracticable. The chief value of these essays consists in their evidential and educative significance. We would therefore recommend that with the prize paper some others be published which represent a different standpoint. We have selected "*Moghal*" and "*Action Front*" as representatives of two opposite schools. "*Moghal*" has a wide, but not, we think, a very profound or always practical, grasp of the question, and is somewhat wordy. "*Action Front*" displays a much surer knowledge of Indian ways, but he ignores too much

the position of "Young India" and the force of English sentiment. Along with these we have placed a very different paper by "A. M. I.," written in halting English, and far down the list as a literary composition. We have selected it because of its obvious sincerity, its pathetic pessimism, and its grasp of certain elemental facts overlooked by the writer's more brilliant compatriots, which make it the best representative among these essays of the large and voiceless class of conservative Hindu patriots.

Among the remaining essays "Garuda's" is the most noteworthy; as an essayist he is equal to "Moghal" or "Action Front"; he appears to occupy a position midway between the Mahomedan and the moderate Congress party, but his views are covered to a considerable extent by those of "*Dum spiro, spero.*"

F. H. BROWN.

C. E. BUCKLAND.

J. KENNEDY.

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THE POLITICAL FUTURE
OF INDIA

By H. P. MODY, BOMBAY

INTRODUCTION

IN the annals of history it will be hard to find a parallel to the romantic story of India. The traces of its civilisation lie deep in the misty past, when the West had not yet emerged from its primæval barbarism. Kingdoms rose and fell in this ancient land ere the foundations of the Roman Empire were laid. The home of great religions, of science, ethics, law, and politics—in the region of thought its influence was unbounded. Its ancient sages taught the world the wisdom and the philosophy of the East. For centuries India maintained its supremacy in the domain of thought and the arts of civilisation. Then the tide turned. The country was given up to bloody feuds, anarchy, and misrule, and darkness settled over the land. Successive dynasties swept over it, and at each cycle of change it stood where it was—lifeless and unprogressive. Once in a while the victorious arm of a strong ruler subdued disorder and restored peace and good government. Then the country would again plunge into confusion and chaos. Thus India lived

on for well-nigh two thousand years, while her strength was being exhausted and her vast resources drained. Then came a small band of white traders from the West, attracted hither by wondrous tales of the fabulous wealth of the East. The story of the long struggle which ended in the conquest of this vast empire by the white traders can hardly be surpassed in dramatic interest by anything the imagination can conceive.

It can be easily perceived that while the country was given up to anarchy and misrule individual consciousness had not manifested itself, and under a long succession of despots the identity of the individual was lost in that of the State, which meant the king. When the English came they found the people disunited, disorganised, and demoralised. They evolved order out of chaos, and to their eternal credit be it said, they set about the task of uplifting the masses. In an auspicious hour they decided upon educating the natives, and through the blessings of higher education to bring about their moral and material regeneration. That wise and beneficent policy has been steadfastly pursued for more than half a century. And now the inevitable has happened. Education has brought to life ambitions and aspirations for which there was no scope while the people were under the heels of the oppressor. But when good government was established, and security of life and property assured, men's minds turned away from mere mate-

rial pursuits towards higher things. Hence, has sprung up the intense desire among the people to have a share in the administration of the country which has been their home from times immemorial. "Good government can never be a substitute for government by the people themselves,"¹ and the educated native has come to realise with much force the truth of this statesmanlike dictum.

With the realisation of the truth has sprung up a host of complicated issues. What Macaulay prophesied with the vision of a seer has come to pass. Speaking from his place in Parliament on the occasion of the passing of the Charter Act, he said :—

"It may be that the public mind of India may so expand under our system as to outgrow that system; that our subjects, being brought up under good government, may develop a capacity for better government, that being instructed in European knowledge, they may crave for European institutions. I know not whether such a day will ever come, but when it does come it will be the proudest day in the annals of England."

Nobler words were seldom uttered. That day which Macaulay dreamt of has at length arrived. Is England ready to respond to the call? Or does she refuse to recognise the conditions which the policy of her own statesmen has brought into being? Herein lies the problem of India. It is the great mission of Englishmen in India to solve this problem in a spirit of broad statesmanship, and

¹ The late Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.

thus carry to its logical conclusion the policy that was inaugurated some fifty years ago. The phenomena that are to-day observed throughout the land are of England's own creation. Does she stand aghast at her handiwork? Will she not instead courageously shape and direct the forces she herself has brought into being? The path of duty is plain, and therein also lie the safety, the prosperity, and the honour of England. In the following pages I shall endeavour to answer the questions set before me with an open mind. They touch some of the most burning topics of the day, and on their right treatment by the British authorities depends the stability of their rule and the happiness of their subjects.

CHAPTER I

NATION-BUILDING

THE question before us is, Is it possible for the diverse races of India to become one united self-governing community? I propose to treat it under two distinct heads. Under the first I mean to discuss the possibility of the various races of India forming themselves into a compact, united nation; under the second I shall deal with their capacity for self-government.

Probably one-half of those who talk about the diverse races of India do not realise how much that means. No other country in the world can afford so many varying types of civilisation. It is necessary to emphasise this fact in order the better to grapple with the difficulties before us. For this purpose I shall quote at some length the words of the late Marquis of Dufferin. Making due allowance for the gorgeous imagery in which that brilliant statesman delighted to indulge, the picture given to us may be considered as fairly

accurate. Speaking at St. Andrew's Day dinner,¹ he said :—

"Well, then, gentlemen, what is India? It is an empire equal in size, if Russia be excluded, to the entire continent of Europe, with a population of 250 million souls.² This population is composed of a large number of distinct nationalities, professing various religions, practising diverse rites, speaking different languages, and many of these nationalities are still further separated from each other by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages, and even antagonistic material interests. Perhaps the most patent peculiarity of our Indian 'cosmos' is its division into two mighty political communities—the Hindus, numbering 190 millions,³ and the Mahomedans, a nation of 50 millions.⁴ But to these two great divisions must be added a host of minor nationalities, who, though some are included in the two broader categories I have mentioned, are as completely differentiated from each other as are the Hindus from the Mahomedans. Such are the Sikhs, with their warlike habits and traditions and their theocratic enthusiasm; the Rohillas, the Pathans, the Assamese, the Baluchis, and the other wild and martial tribes on our frontiers; the hillmen dwelling in the folds of the Himalayas; our subjects in Burma, Mongol in race and Buddhist in religion; the Khonds, Mairs, and Bhils, and other non-Aryan peoples in the centre and south of India; and the enterprising Parsis, with their rapidly developing manufactures and commercial interests. Again, among these numerous communities may be found at one and the same moment all the various stages of civilisation through which mankind has passed from the prehistoric ages to the present day. At one end of the scale we have the naked savage hillman, with his stone weapons, his head-hunting, his polyandrous habits, and childish superstitions; and at the other the Europeanised native gentleman, with his refinement and polish, his literary culture, his Western philosophy, and his advanced political ideas; while between the two lie, layer

¹ Calcutta, 1888.

² 294 millions in census of 1901.

³ Now 207 millions.

⁴ Now 62½ millions.

upon layer, or in close juxtaposition, wandering communities, with their flocks of goats and moving tents; collections of undisciplined warriors, with their blood-feuds, their clan organisation, and loose tribal government; feudal chiefs and barons, with their picturesque retainers, their seignorial jurisdiction, and their mediæval modes of life; and modernised country gentlemen and enterprising merchants and manufacturers, with their well-managed estates and prosperous enterprises. The mere enumeration of these diversified elements must suggest to the most unimaginative mind a picture of as complicated a social and political organisation as ever taxed human ingenuity to govern and administer."

Is it possible for this confused mass of humanity to emerge into a united community with definite ideals and definite aims? The question is one of great difficulty, involving a consideration of complex factors in political and social evolution. At the outset it will be necessary for us to analyse carefully the conception of nationality. We shall then be in a position to state definitely to what extent the diverse races of India have the making of a nation in them.

What is a nation? It is generally understood to denote a distinct homogeneous race of men, united by the ties of common origin, language, and manners. It is here the confusion between a "people" and a "nation" comes in. Bluntschli, in his great work on "The Theory of the State," has clearly distinguished between the two. Community of race and community of religion may be essential elements in the formation of a

people. But it is quite possible to believe that a nation may grow up where these two conditions do not exist. By a nation we generally understand a society of all the members of a State as united and organised in the State. To put the difference between the two conceptions shortly, "it is the consciousness, more or less developed, of political connection and unity which lifts the nation above the people."

Seeley, in his "Expansion of England," after stating that it is not every population that constitutes a nationality, goes on to discuss some of those uniting forces which go towards the formation of a nation. He assigns the first place to community of race. Now, it may be at once conceded that it is much harder to establish and maintain the unity of a nation if it is composed of several peoples each fighting for power and place, than if it is a single people descended from a common stock. But it is submitted that community of race, though a very helpful, is not an indispensable factor. It is difficult to understand why racial differences should stand in the way of political unity (which is all we are concerned with) if other conditions favouring its growth exist. Now what are these conditions which make possible the union of the heterogeneous communities of India? The answer is to be found in the following definition of a nation:—

"It is the aggregate of those who are citizens of one country, subordinate to one Power, subject to one supreme

legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal and woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens."

In other words, common grievances and common aims, a common country and a common system of government, supply the defects of diversity of race. I shall now consider one by one the value of these factors in combating the adverse influence of racial differences.

Where a body of people suffer under a sense of injury, there is formed between them a bond which far transcends mere community of race as a moral and political force. Now it will not be denied, even by the Anglo-Indian official, that the people of India have grievances and are discontented. Whether we have to thank "pestilential agitators" for this, or "sun-dried bureaucrats," this is not the place to inquire. Sufficient for us is the fact that the unrest in India is not confined to one community or to one district. All over the land a ceaseless campaign is being carried on against the policy of the Government. From the press and from the platform a flood of criticism, valuable or worthless, is being poured upon the methods of British rule in India. Bengali and Sikh, Rajput and Brahmin, Madrasi and Parsi, all are united in one common endeavour to ameliorate the lot of the people of this country. There is not a single measure affecting a district or a province which does not evoke an active and sympathetic interest

throughout the whole land. Even a purely provincial question such as the Partition of Bengal produced a commotion which was felt by Bombay, Madras, and the Punjab no less than by the divided province itself. Of course, the intensity of feeling in Bengal was not manifested to an equal degree in the other provinces. That is but natural. Similarly, the Punjab Colonisation Bill was impartially condemned everywhere, though it affected the Land of the Five Rivers only. These are signs which he who runs may read. Here we have practical demonstrations of the power of common grievances in uniting widely divided peoples. A significant passage in a recent issue of the *Fortnightly Review* amply supports my contention. Says the writer: "It is a matter of life and death for our régime in the East that no artificial unity of the Indian peoples—Bengalis with Sikhs, Pathans, Rajputs, Mahrathas, and the rest—should be created by the burning sense of a common injustice." By "artificial unity" I suppose the writer means a unity based on other factors than community of race. If that is the interpretation, I have nothing to say to it; but the word is otherwise apt to mislead.

If common grievances have the power to unite people, community of aims is no less instrumental in doing so. It is another stimulus to co-operation and combination. The leaders of thought all over India are animated by a single purpose, and that is the moral and material advancement of the

country and the larger association of the people in its government. Methods may differ, but the ultimate aim of all is practically identical. Extremist or moderate in their opposition to Government, and in their desire to have a substantial share in the administration, they are all at one. I shall have occasion to dwell on this topic further on.

For the present, I pass on to another factor of importance in breaking down the barriers of race, and that is a common country, which includes common laws, common rights, &c. Whether we are Hindus or Mahomedans, Gurkhas or Sikhs, we are the children of one soil. Mr. Seeley has contended that India is not a political name, but only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. This is but a half truth, which generally is worse than palpable error. I am prepared to admit that before the advent of the British the word "Indian" had no meaning, and India was only a geographical expression. But circumstances have altered, and what was formerly a conglomeration of scattered principalities is now a single country dominated by a single Power. No longer is the south the country of the Hindu and the north the dominion of the Moslem. We are all British-born subjects, living under the same flag, enjoying the same rights, and suffering the same disabilities. India is equally the home of the Pathan in the North and the Tamil in the South. The population is the same as before, the geographical boundaries are the same, but the

dividing forces are no more. We are all the inhabitants of British India. This has added one more bond of sympathy between us, and thus helped to break down further the demoralising influence of racial diversity.

My last argument deals with the part played by the Government in bringing about the same end. It is a commonplace in politics that where there is a centre of resistance round which all the moral, political, or social elements cluster, there will be found a powerful incentive to organised effort. This pivot of opposition is supplied by the British Government. However divided the people may be, the division between one community of India and another is not so great as between the Indian and the Englishman. There is much that is common between the various races of India, but what community of interests is there between the rulers and the ruled? Here, the consideration of the beneficence or otherwise of British rule does not enter at all. Even if it was a perfectly organised machinery, the interests of the rulers on the one hand and the aspirations of the subject races on the other must inevitably produce a conflict which would drive the two forces into opposite camps. All our efforts are concentrated towards breaking down the ramparts behind which the bureaucratic forces are at work. We constitute, so to say, a permanent Opposition, and just as in English politics there is a combination while in opposition

which was lacking in the days of power, so our combination grows vigorous and intense. A Liberal in power occasionally declaims against his own party; in opposition he is a staunch and consistent enemy of all that is Conservative. Thus we are never demoralised by victory, but always united by constant reverses.

But, letting alone the political aspect of the question, what are the ties that draw us to our rulers? Do they lie in the Anglo-Indian's ill-disguised contempt for the "nigger," or in his arrogant behaviour towards all and sundry, irrespective of class and education? Is the over-sensitive native to be won over by being socially ostracised and continually reminded of the blackness of his skin? Does it tend to better relations when institutions all over the country are labelled "For Europeans only," with the "Eurasian" also thrown in at times? A Mahratha and a Sikh, a Rajput and a Gurkha may not have much in common, but the connection between them and the nation which conquered them all is still less. The victor of Plassey and Argaon, of Khirkee and Sobraon can hardly be more acceptable to the Indian than a compatriot and fellow-countryman. Specially is this the case when the conquerer never forgets his racial superiority. It is unfortunately forgotten

¹ It is to be regretted that the writer does not here discriminate, but charges Anglo-Indians as a class with an attitude and spirit observable in a small minority only.—Ed.

that "In India bad manners—overbearing manners—are a crime." But then every Anglo-Indian is not a Morley. Thus it comes to pass that the division is not between the Hindu and the Moslem, but between the Hindu and the Moslem on the one hand and the Englishman on the other. Mr. Sydney Low, who has hardly much sympathy with Indian aspirations, thus observes in his book on the Royal tour :—

"What did not seem to me a small matter by any means was that all these Anglicised, de-Orientalised natives had a certain common national feeling as against the alien ruler. Differing as they do among themselves in origin, race, and language, they yet manifested a consciousness that *vis-à-vis* the British they were all 'Indians.' It was a sentiment the existence of which most Anglo-Indians would emphatically deny, but I have seen other evidence that it prevails even in Europeanised Bombay, which is perhaps the last place where one would expect to find it."

I have so far attempted to show that racial diversity is not an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of political unity. Perhaps, if we find some illustrations from history in support of our view, our case will be very much strengthened. The most striking instance is that of Switzerland, which has succeeded in retaining different nationalities side by side without injuring the unity of the State. It has maintained a vigorous patriotism in spite of its three languages and two religions. French, German, and Italian elements there co-exist without any quarrel or conflict. In a lesser degree, the same

may be said of modern Germany, whose different peoples have merged their petty differences and by their union created a strong and militant Fatherland. How many discordant elements, again, have gone to the making of the American nation, since the days when Europe first poured her human cargo into the New World. So, while we reflect upon the diversity of races in India, let us not despair of their political unity. A united India is not a fond visionary's dream, but quite within the range of practical politics. And what, after all, does this diversity in substance amount to? Underlying all these various manifestations of civilisation there is an essential unity of Indian life and ideals. A shrewd observer has remarked :—

"Compare the most dissimilar Indian sects, and if a few wild tribes at a lower stage of civilisation be left out of account, striking similarities will at once appear, while the differences of both from the civilisation of Europe on the one hand, or of China and Japan on the other, will be very marked. To take only one point, it will be found that the ideal of sanctity is the same throughout India; so that there are saints who are held in veneration by men of all religions in India."

But the casual observer is of course more struck by superficial differences than by the underlying similarities.

I have attempted to demonstrate that a common origin is not an essential condition of political unity, if there are other circumstances conducive to its growth. I now proceed to discuss what has been

regarded as another indispensable element in the formation of a nation, and that is a common religion. According to Seeley, it is the strongest and most important of all the elements that go to constitute nationality, and he thinks this element exists in India. The latter part of this remark is, of course, not correct (though it is an admission in my favour), for Hinduism and Mahomedanism have nothing in common, and there are absolutely no indications of the one absorbing the other. In ancient times, religious belief had immense influence over the thought and life of man. The principle of toleration was practically unknown, and religious liberty amounted to a "permission to believe what I believe." Those were the days when heretics and unbelievers were tortured and burnt. In the first days of man's faith, religious belief brought with it an intolerance and bigotry which almost amounted to fanaticism. Human life was not so sacred then, and our forefathers had rather vague notions of its value. Respect for individual conscience there was little, and as the Greeks called all others barbarians, so difference of belief was termed unbelief. The statutes of civilised countries bear witness to the spirit which dominated the religious convictions of men down to within recent times. Our modern civilisation can boast of no prouder achievement than the triumph over religious bigotry and fanaticism. We are not

totally free from their influence, but the old fury will never again take possession of men's souls. No longer will a Bartholomew massacre disgrace the annals of mankind. No more will the militant faith of Islam carry conviction at the point of the sword. Not in our day will an imaginary Popish Plot unhinge the minds of men. Never again will adherence to the ancient faith of Persia be purchased with exile from hearth and home. The dictates of a man's conscience we value above religious unity, and we have too much respect for the human mind to make of it a slave. Freedom from dogma has enabled us to grasp with clearer perception the essentials of religion, and its teaching of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood and equality before God of men.

Thus it has come about that religious differences have ceased to be the disruptive influences that once they were. Outside of our beliefs, we find much that brings us into close communion with our fellow-creatures. As Mr. Wells observes in one of his essays:—

"One man may be a Swedenborgian, another a Roman Catholic, another a Calvinistic Methodist, another an English High-Churchman, another a Positivist or a Parsi or a Jew; the fact remains that they must go about doing all sorts of things in common every day, and may meet unanimously in the market-place with a desire to shape their general activities to the form of a public-spirited life, and when at last the life of every day is summed up, to leave the world better than they found it."

This is, of course, an ideal held before us, and it has not yet succeeded in directing the public life of any country. But we are gradually progressing towards this ideal, and the day is not far distant when our religious differences will be entirely merged in a higher conception of the essential unity of all religions. In Protestant England, it was found possible for a Jew to attain the highest position in the State, and a French Canadian and a Catholic could become Prime Minister of Canada.

In India, this spirit of broad-minded tolerance has been specially inculcated by the wise policy of the British Government, which has emphatically declared that it regards all religions alike. Hence the violence and animosities of earlier days have ceased to exist, and the acuteness of our dissensions is considerably diminished by the lesson of tolerance thus taught. Of course there are occasional outbursts of ill-feeling between the Hindus and the Mahomedans, but to represent these solitary instances as a chronic condition of things is too ridiculous to need refutation. Since the British occupation there have been very few instances of any serious conflict between the two races. The recent breach between them in Eastern Bengal is due to political reasons, and religious differences have not contributed thereto. Of their general relations I shall have to speak shortly. For the present I shall content myself with one or two notable illustrations in support of my contention

that diversity of religion is not such a disruptive influence among Indians as it is represented to be. The premier Native Prince of India, a staunch Mahomedan, has for his Prime Minister a Hindu gentleman, and the enterprising Parsis have monopolised in that State some of the highest positions in the gift of the Nizam. The Gaekwar of Baroda, a devoted Hindu, and the most enlightened of all the Native Princes, has had more than one Parsi at the head of his State. Similarly, in other Native States, important posts will be found to have been distributed irrespective of caste or creed. This is an encouraging sign of the times, and a happy augury for the future. Bluntschli's opinions are always deserving of respect, and this is what he has to say on the influence of religion :—

“Now that religious freedom is valued more highly than unity of belief, the influence of religion upon the formation and separation of peoples becomes weaker. Germans have become conscious of their unity as a nation apart from the question whether they are Catholics or Protestants, Jews or Pantheists, and they maintain their distinction from foreign peoples, although many of these are of the same religion with them.”

A third element in the formation of a national spirit is community of language. Unlike the other two elements we have just discussed, it is an essential condition of political unity. For unless there is a common language which serves as a medium of intellectual intercourse, there cannot be a com-

munity of ideas. Common language is the special characteristic of a nation, so that those who speak the same language have a mutual recognition of each other as members of the same people. It must not be understood that community of speech always denotes nationality; for the English and Americans both speak the same tongue, yet are two distinct nationalities. But it is essential that there should be a common instrument for the diffusion of ideas before there can be a community of interests. Now, India has more than a hundred dialects, and it would appear that here is an insurmountable obstacle to our ultimate unification. But the spread of English education has partially removed this obstacle, and the gradual diffusion of the language among the masses will ultimately supply us with that common speech which is so necessary for our progress. Already, all over India, the educated classes find in it a common medium for the expression of ideas. How much it has done for us can best be realised by an attendance at the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress. Here will be found the Bengali and the Sikh, the Brahmin and the Moslem, the Mahratha and the Parsi conversing with each other in the language that threatens to supplant their mother-tongues, and voicing their grievances through the medium of a common speech. It will be urged that the English-speaking portion of the population is very small, and that the masses

of the people cannot even write their own dialects. But so far we have been considering the educated classes only, and it must be admitted that whatever unity exists at present exists among them alone. It is remarkable, however, with what facility Indians have adopted a tongue which is not their own. The foreigner stands amazed at their command over the English language. There are hundreds of natives who can speak and write it as well as Englishmen themselves, though the eloquent Babu sometimes butchers the idiom. To one who is a resident of this country the fact needs no demonstration. Attend a political meeting or read a native journal, and no further proof will be required.

Nor will proof be needed to demonstrate the immense influence of language and literature in bringing about a feeling of nationality. A common literature is the means whereby community of thought and feeling is engendered, for it is the vehicle by which ideas are exchanged and acquired. To this result the periodical press has contributed not a little. If the Elizabethan age was the age of poets and dramatists, the twentieth century may aptly be said to be the age of newspapers. Within the past fifty years the press in Western countries has acquired and wielded an influence which has been felt by princes and cabinets. This is not the growth of a decade or a generation. It is the result of a long struggle against neglect, opposition, and oppression. To-day, its position as the spokesman

of the people and the moulder of public opinion is unchallenged. The press in India had no such difficulties to encounter, though it, too, has had its share of abuse and ridicule. With a magnanimity which deserves the highest commendation, the Government of India, some twenty-five years ago, granted the complete freedom of the press. To this may be ascribed the birth and growth of native journalism, for its position as a power in the land dates from that time.* At the present day it performs the difficult task of voicing the aspirations of the people and criticising the methods of the Government. In a country of vast distances, it has been the only means of bringing the people of the different provinces into communication with each other. It has created and shaped public opinion, and, in voicing the aspirations of the diverse races of India, has helped to bring about a common feeling of nationality.

Of all the various shapes which political activity has taken in this country, I am inclined to attach the greatest importance to the efforts of the native papers. Their influence is being slowly recognised by the Government, and by none more so than by the present Governor of Bombay, who has borne public testimony to their usefulness and importance. Their influence has not been confined to the educated classes only.* The vernacular papers have their own sphere of activity. But, it will be urged, the people of India have no common vernacular.

True; but whether the papers are printed in Gujarati or Hindi, Bengali or Mahrathi, Tamil or Arabic they are all directed towards the same object, and that is the education of the people in political principles and improvements in the methods of administration. They are conducted with an ability and energy of which those who have not seen them can have no idea. Their integrity, too, is unquestioned; and if they adopt a too partisan tone it may be excusable under the peculiar circumstances of the case. For the matter of that, a Tory journal has seldom a good word to say of the Liberals. Of course, there are black sheep everywhere, and the man who wrote that Lady Curzon's death was a visitation from God on the late Viceroy for partitioning the province of Bengal cannot be too severely condemned. But, despite occasional lapses from good taste and common sense, the native press as a whole is doing yeoman's service to the cause of the country.

Here, then, we have a mighty instrument at work in forming a national spirit. And for this we have to thank the language of our adoption. Without its aid nothing could have been achieved. With its aid, there is being slowly formed a feeling of nationality all over the country. As has been well said:—

“Even strange races, entering on the heritage of a new language, are gradually transformed in spirit by it until their nationality is changed. Thus the German tribes of the Ostro-

goths and Lombards in Italy became Italian ; the Celts, the Franks, and the Burgundians in France became French ; the Slavs and Wends in Prussia became Prussian."

And so it may come about that the diverse races of India, entering on the heritage of the English language, may be so transformed by it in spirit that they all may be able to call themselves Indians in the real sense of the term.

A fourth element of nationality consists of what Renan styled "community of historical antecedents." This element exists in India, though its force is rather weak. It is natural that people who have been associated with each other in the past should develop strong tendencies to unite. In spite of what may be said to the contrary, the people of India have historic associations. Whatever rulers they had, they remember at least the ancient glory and prosperity of their fatherland. Not have the alternations of Hindu and Mahomedan rulers tended to impair this sense of historical associations in the past, if it be remembered that the distinction between a Hindu and a Mahomedan is not so great as that between them and a foreigner. On the other hand, the rule of a universal benefactor like Akbar has handed down glorious traditions which are the common property of all. Just as the dark episodes of the Mutiny excite no bitter feelings in the breast of the Englishman now, so the scenes of their early conflicts do not conjure up bitter memories in the descendants of those who fought and died for their