

ORY OF THE NATIONALIST OVEMENT

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(IN INDIAN HISTORY AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY)

LONDON
RAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1921

FIRST EDITION . . .
 SECOND EDITION . . .
 THIRD EDITION . . .



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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

second edition of this book contained a few corrections and explanations of minor importance. I added a brief clause to Appendix III.

As the book has reached a third edition, I have expanded it beyond its original scope by adding a chapter which reviews events from the end of April 1919 to the close of the year 1920. I was not in India during any portion of this period, but have carefully ascertained all the facts narrated in the chapter, which I intended to make the present situation more easily comprehensible.

It will be noted that I have not dwelt on or discussed the conclusions of the Hunter Committee and the subsequent debates in Parliament. I have merely referred to them. They gave rise to bitter controversies which are fresh in the minds of all and cannot with profit be reopened now. I earnestly trust that as the foundations of the new constitution settle, the position will become more stable.

In my new chapter I have summarised the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee in the Government of India Bill; I have dwelt with some care on the progress of events in the Punjab during the latter months of the year 1920; I have traced the development of the non-co-operative agitation. It is directed by men who thoroughly understand how to play on the pathetic gullibility of the masses and the uncritical, easily aroused ardour of the youth of the educated classes. Indifferent seasons, economic depression, and other circumstances have favoured their efforts. They are determined to make the most of every opportunity. Their object is to subvert the

central and provincial British-cum-Indian Governments and Councils recently established by law.

The numerous Indian members of these bodies represent powerfully the thinking and responsible sections of their fellow-countrymen. They stand for the welfare and interests of all other sections. They know that, whatever may be the pretext, the issue which the Extremists have raised is crucial. Is there to be order or anarchy? That is the question. By the promptitude and vigour of their answer to it, the new semi-parliamentary Governments and Councils will be judged, not only in England, but throughout the civilised world.

To reformed India, for the sake of many happy memories of unreformed India, I wish the amplest measure of progress and prosperity.

H. V. L.

January 20th, 1921.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I LEFT India in April, 1919, and in the following October completed thirty-five years of service passed in direct contact with Indians of all classes. I have enjoyed considerable facilities for observing from close quarters various phases of the Indian Nationalist movement.

In this book I have tried to trace its history and summarise political conditions in India as they were when I left the country. My object has been to render some slight assistance toward a clear understanding of the difficult problems which India offers, and will continue to offer, to the British people.

Throughout I have felt the extreme difficulty of appraising and setting forth fairly the ideals and mental processes of men not of my own race. I have, therefore, aimed at explaining these, as far as possible, in the words of Indian Nationalists themselves. My book may be held to contain an excessive number of quota-

tions; but the quantity of these is due to my anxiety to throw as accurate a light as possible on causes, motives, and events.

Another object has been present to my mind. British rule in India has been, and is constantly slandered and vilified in India, in England, and in other countries. I have taken care to show what has been said of its character and policy by prominent founders and leaders of Indian Nationalism.

My story is one of my own time, and ends with the day of my departure from India. My last chapter was written before publication of the amended Government of India Bill, which has since become law. I have endeavoured to write what I believe to be the truth in a fair and considerate spirit.

I wish to acknowledge my obligations to a large variety of authorities, to the published reports of the Indian National Congress, from 1885 to the present time, to the newspapers *India*, *The Times of India*, the *Pioneer*, the *Leader*, and other Indian journals, to the writings of the late Sir Alfred Lyall to Mr. Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*, to the *Life of Saiyid Ahmad Khan, C.S.I.*, by Colonel Graham, to the Speeches of Lord Curzon of Kedleston edited by Sir Thomas Raleigh, to Lord Morley's *Recollections and Indian Speeches*, to the Speeches of the late Mr. Gokhale, to Papers on Indian Social Reform, edited by Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, to Mr. William Archer's *India and the Future*, to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Report, to various reports published by the Government of India, and to other sources of information too numerous to detail.

• Lastly, I would express the hope that the importance and interest of the subject, especially at the present time, may lead my readers to forgive the shortcomings of the book; and I would express my gratitude to the people of the United Provinces, and to my brother officers of the Indian Civil Service, with whom I have passed many happy years.

H. V. L.

December 31st, 1919.

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A HISTORY OF THE INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

"An accurate knowledge of the conditions of the past is necessary for a right understanding of the problems of the present."

SOME time ago, in the well-known book *J'accuse*, I read the following passage :

"National movements in fact cannot be suppressed. The practical politician must deal with them as facts ; and if he hopes to conduct them in the desired direction, he must endeavour, as far as possible, to satisfy their demands, which rest on community of race, of language, and often of religion—demands which are thus healthy and justifiable. Therein lies the skill of the English, and the true basis of their colonial greatness."

These words, written by a German, and inspired by observation of stirring incidents in the recent War, are a well-deserved tribute to the success of the colonial policy of Great Britain. Her Indian policy has been declared to be based on the same principles, but must be adapted to far more complex circumstances ; for in this great continent, or collection of countries, diverse in soil and physical characteristics, she has to deal with, not community, but numerous varieties of race, language, and religion. Yet she must recognise that

“ although Indians are broken up into diversities of race and language, they are, as a whole, not less distinctly marked off from the rest of Asia by certain material and moral characteristics than their country is by the mountains and the sea. The component parts of that great country hang together morally and politically. There is no more room for two irreconcilable systems of government than there is in Persia, China, or Asiatic Turkey.”¹

The British Government has decided to accede to the demand of Indian Nationalists that India shall tread the paths that lead to parliamentary government. This decision calls for, and will call for the solution of very difficult questions. We shall explore these to small purpose unless we make some study of the past, unless we observe the course of events which introduced democratic politics into the most rigidly conservative country in the world. The formal introduction took place thirty-four years ago; but the India of 1885 was, like the India of to-day, heir to a former time.

In view of perversions of Indian history which have lately become too common, it will be convenient to describe briefly the nature of the political inheritance to which Britain succeeded. The Moghal Empire, the product of a great Muhammadan invasion from Central Asia, had previously swept away all indigenous political institutions and shattered all semblance of Hindu nationality except in the States of Rajputana. When, after two centuries, that Empire itself fell gradually into decay, Sikhs, Jats, Afghans, Marathas disputed and fought over its territories. The Marathas were showing signs of consolidating their acquisitions when British intervention turned the scale; but history does not show that their Government represented any pan-

¹ Sir Alfred Lyall.

Hindu nationality. In its later days it was described by Sir Thomas Munro, a high contemporary authority, as "one of the most destructive that ever existed in India." He went on: "Their work was chiefly desolation. They did not seek their revenue in the improvement of the country, but in the exaction of the established *chaut*¹ from their neighbours and in predatory incursions to levy more."

Province after province fell to the East India Company because the Moghal Empire could no longer withstand the attacks of its enemies, and in each the company's servants found no stable or organised political institutions. Everywhere the strongest ruled, or tried to rule, by purely despotic methods. Everywhere the lives and property of the people were at the arbitrary disposal of their rulers. Everywhere armies, or hosts of marauders, marched frequently over the country, supplied their wants by plunder and left ruin in their train. Sir Alfred Lyall writes, in *Asiatic Studies* :

"The character and consequences of the events which preceded British supremacy in India have, perhaps, been seldom adequately estimated. There intervened a period of political anarchy greater and more widespread than India had experienced for centuries. It was a mere tearing and rending of the prostrate carcass, a free fight with little definite aim or purpose beyond plunder or annexation of land revenue."

Let those who are prone to undervalue the advantages of British government remember the miseries which it brought to an end.

Endeavouring to achieve peace and security, first for their commerce and then for their territories, constantly seeking for a permanent frontier, the East India Company as constantly lost it in receding vistas, until at

¹ Blackmail.

last they found themselves supreme over the whole of India south-east of the Punjab. Such rapid extension would have been impracticable had not their rule been generally welcome for reasons explained by Abbé Dubois, a French missionary who worked in Southern India early in the last century :

“ Nevertheless,” he wrote, “ the justice and prudence which the present rulers display in endeavouring to make these people less unhappy than they have been hitherto ; the anxiety they manifest in increasing their material comfort ; above all, the inviolable respect which they constantly show for the customs and religious belief of the country ; and, lastly, the protection they afford to the weak as well as to, the strong, to the Brahman, to the Pariah, to the Christian, to the Muhammadan ; all these have contributed more to the consolidation of their power than even their victories and conquests.”

But now other considerations began to claim the attention of thinking men. Perhaps the most noteworthy utterances on the subject were those of Sir Thomas Munro, who, arriving in India in 1780 as a military cadet at the age of nineteen, died as Governor of Madras in 1827. Not only did he consider

“ how we can raise the character and material condition of our people, how by better organisation we can root out needless misery of mind and body, how we can improve the health and intelligence, stimulate the sense of duty and fellowship, the efficiency and patriotism of the whole community ; ” but, going further, he struck an altogether new note. “ The strength of the British Government enables it to put down every rebellion, to repel every foreign invasion, and to give to its subjects a degree of protection which those of no Native Power enjoy. Its laws and institutions also

afford them a security from domestic oppression unknown in Native States; but these advantages are dearly bought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable. The natives of British provinces may, without fear, pursue their different occupations as traders or husbandmen and enjoy the fruits of their labours in tranquillity; but none of them can look forward to any share in the civil or military government of their country. It is from men who either hold or are eligible for public life that nations take their character; where no such men exist, there can be no energy in any other class of the community. No elevation of character can be expected among men who in the military line cannot attain to any rank above that of a subadar, where they are as much below an ensign as an ensign is below the commander-in-chief, and who in the civil line can hope for nothing beyond some petty judicial or revenue office in which they may by corrupt means make up for their slender salary."

On another occasion he wrote :

"Our great error in this country, during a long course of years, has been too much precipitation in attempting to better the condition of the people with hardly any knowledge of the means by which it was to be accomplished, and indeed without seeming to think that any other than good intentions were necessary. It is a dangerous system of government to be constantly urged by the desire of settling everything permanently; to do everything in a hurry and in consequence wrong, and in our zeal for permanency to put the remedy out of our reach. The ruling vice of our Government is innovation; and its innovation has been so little guided by a knowledge of the people, that though made after what was thought by us to be mature discussion, it must appear to them as little better than the result of mere caprice."

Munro overlooked an important condition of the future, as I shall subsequently show; but he was regarded as an official of exceptional ability, and his ideas were to some extent shared by other prominent men of his day. Thus it was that broad and liberal principles guided the statesmen who were responsible for that important Act of Parliament—the Government of India Bill of 1833—which asserted the sovereignty of the Crown over the Company's territories, and declared that these were held in trust for His Majesty. It formulated definitely the principles of British rule. It declared that no person by reason of his birth, creed, or colour should be disqualified from holding any office in the East India Company's service. It also forbade the Company to engage in any kind of trade, thus terminating the association of Government with profit-making, and it converted the Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal into the "Governor-General of India in Council." There were to be four ordinary members of Council, three servants of the Company, and the fourth a legal member appointed with the approbation of the Crown, but only entitled to sit and vote at meetings convened for legislative purposes. The first legal member was the great Macaulay. Great Britain thus declared her determination that her Empire in India should rest on freedom and fair opportunity, and took a further important step in the process of transforming the East India Company from what was originally a purely mercantile association into a special agency for the government of a great dependency. The Directors of the Company endeavoured to give effect to this generous policy by a despatch dated December 10th, 1834. Natives of India were to be admitted to places of trust as freely and extensively as a regard for the due discharge of the functions attached to such

places would permit. Fitness was henceforward to be the criterion of eligibility. And in order that the natives of India might become fit, and able to compete with a fair chance of success, every design tending to their improvement was to be promoted, "whether by conferring on them the advantages of education or by diffusing on them the treasures of science, knowledge, and moral culture." At the same time the Governor-General was to remember that

"it is not by holding out incentives to official ambition, but by repressing crime, by securing and guarding property, by ensuring to industry the fruits of its labour, by protecting men in the undisturbed enjoyment of their rights and in the unfettered exercise of their faculties, that governments best minister to the public wealth and happiness."

Democratic political ideals in India owe their origin largely to the decision of Lord William Bentinck, then Governor-General, who in pursuance of the "liberal and comprehensive policy" laid down by the despatch from which I have quoted, announced, on March 7th, 1835, that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India." Up to that time the pioneers of Western education had been mainly Christian missionaries, but now the advancement of such teaching was declared to be a part of State policy. As has often been told, this announcement was largely influenced by Macaulay, and closed a controversy in which the question at issue was whether the instruction to be subsidised by public money should be English or Oriental; whether the language, the philosophies, and science of the West or the East should be encouraged by the State. The settlement arrived at was in prin-

ciple right, for it was clearly the duty of the British Government to attempt the intellectual enlightenment of India on Western lines; but in carrying out this settlement the Government made one mistake perceptible to after-experience—it promoted literature far above science; it also necessarily offended conservative communities with sensitive prejudices, the Brahmans, who were depositaries of orthodox Hindu tradition, and the higher classes of Muhammadans, who were attached to their own books and philosophy. Nevertheless, for the first time in India, State-aided instruction was established on a firm foundation. In the words of the last Census of India Report “the country had been for centuries in an unsettled condition, and the common people were sunk in deepest ignorance. Under the caste system, the learned professions were the monopoly of a few castes, and in the law books the imparting of knowledge to Sudras (low castes) was forbidden.” But now a new system was introduced. English and vernacular education were opened to all, although years elapsed before the former penetrated beyond an extremely limited number of persons belonging to the already lettered classes. In 1854 the directors of the East India Company in a memorable despatch accepted the systematic promotion of general education as one of the duties of the State, and emphatically declared their desire for the “diffusion” of European knowledge in India. Shortly afterwards a University was established at Calcutta which devoted its entire energies to literary and theoretical instruction.

It must be remembered that in 1835 neither the Punjab nor Oudh belonged to Great Britain, also that throughout the whole of British India communications were still primitive and adverse to a rapid spread of

the new learning. Hindus formed and form the great majority of the population. Their higher castes represent, generally, the early Aryan invaders. Their lower castes are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the country, who lost their independence by the imposition of the caste system. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, late Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University, tells us that each Aryan tribe that invaded India in the remote past had a king of its own, and a family or families of priests.

“There were among them,” he says, “three social grades. To the first belonged priests, who composed Brahmins, *i.e.*, songs or hymns to the gods, knew how to worship them, and were called Brahmins. The second grade was occupied by those who acquired political eminence and fought battles, and were called Rajas. All the other Aryas were referred to the third grade, and were distinguished by the name of Visas, or people, generally. These three classes formed one community, and such of the aborigines as had yielded to the Aryas were tacked on to it as a fourth grade under the name of Dasas, slaves, or servants.”

As the Aryans spread eastward over the vast continent of India, subjugating or pushing back the earlier inhabitants, they developed the religious and social system known as Hinduism, which is founded on the original Aryan beliefs, but has adopted certain additional doctrines which are generally accepted among Hindus and are likely to influence the future materially, if less profoundly than they have influenced the past. That here and there they have been modified or largely rejected by particular sects or classes does not alter the fact that they are the basis of the working creed of the great majority of Hindus, and form the mental windows through which these many millions look out

upon the things of life. The first of these doctrines is that the cleavages between the four main castes were divinely ordained, that these castes alone are within the pale of Hinduism; and that outside that pale are barbarians or outcastes, descendants of the aborigines who never intermingled with the lowest caste of Hindus. The second doctrine is that every soul passes through a variety of bodies. At each birth the caste or out-casting of the body is determined by the deeds of the soul in its previous body. This doctrine is named "karma," or action. In effect it implies, and is understood to imply, that persons who are so fortunate as to be born Brahmans have won their position by merit and spirituality; that members of the lowest caste and outcastes are paying a just penalty for transgressions in a previous existence, and must be content to accept this unpleasant fact. To this belief was added another, that the high castes, and notably the Brahmans, must be most careful to preserve their spirituality and position; that for this reason they must, as far as possible, avoid contact with lower castes.

As the centuries rolled on, the original four castes expanded into many sub-castes; but although the law and the scriptures were by no means always observed, and modifications of caste practices resulted from migrations and changes of occupation, the basic principles of "karma" and caste-organisation hardened. Even the outcastes largely accepted them, together with vague varieties of Hindu theology, and are at the present day classed as Hindus in census returns. And thus it is that, in spite of the political disintegration which prevailed in India at the time of the Muhammadan inroads from central Asia, there was a Hindu social and religious system combining external unity with internal cleavages. This system remained

intact during the period of Muhammadan domination, although the temptations of a militant religion, which taught that all true believers were equal before God, proved irresistible with many Hindus of the lower castes. It was, indeed, not until the establishment of British rule and the introduction of English education, often imparted by Christian European missionaries, that the rooted ideas engendered by the caste system and the pessimism implanted among the lowest castes by the doctrine of "karma" weakened in the slightest degree; and even now these ideas, although partially dissolving among the English-educated, are very strong among the generality of Hindus, and necessarily imply rigid social distinctions, assuring Brahman supremacy and supporting it by the teaching that the presence of Brahmans is indispensable for the religious family ceremonies to which orthodox Hindus attach supreme value. Caste distinctions are now enforced by strict rules and penalties, even though such rules and penalties are here and there lapsing into disuse. Brahman ascendancy has been largely temporal as well as spiritual. Brahmans were the councillors of early Hindu monarchs, and have often been the ministers of Muhammadan rulers. Neither foreign conquest nor domestic dissensions have materially impaired a religious and social position which is buttressed by the sanction of ages. Such a supremacy has necessarily developed an intense pride of place, and has produced restrictions and exclusions of the most arbitrary kind.

British rule had followed closely on the fall of Muhammadan sovereignty, and had inherited the autocratic system of administration which the Muslim conquerors from Central Asia had themselves received from earlier rulers of India. No other system had ever been known in the country from time immemorial. In the gradual

dissolution of their own empire, many Muhammadans freely assisted in establishing British authority. Not only did they enlist in the army of the East India Company, but, in the years which immediately preceded the Mutiny, they considerably outnumbered Hindus in the best offices which could be held by Indians under the British Government.) The majority of their upper classes, however—adventurers by descent and soldiers by tradition—clung to their own history and literature, and turned their faces away from the new learning, failing to realise that, in course of time, under Western rule, Western education must necessarily become the channel to office and power. The Parsis, on the other hand, descendants from Persian exiles who settled in India some centuries ago and form a strong commercial section in Bombay, and the Hindu clerical and trading castes, as well as those families of Brahmans who, by tradition, inclined to Government employ, quickly availed themselves of opening opportunities, especially in the capital province of Bengal and in the seaports of Bombay and Madras. The Rajputs or Thakurs, the great Hindu fighting caste, at first held entirely aloof from English education. Their ambitions were military or territorial. They lived in the interior of Upper India, and were slightly represented elsewhere.

The India of the East India Company's days ended with the Mutiny. Lord Roberts has pointed out that this was a military revolt, but that the revolt would not have taken place had there not been considerable discontent through that part of the country from which the Hindustani sepoy chiefly came, and had not powerful persons borne the British a grudge. He states that the discontent was largely due to the antagonism of the Brahmans to our innovations and

to Western education, which was sapping their influence. He points out that we had spread among the ruling chiefs uncertainty and discontent; that we had recently annexed Oudh and Jhansi, and had informed the titular King of Delhi that on his death his title would cease and his court would be removed from the Imperial city.

It is also important to notice that for various reasons, the more sensitive Hindu and Muhammadan classes had conceived the idea that their religions were losing their exclusive privileges and were being steadily undermined. The proclamations issued from Delhi and Lucknow appealed to the multitude with the cry of religion in peril.

The arena of the Mutiny was the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, which then included Delhi, and a large part of Central India. There was little fighting anywhere else, and no popular trouble in Bengal proper, although there was some fighting in Bihar. Unlike the Punjab, neither Agra nor Oudh had been disarmed. In the Agra Province there were very few British troops, and those few either were drawn off to the siege of Delhi or were themselves for the first four or five months hopelessly beleaguered. At Agra itself the Lieutenant-Governor was, until after the fall of Delhi, supported against 42,000 rebel soldiers by one company's regiment of 655 effectives and one battery of six guns manned by Indian drivers. It was indeed fortunate for our cause that in this province, which contains so much that is most national and most sacred in Hindu eyes, and has moreover been the centre of Muslim empire, the rebellion, although animated largely by racial and religious sentiment, was not a great patriotic or religious combination. Here is a contemporary description of ordinary district occurrences

away from the great centres of population: "The villages and towns generally side with some neighbouring potentate, or more generally they side with no one at all. They are delighted at being relieved from all government whatsoever, and instantly set to work fighting among themselves. Every man of enterprise and a little influence collects his clan, and plunders all the weaker villages round him."

In Oudh, recently annexed, and the chief recruiting-ground of the old sepoy army, the landed aristocracy, who are now our good friends the talukdars, were boiling with rage and discontent. In our recent settlement of the land revenue we had inclined to the principle of pushing them aside as grasping middlemen devoid of right or title, and, when the sepoys mutinied, most of the talukdars naturally joined them. In the whole province we had not 1,000 British soldiers, but those whom we had, assisted by some loyal Indian troops, gave a remarkably good account of themselves. The rebellion in Oudh was more national than in Agra, but here, too, the fighters were generally more concerned to make as much as they could out of unusual opportunities for licence and plunder than to oppose a persistent and determined front to the enemy.

Later on I shall have occasion to quote the remarks of a loyal and competent Indian observer on the events of the Mutiny. But what struck the late Sir Alfred Lyall, at that time a young civilian in the Agra Province, was the fierce hatred borne to us by the Muhammadans, and he put the whole rebellion down to them. This was an off-hand expression of opinion. But more weight attaches to his later views, expressed many years after his early adventures, that after the Mutiny the British turned on the Muhammadans as their real enemies "so that the failure of the revolt was much

more disastrous to them than to the Hindus. They lost almost all their remaining prestige of traditional superiority over the Hindus; they forfeited for the time the confidence of their foreign rulers; and it is from this period that must be dated the loss of their numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of the civil and military services."

When the revolt had been suppressed, the Crown took over the government of India from the East India Company. Queen Victoria's Proclamation of November 1st, 1858; which is frequently referred to by educated Indians as the Magna Charta of their liberties, declared that the rights, dignity, and honour of Indian ruling princes were to be preserved as Her Majesty's own, and that, so far as might be, all Her Majesty's subjects, of whatever race and creed, were to be freely and impartially admitted to offices in the public service, the duties of which they might be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge. The peaceful industry of India was to be stimulated; works of public utility and improvement were to be promoted; and the Government was to be administered for the benefit of all Her Majesty's subjects resident in India. "In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our great reward." Three years later, an important step was taken in the first association of Indians with the Government for legislative purposes. By the Councils Act of 1861 the Governor-General's Executive Council was to consist of five members, three of whom had been in the Indian service of the Crown for ten years at least. The Commander-in-Chief was to be an extraordinary member; and for the purpose of making laws and regulations the Governor-General could nominate to his Council not less than six or more

than twelve persons, not less than half of whom must be non-officials.

The Governors of Bombay and Madras, who were also assisted by Executive Councils, could similarly nominate a few persons to aid in legislation, not less than half of whom must be non-officials.

The Governor-General in Council could, with the approval of the Home Government, extend to the Lieutenant-Governors of Bengal, the North-Western Provinces,¹ and the Punjab, who ruled without Executive Councils, the power to convoke small Legislative Councils and to appoint persons thereto, not less than one-third of whom would be non-officials.

Prominent Indians were to be associated henceforward with the Government in legislation. The association was to be extremely limited, but marked the beginning of a more liberal policy.

At this time about two-thirds of the country was under direct British administration. The rest was, and is now, ruled by its hereditary chiefs, all owing allegiance to the British Crown. The area under British administration now consists of seven provinces, each under a Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, and seven under Chief Commissioners. Four of the major provinces exceed the United Kingdom in area, and two exceed it in population.

All classes of the population were now led into the ways of peace, and the whole edifice settled down. Starting badly as usual in the recent conflict, the British had vindicated their supremacy, and now rapidly re-established peace and order throughout the country. Means of correspondence and communication rapidly improved; British capital poured in; railways and commerce developed; schools and colleges grew and

¹ Now the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

multiplied, until at last the Muhammadans yielded to the general impulse and began to enter the English educational arena. The India of to-day gradually came into being. It was, in an important respect, a different country from that foreseen by Sir Thomas Munro. It involved more complex interests. He had not anticipated the part which European capital would play in the development of an India no longer "standing before her captors like some beautiful stranger," but traversed by railways, served by steamships, and brought into the bustling consolidation of the modern world. So blind was his augury of this side of the future that he defended the monopoly of the East India Company on the ground that it was doubtful whether or not trade with India could be greatly increased.

"No nation," he wrote, "will take from another what it can furnish cheaper and better itself. In India almost every article which the inhabitants require is made cheaper and better than in Europe. . . . Their simple mode of living renders all our furniture and ornaments for the decoration of the house and table utterly unserviceable to the Hindus." •He saw no prospect of any considerable number of Europeans being able to make a livelihood in the country. "The trading disposition of the natives induces me to think it impossible that any European trader can long remain in the interior of India, and that they must all sooner or later be driven to the coast."

• Those were easy days for the rulers of India, for their superior efficiency was taken for granted, and opposition was scarce and insignificant. The ruling chiefs were less apprehensive and more contented than they had ever been before, and their content was reflected in our own territories. These were administered

by British officers,¹ assisted by a host of improving Indian subordinates. The officers themselves for the most part did their work, as it came, with zeal and energy, liking the people and holding generally that, in the words of a distinguished lieutenant-governor, "Good administration was like good digestion. " It did its work and you heard no more about it." And indeed to the simple and docile masses of India, who desire only strong and sympathetic protection, good administration must always be the best of blessings.

Mainly peasants living in mud-built huts and cultivating small holdings, at times absorbed in pilgrimages or religious observances, they are generally preoccupied

¹ "The easiest way of understanding the organisation of a province is to think of it as composed of districts, which in all provinces, except Madras, are combined, in groups of usually from four to six, into divisions, under a commissioner. The average size of a district is 4,430 square miles, or three-fourths the size of Yorkshire. Many are much bigger. Mymensingh district holds more human souls than Switzerland Vizagapatam district, both in area and population, exceeds Denmark. In the United Provinces, where districts are small and the population dense, each collector is, on the average, in charge of an area as large as Norfolk and of a population as large as that of New Zealand. The commissioner of the Tirhut division looks after far more people than the Government of Canada.

"The district, which is a collector's charge, is the unit of administration, but it is cut up into sub-divisions under assistants or deputy collectors, and these again into revenue collecting areas of smaller size. The provincial Government's general authority thus descends through the divisional commissioner in a direct chain to the district officer. The district officer has a dual capacity; as collector he is head of the revenue organisation, and as magistrate he exercises general supervision over the inferior courts and, in particular, directs the police work. In areas where there is no permanent revenue settlement, he can at any time be in touch, through his revenue subordinates, with every inch of his territory. This organisation in the first place serves its peculiar purpose of collecting the revenue and of keeping the peace. But, because it is so close-knit, so well-established, and so thoroughly understood by the people, it simultaneously discharges easily and efficiently an immense number of other duties."—*Montagu-Chelmsford Report, paragraphs 122-3.*

with the prospects of the weather, the humours of their moneylenders and landlords, frequent litigation with these powerful persons or with other neighbours, and perhaps the exactions of some petty subordinate official. As was truly said in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report : " the physical facts of India, the blazing sun, the enervating rains, have coloured their mental outlook " ; and it is difficult to suppose that the day will ever come when these facts will cease largely to dominate their lives. Ignorant and credulous, industrious and frugal, but, in spite of frequent inroads of epidemics, breeding to the very margin of subsistence, they form with their landlords 90 per cent. of the population, and have always contributed by far the larger share of Indian revenues. The greatest natural asset of India is and must be its soil. It is, too, from those agricultural castes which are martial by tradition that the Army has always drawn its recruits. The importance in the body politic of the people who live on and by the land has been often overshadowed in these latter days, but things were not so formerly. It was to them and their affairs, to the ascertainment and codifying of their rights and tenures, to the adjustment and readjustment of their relations with their landlords and with Government, it was to the protection of their interests, to the settlement of their feuds, that some of our most famous administrators, men who are remembered in their provinces as the salt and justification of British rule, devoted years of unremitting energy. British administration could never have prospered as it did, had they not done so. It is with the rural masses that district officers are still mostly concerned. In this untroubled period the rights of the people of India and the rights of their rulers agreed together in a silence that was seldom broken, and the

foundations of comprehensive revenue and tenancy legislation, which had been well and truly laid by the East India Company, were examined, improved, and consolidated. Things worked on laborious but broad and simple lines in the interior of the country.

But at the great seaports, with which the majority of English officials were seldom in personal contact, among those middle or professional classes which had originally embraced English education, thought was beginning to enter fresh channels and new problems were coming into dim outline. With some members of these the Hindu ideas of the unimportance of life, as a mere link in a chain of existences, of the desirability of rigid adherence to caste and family customs, as well as the ancient belief that the course of the four ages of the world was a continuous process of deterioration, were rapidly weakening. They were yielding to the allurements of a world of greater material comfort and of growing interest. Western education, English history, English literature, the works of Milton, Burke, Macaulay, were inspiring ideas of liberty, nationality, self-government. From England were returning Indian visitors with accounts of unusual consideration conceded there. These and a commencing contact with the British democracy were producing the idea that Anglo-Indian social and political exclusiveness was humiliating and unjustifiable. Things should be changed; power and high place should cease to be a preserve from which educated Indians were mainly shut out. In 1859 the late Sir Alfred Lyall, then a young civil officer, had written from the seclusion of an up-country district:

“I am always thinking of the probable future of our Empire, and trying to conceive it possible to civilise and convert an enormous nation by establishing schools

and missionary societies. Also having civilised them and taught them the advantage of liberty and the use of European sciences, how are we to keep them under us and persuade them that it is for their good that we hold all the high offices of Government?"')

The time was nearing when questions of this kind would call for answer. It is true that Act XXXIII of 1870, while laying down the principle that "it is one of our first duties toward the people of India to guard the safety of our dominion," had provided for more extended employment of Indians in the uncovenanted civil service, and for promotion therefrom to the covenanted service "according to tried ability." But such promotions were rare and merely whetted rising ambitions. Education was expanding not only Indian capacities, but Indian desires. What if, after all, life could offer a more exciting prospect? After some preliminary indications of discontent, the position became more fully disclosed. It contained a sinister element.

The Mutiny had shown the ease with which the British could establish their supremacy, but had bequeathed a legacy of bitter memories to persons on both sides. Fear had, for some years, stifled expression of these; but, as time went on, a section of the Indian Press began to display malignant hostility to the existing state of things.

The tendency of some vernacular newspapers, especially in Calcutta, to excite popular feeling against the British Government had for some time attracted attention. In 1873, Sir George Campbell, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and subsequently for many years a Liberal member of the House of Commons, had expressed the opinion that special legislation was required; and in 1878 an Act was passed by Lord Lytton's Legis-

lative Council for the better control of the vernacular press.

The following extracts from the speech of the Legal Member of the Government, who introduced the bill, explains clearly the mischief which was brewing :

“ But there is a large and increasing class of native newspapers which would seem to exist only for the sake of spreading seditious principles, of bringing the Government and its European officers into contempt, and of exciting antagonism between the governing race and the people of the country. This description of writing is not of very recent growth, but there has been a marked increase in it of late, and especially during the last three or four years. During the past twelve months it has been worse than ever, the writers gaining in boldness as they find that their writings are allowed to pass unpunished. Their principal topics are the injustice and tyranny of the British Government, its utter want of consideration towards its native subjects, and the insolence and pride of Englishmen in India, both official and non-official. There is no crime however heinous, and no meanness however vile, which according to these writers is not habitually practised by their English rulers.”

The Honourable Member then proceeded to illustrate his argument with examples, and continued :

“ The extracts which I have read, are specimens, extracted haphazard from a great number, of the manner in which the British Government and the English race are habitually aspersed and held up to the contempt and hatred of the people of India. Of late, however, a further step has been taken, and a beginning has been made in the direction of inciting the people to upset the British Raj by denunciations, sometimes open and sometimes covert, of the alleged weakness and timidity of the English and their inability to maintain their present position in India.”

The bill became Act IX of 1878. But it was denounced in England by Mr. Gladstone, who was then in opposition, and after his return to office it was repealed in 1882 by Lord Ripon's Government, who considered that circumstances no longer justified its existence. The evil which had brought it into being forthwith revived. Close on the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act followed the Ilbert Bill controversy. But before describing this melancholy episode, we must turn back a few years to incidents of wide and healthful importance in India's political history.

She had recently been brought into touch with the Royal Family of England through the visit of the late King Edward, then Prince of Wales, and on January 1st, 1877, a strong and abiding tie was forged when Her Majesty Queen Victoria, in recognition of the transfer of Government made in 1858, was at Delhi proclaimed Empress of India. As in 1858, so in 1877 there was a real and living personal note in Her Majesty's message which evoked warm response.

"We Victoria by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom, Queen, Empress of India, send through our Viceroy to all our Officers, Civil and Military, and to all Princes, Chiefs and Peoples now at Delhi assembled, our Royal and Imperial greeting, and assure them of the deep interest and earnest affection with which we regard the people of our Indian Empire. We witnessed with heartfelt satisfaction the reception which they have accorded to our beloved son, and have been touched by the evidence of their loyalty and attachment to our House and throne. We trust that the present occasion may tend to unite in bonds of yet closer affection ourselves and our subjects; that from the highest to the humblest all may feel that under our rule the great principles of liberty, equity, and justice are secured to them; and that to promote their happi-

ness, to add to their prosperity, and advance their welfare, are the ever present aims and objects of our Empire."

The response of the Ruling Chiefs expressed a sentiment which has never since varied.¹ It was voiced by His Highness the Maharaja Scindia after the delivery of the Viceroy's address :

"Shah-in-shah Padishah, may God bless you ! The princes of India bless you, and pray that your sovereignty and power may remain stedfast for ever."

The Maharaja of Kashmir said that in the shadow of Her Majesty's gracious Empire would be his chief protection.

The speech of the Viceroy at the State banquet contained a great undertaking :

"There is one thing above all others that this British Empire in India does mean. It means this. It means that all its subjects shall live at peace with one another ; that every one of them shall be free to grow rich in his own way, provided his way be not a criminal way ; that every one of them shall be free to hold and follow his own religious belief without assailing the religious beliefs of other people, and to live unmolested by his neighbour. At first sight, that may seem a very plain and simple polity, and very easy to be applied. But, when you come to apply it to an empire multitudinous in its traditions, as well as in its inhabitants, almost infinite in the variety of races which populate it and of creeds which have shaped their character, you find that it involves administrative problems unsolved by Cæsar, unsolved by Charlemagne, unsolved by Akbar. It seems a very simple thing to say that we shall keep the peace of the empire ; but if we are to keep the peace of it, we must have laws to

¹ See Appendix VIII.

settle quarrels which would otherwise disturb its peace ; and if we are to have such laws, we must frame them into a system at once comprehensive and intelligible. Again, if we are to enforce any such system of law, we must have judges to administer it, and police to carry out the orders of the judges, and then we must have troops to protect the judges, the police, the people and all concerned. Well then, when you come to introduce this elaborate system of administration into a vast continent . . . you find that the work in which you are engaged is nothing less than this, that you are modifying, unavoidably modifying—not harshly, not suddenly, but slowly, gently and with sympathy, but still modifying—the whole collective social life and character of the population of the Empire. . . . But our proclamation of the Imperial title implies something more. It implies that henceforth the honour of the British Crown, and consequently the power of the British Empire, are committed to the continued maintenance and defence of this Empire. . . . For my own part, I hope and believe that the impressive demonstration of an Imperial power, conscious of its duties, but also confident in its rights which it was our privilege to witness this morning, will be a significant and sufficient intimation that Her Majesty . . . will not relinquish under any difficulty the task in which she is engaged as regards this Empire ; that she will not abandon to any enemy the great inheritance she holds in trust for her descendants.”

I return to a less cheerful page in Indian politics. The question at issue in the Ilbert Bill controversy was originally raised by a note forwarded to the Bengal Provincial Government by a Bengali Hindu civilian serving in his own province. He represented the anomalous position in which the Indian members of the Civil Service were placed under the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which limited the jurisdiction to be exercised over European British sub-

jects outside Calcutta to judicial officers who were themselves European British subjects.

The note was forwarded to the Government of India with the views of the Government of Bengal; and the Government of India published proposals the effect of which would have been "to settle the question of jurisdiction over European British subjects in such a way as to remove from the Code at once and immediately every judicial qualification which is based merely on race distinctions." The proposals met with fierce European opposition. They were considered to imperil the liberties of British non-officials. After being under consideration for over a year, they were finally largely withdrawn. "Nothing could be more lamentable," it has truly been said, "than the animosities of race that the whole controversy aroused." There can be no doubt that it was a serious catastrophe, especially in Bengal, exciting keen racial feeling on both sides, and impressing many educated Indians with the idea that in British India they must, unless a reorganisation of relations could be contrived, for ever occupy a hopelessly subject position.) Lord Ripon, then Viceroy, was, they knew, on their side in these contentions, and he further gratified their aspirations by exerting himself to extend and advance local self-government through increasing the powers and functions of the municipal boards and local cess committees instituted in the sixties. His aim was by such methods to forward general political education.

He left India at the end of 1884 amid such acclamations from the educated classes as had been accorded to no preceding Governor-General, and has ever since been regarded by those classes as their great champion and patron.

And before closing this introductory chapter, (I must

mention another movement,) hardly noticed in those days, (which was, later on, to take no small part in moulding the aspirations of the English-educated classes.)

"India," it has been said, "is not only a land of romance, art, and beauty. It is, in religion, earth's central shrine." The face of the country is covered with places of worship.¹ India, as Sir Alfred Lyall has said, contains three great historic religions and has given birth to a fourth. Yet (Western rationalism was turning the minds of some Indians away from religion, when a Hindu ascetic, Swami Dayanand, began to preach return from idols to the faith of the early Aryans, of a reputed golden age when the land prospered and was blessed, before the foreigner came. He founded the now large and growing sect of the *Arya Samaj*, and familiarised many Hindus with the conception of a far-away great and independent Hindu India, since degraded, by corrupt religious teaching and foreign intrusion. His efforts were assisted by the Theosophists, Colonel Olcott, an American, Madame Blavatsky, a Russian, and their followers, who, in 1878, called themselves the Theosophical Society of the *Arya Samaj*, but subsequently separated from the disciples of Dayanand as too sectarian for their taste. Nevertheless Madame Blavatsky, a lady who believed herself to have been Hindu in a previous incarnation, and those with her, continued to proclaim the greatness of the Hindu religion and the present degeneration of India from the era of ancient Aryan grandeur.)

(The idea of an ancient unified independent Hindu

¹ "Buildings devoted to religious worship are extremely numerous in India. There are few villages or hamlets which have not at least one. It is even a generally received opinion that no place should be inhabited where there is no temple, for otherwise the inhabitants would run grave risks of misfortune."—ABBÉ DUBOIS.

Empire owed its origin to the fact that once in the third century B.C., and again in the fourth century A.D., the greater part of India had been governed by Hindu emperors. Each period produced a great ruler; but information regarding these empires is scanty. They were strong and prosperous, but neither lasted long. They were fugitive intervals in ages of disintegration.¹

In Europe, at this time, Professor Max Müller's edition of the *Rig Veda*, the knowledge of the law, had introduced a new period in Sanskrit scholarship, and had preached to all the beauties of Indo-Aryan literature, the flights of India's native philosophy, the devotion of its ancient faith.

And so, about the time when English-educated Hindus were impelled by particular circumstances to impatience of British domination, and Hindu youths were reading in schools and colleges of British love of Britain, of British struggles to be free, certain Hindus and Europeans were assuring all who listened that India too had a glorious past and a religion supreme and elevating. It was not surprising that in some minds the conception of an India famous and prosperous long ago, before the foreigner came, began to obliterate thoughts of the subsequent centuries of inglorious discord before the first Muhammadan invasion from Central Asia and of the India much later still, rescued, as the greatest of Hindu politicians has admitted, from chaos and oppression by British rule.² Later on we shall see how among certain classes of Hindus peculiar circumstances developed this concep-

¹ See Appendix I.

² "The blessings of peace, the establishment of law and order, the introduction of Western education, and the freedom of speech and the appreciation of liberal institutions that have followed in its wake—all these are things that stand to the credit of your rule."—*Speech by Mr. Gokhale on November 5th, 1905.*

tion into a genuine enthusiasm ; but, Colonel Olcott asserts that even in the early 'eighties the new idea was able to awake no ordinary sympathy among emotional English-educated audiences. Of a lecture on the past, present, and future of India, delivered at Amritsar in October 1881, his diaries, published long afterwards, record :

“ People who imagine the Hindus to be devoid of patriotic feeling should have seen the effect on my huge audience as I depicted the greatness of ancient and the fallen state of modern India. Murmurs of pleasure or sighs of pain broke from them ; at one moment they would be cheering and vehemently applauding, the next keeping silent while the tears were streaming from their eyes.”¹

Behind feelings of this kind was the racial resentment which had already manifested itself in the press, and had been intensified by the Ilbert Bill controversy. Altogether it is clear that when Lord Ripon was succeeded in the Viceroyalty by Lord Dufferin, various influences were working to produce some kind of upheaval among certain Hindus who, with English education, were learning to feel after English political ideals. They were few in number. They were coldly regarded by the aristocracy, by the territorial and martial classes, by the Muhammadans. They stood apart from the masses. They were peaceable people, and their ambitions were peaceable. In the path of these ambitions stood a social system opposed to democratic ideals, and buttressed by the influence of a powerful hierarchy on rigid caste organisations.

“ We have been subject,” said a learned Hindu professor,¹ in a lecture delivered before the close of the

¹ Sir R. G. Bhandarkar.

last century, "to a three-fold tyranny; political tyranny, priestly tyranny, and a social tyranny or the tyranny of caste. Crushed down by this, no man has dared to stand and assert himself. Even religious reformers have shunned the legitimate consequences of their doctrines to avoid coming into conflict with the established order of things. . . . At present, however, though we live under a foreign government, we enjoy a freedom of thought and action, such as we never enjoyed before under our own Hindu princes. But have we shown a capacity to shake ourselves free from priestly and social tyranny¹? I am afraid, not much."

The path to wider political freedom was to prove by no means difficult to tread. The path to religious and social emancipation was far steeper and less attractive. It has not yet been trodden with determined purpose by the great majority of Hindus.

¹ The President of the 1917 Indian National Social Conference emphasised the necessity of "extending the right hand of fellowship to the backward classes," promoting the education of women, and raising the age of Hindu marriage. These he considered the main social objectives. In my last chapter I refer to the first of these. As regards the second, the schooling of girls is frequently advocated and generally neglected. It lacks genuine impulse from within. As regards the third objective, the age of consent was, after violent Hindu opposition, raised by the Government from ten to twelve in the year 1891.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS—FIRST STAGE

THE year 1885 saw the formal inauguration of modern Indian politics. Lord Dufferin had just succeeded Lord Ripon, and it will be useful to summarise general conditions.

I have already shown how the country was administered. In every district were some beginnings of popular control in the shape of Lord Ripon's municipal and district Boards, but higher up nothing of this nature existed. No Indian was member of any Imperial or Provincial Executive Council, and the few Indians who sat on Legislative Councils were nominated or selected by Government. A very few Indians, for the most part Hindus, were Judges of High Courts. The number of Indians in the Covenanted Civil Service was infinitesimal. It was open to those who could afford the effort to compete for the Service in England, but few availed themselves of this opportunity and fewer obtained admission. Indians were hardly, if at all, represented on the higher grades of the Indian Medical Service, and almost all the leaders of the Bar were Europeans. The dominant influence too in Anglo-Vernacular schools and colleges was English, although a change was impending in Bengal in consequence of the recommendations of the Education Commission of 1882-3.

British exclusiveness was far stronger than it has

since become ; but the subordinate services were chiefly manned by Indians ; and it must be remembered that the English-educated were far less numerous than they are now. Since the Viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin, "schools have more than doubled ; higher education has increased threefold ; printing presses and newspapers have multiplied ; and the production of books in English has increased by 200 per cent." ¹ The English-educated, too, were then, as now, mainly Hindus of the peaceful castes. Among them the fighting races—the Sikhs, the Gurkhas, the Rajputs, the Pathans—were hardly represented at all. The Brahmans indeed have contributed valuable soldiers to the Indian Army, and had, in considerable measure, availed themselves of English education ; but the English-educated Brahmans did not, as a rule, belong to the martial families. Nor did advanced Indians count among their ranks many members of the territorial aristocracy. Their recruits were almost entirely drawn from castes clerical, professional, or mercantile by tradition. Thus it is easy to understand why, in spite of the liberal wording of Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, the Government of a highly conservative country, inhabited by various intermingled races hitherto ruled by the strongest, hesitated to call to its highest places Indians who owed their status solely to their literary accomplishments. For centuries before British rule the history of India had been a history of conquests from Central Asia, each conquest enduring until the invaders from the hills and uplands had largely merged in the industrious and less vigorous people of the plains. From the day of Plassey, the British had been constantly opposed by armed States or levies, and within the twelve years before the Proclamation had been engaged in desperate

¹ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, paragraph 141.

wars with the Sikhs and with their own Indian Army. The strongest had always prevailed.

The English-educated section of Indians did not represent any of these late adversaries. That it would one day become a power in the land, a power of an altogether new kind, was vaguely recognised; but that day was relegated by general opinion to a far-distant future. Inadequate count was taken of the trend of politics in Great Britain herself, and of the slowly growing interest of a small section of the British democracy in Indian affairs; and no one foresaw the extraordinary progress and triumphs of Japan or the stimulus which these were to impart to Indian aspirations.

(By one observer, indeed, the significance of the enthusiastic demonstrations which had accompanied Lord Ripon's departure was noted.) (In a leading English newspaper appeared an article "If it be real, what does it mean?" The author was the late Sir Auckland Colvin, a Civil Servant of wide practical experience. In eloquent language, he warned his countrymen to "search for the spirit of the time to which the present days are bringing us, to recognise that the rapid development of railways was facilitating the interchange of ideas among Indians, the beat of the engine was breaking down barriers which the voices of many missionaries had failed to remove; that the Indian mind was marching on, eager to do what it, for its own part, had to do." But, just as now, even the most ambitious section of Indian Progressives has been compelled to recognise the perils from Central Asia to which India, unsheltered by British protection, would certainly be exposed, so in 1885 disputes with Russia about the Afghan frontier caused all classes in India to realise their dependence on the stability of British rule. "The danger," wrote the late Sir Alfred Lyall,

then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, "has made the Indian people very loyal; they are in great dread of some widespread political revolution if we get an upset, and they are all afraid of each other. In short, we represent peace and a firm government, whereas anything else leads to unfathomable confusion."

In March, 1885, some Indians of the new school of thought, seeking for a remedy for the then existing state of things, decided to hold a Congress of delegates of their own persuasion from all parts of British India. This resolution appears to have been largely inspired by the late Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, whom his followers have always called "the Father of the Congress." Mr. Hume was the son of Joseph Hume, a well-known Liberal. From 1849 to 1882 he had been a member of the Covenanted Civil Service. He had been decorated for good work in the Mutiny, and had retired from the Board of Revenue of the North-West Provinces. Since retirement he had lived at Simla, largely devoting his energies to propagating among educated Indians the precepts of English Radicalism. (In a published correspondence of a later date,) which once attracted considerable attention, but has long been generally forgotten, he justified his propaganda by alleging that the *Pax Britannica* had failed to solve the economic problem; that the peasantry were ravaged by famine and despair; that Government was out of touch with the people; that there was no safety for the masses till the administration was gradually leavened by a representative Indian element. He considered it "of paramount importance to find an overt and constitutional channel for discharge of the increasing ferment which had resulted from Western ideas and education.")

The prospectus of the new movement stated that

the direct objects of the Conference would be—(a) to enable the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (b) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year. The prospectus further announced: "Indirectly this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament, and if properly conducted will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institution." In pursuance of these instructions (the first Congress met in Bombay on December 28th, 29th, and 30th, 1885) It was attended by seventy-two delegates, mostly lawyers, schoolmasters, or newspaper editors, collected, sometimes after considerable effort, from various cities or large towns, and by a few Indian Government servants as friendly lookers-on. Only two of the delegates present were Muhammadans, and these were Bombay attorneys. (Mr. W. Bonerjee, then Standing Counsel to Government in Calcutta, was elected president. He proclaimed that one of the objects of the Association was "the eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's memorable reign.") Britain had given them order, railways, "above all, the inestimable benefit of Western education. But the more progress a people made in education and material prosperity, the greater would be their insight into political matters and the keener their desire for political advancement.") He thought that their desire to be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with

their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was that the basis of government should be widened, and that the people should have their natural and legitimate share therein.

The first speaker to the first resolution, Mr. Subramania Aiyar,¹ of Madras, said :

“ By a merciful dispensation of Providence, India, which was for centuries the victim of external aggression and plunder, of internal civil wars and general confusion, has been brought under the dominion of the great British Power. I need not tell you how that event introduced a great change in the destiny of her people, how the inestimable good that has flowed from it has been appreciated by them. The rule of Great Britain has, on the whole, been better in its results and direction than any former rule. Without descanting at length upon the benefits of that rule, I can summarise them in one remarkable fact that for the first time in the history of the Indian populations there is to be beheld the phenomenon of national unity among them, of a sense of national existence.”¹

Various resolutions were passed, one demanding the expansion of the supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils by the admission of a considerable number of members elected by such organised bodies as municipal and district boards. Thus enlarged, these Councils were to have a voice to interpellate the Executive on all points of administration.

¹ Lately famous as the author of a letter to President Wilson, which contained the following passage :

“ Permit me to add that you and the other leaders have been kept in ignorance of the full measure of misrule and oppression in India. Officials of an alien nation, speaking a foreign tongue, force their will upon us ; they grant themselves exorbitant salaries and large allowances ; they refuse us education ; they sap us of our wealth ; they impose crushing taxes without our consent ; they cast thousands of our people into prisons for uttering patriotic sentiments—prisons so filthy that often the inmates die from loathsome diseases.”

It was also recommended that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that might be recorded by majorities of the new Legislative Councils against the exercise by the Executive Government of the power, which would be vested in it, of overruling the decisions of any such majorities.

Another resolution recommended simultaneous examinations in India and England for admission into the Indian Civil Service. There had been some idea of discussing social reform, but only two addresses were delivered on the subject, the main objective being political.

(The next Congress met at Calcutta on December 27th, 28th, 29th, and 30th, 1886.) It was claimed for this Congress that it marked "a total change of character. Everybody wanted to come of his own accord." It was admitted that in 1885 "people had to be pressed and entreated to come."

The Conference was attended by 440 delegates, elected either at public meetings or by societies and associations. Two hundred and thirty of these came from Bengal. The old aristocracy were entirely absent. The shopkeeping classes were represented by one member. This deficiency was ascribed by the author of the introductory article to the record of proceedings, to the fact that these classes, ignorant and immersed in their own concerns, cared for no change in a form of government which both prevented others from robbing them and "by its system of civil jurisprudence" afforded them ample opportunities for enriching themselves. The cultivating classes were "inadequately represented." This was because "though a great number realise that the times are out of joint, they have not learnt to rise from particular instances to generalisations, and they neither understand clearly what is wrong, nor have

they as a class any clear or definite ideas as to what could or ought to be done to lighten somewhat their lot in life." There were thirty-three Muhammadan delegates. This was ascribed partly to the "present lack of higher education among our Muhammadan brethren," and partly to the fact that three prominent Calcutta Muhammadans had publicly declared against the Congress, preferring "a policy of confidence in the Government." By far the greater majority of the delegates came from Bengal. The Punjab sent only seventeen and the Central Provinces eight. (Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, a Parsi, and well known as the first Indian who has sat in the British Parliament, was elected President.) The resolutions closely resembled those of the previous year. One asked for the authorisation of a system of volunteering for Indians which would enable them to support Government in any crisis. Another related to "the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India."

The president (remarked) on the blessings of British rule, in the stable foundation of which the Congress was another stone.

"Let us speak out," he said, "like men, and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone; that we understand the benefits English rule has conferred on us; the education that has been given to us; the new light which has been poured on us, turning us from darkness into light, and teaching us the new lesson that kings are made for the people, not peoples for their kings; and this lesson we have learned amid the darkness of Asiatic despotism only by the light of free English civilisation."¹

¹ These words may be compared with some sentences from a recent speech by Mr. B. G. Tilak, reported in the *Leader* issue of October 10th, 1917.

"They knew on what principle the bureaucracy governed India for

The virtual abstention of Muhammadans from the Congress movement was largely due to the influence of Sir Saiyid Ahmad, and it is worth while to turn aside from the main course of my narrative in order to give some account of this great man.)

Sir Saiyid Ahmad was born at Delhi in the year 1817, and belonged to a family of considerable note at the court of the Moghal Emperors. In the year 1837 he obtained a clerical post in the British service. Twenty years later he had risen to the position of a Subordinate Judge, and when the Mutiny broke out at Bijnor in these provinces, he gave noble proofs of loyalty. "No language that I could use," said a Lieutenant-Governor in subsequently referring to Saiyid Ahmad's Mutiny services, "would be worthy of the devotion which he showed."

(In 1858 Saiyid Ahmad wrote in his own vernacular an account of the causes of the revolt) which was long afterwards translated and published in English. His appreciation of British rule in India was by no means wholesale, and his criticisms deserve our careful consideration even now. It is remarkable that he attributed the outbreak largely to the absence of all Indians from the Supreme Legislative Council.)

("The evils," he wrote, "which resulted from the non-admission of natives into the Legislative Council were various. Government could never know the inadvisability of the laws and regulations which it passed. It could never hear the voice of the people on such a subject. The people had no means of protesting against what they might feel to be a foolish measure, or of the last 100 years. They were a self-governing nation before. They knew how to organise an army, they knew how to dispense justice, they had laws, regulations, etc. All those had been swept away, and now the bureaucracy said that they knew nothing about them. Who was responsible for that? Not the Indians."

giving public expression to their wishes.) But the greatest mischief lay in this, that the people misunderstood the views and intentions of Government. They misapprehended every act, and whatever law was passed was misconstrued by men who had no share in the framing of it and hence no means of judging of its spirit. . . . I wish to say that the views of Government were misconstrued by the people, and that this misconstruction hurried on the rebellion. Had there been a native of Hindustan in the Legislative Council, the people would never have fallen into such errors. . . . (There was no real communication between the governors and the governed, no living together or near one another) as has always been the custom of the Muhammadans in countries which they subjected to their rule. Government and its officials have never adopted this course, without which no real knowledge of the people can be gained." Further on he asserted: "Now, in the first years of the British rule in India, the people were heartily in favour of it. This good feeling the Government has now forfeited, and (the natives very generally say that they are treated with contempt) (A native gentleman is, in the eyes of any petty official, as much lower than that official as that same official esteems himself lower than a duke. The opinion of many of these officials is that no native can be a gentleman.) . . . There are many English officials who are well-known for their kindness and friendly feeling toward the natives, and these are in consequence much beloved by them, are, to use a native expression, as the sun and moon to them, and are pointed out as types of the old race of officials."

After the Mutiny Saiyid Ahmad exerted himself strenuously to make peace between the Government and his co-religionists and to reform the Muhammadan educational system. Although his boyhood had known no other, he was convinced that the ordinary Muhammadan education was inadequate and out of date

"Cure the root," he said, "and the tree will flourish." He did all he could to "cure the root," and, at the age of fifty-two, travelled to England to enter his son at Cambridge University, and to see what measures were desirable for the establishment of a Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Upper India. This he finally accomplished, and the famous College at Aligarh is his abiding monument. While affording religious instruction to Muhammadans alone, it admits scholars of all faiths; and the whole attitude of its great founder, who frequently and strongly championed the tenets of Islam, was invariably tolerant and liberal. He rejoiced in the spread and growth of English education in India, believing that enlightenment meant loyalty to Britain. His spirit is reflected in the address presented to Lord Ripon in 1884 by the Aligarh College Committee, which contains the following passage :

"The time has happily passed when the Muhammadans of India looked upon their condition as hopeless, when they regarded the past with feelings of mournful sorrow. Their hopes are now inclined to the promise of the future; their hearts, full of loyalty to the rule of the Queen-Empress, aspire to finding distinction and prominence among the various races of the vast Empire over which Her Majesty holds sway. It is to help the realisation of these aspirations that this College has been founded; and we fervently hope that among the results which may flow from our system of education, not the least important will be the promotion of friendly feelings of social intercourse and interchange of amenities of life between the English community in India and the Muhammadan population."

In spite of his strong liberal sympathies, Sir Saiyid Ahmad would have nothing to do with the Congress, and advised his co-religionists to follow his example.

Although he had his enemies and detractors, his influence was enormous, and it determined the attitude of the great majority of his people. Some years ago one of his co-religionists attributed this attitude to three causes :

- (a) the violence of many publications distributed broadcast before the launching of the Congress ;
- (b) the excessive blandishments of the Congress leaders ;
- (c) the advocacy by the Congress of elective principles, and open competition, with no regard for minorities.

I now return to the Congress movement. In December 1888, Lord Dufferin was succeeded in the Viceroyalty by Lord Lansdowne. At a farewell dinner in Calcutta he had referred to the Congress party as a "microscopic minority," but he was far too astute a statesman not to be impressed by the movement, and confidentially sent home proposals for liberalising the Legislative Councils, "which," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "is all that the reasonable leaders even of the most advanced section of Young India dream of."

He was, however, dealing with wider ambitions. There was a strong demand for more general and higher employment in the Public Services, a belief that in this respect the educated classes were dwarfed and stunted. He had indeed appointed a Commission of inquiry into this matter, but its recommendations were received some time after his departure, and by no means pleased the advanced party.

✓ The Congress of 1888 was attended by 1,248 delegates. Great efforts had been made by the leaders to stultify Lord Dufferin's estimate of their importance. Six Europeans attended, and the president was Mr. George Yule, a prominent Calcutta merchant, who complained

that the British non-official class was disfranchised in India, and had no more voice than Indians in the government of the country. Complaint was made by various speakers of the official attitude as needlessly unfriendly. The resolutions passed were on lines already described. Among other things, they recommended abolition of the distinctions created by the Arms Act, military colleges for natives of India, and an inquiry into the industrial condition of the country.

At the sixth Congress, held at Calcutta in 1890, and attended by 702 delegates, including 156 Muhammadans, the Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates in the following words :

"It is perfectly correct that the ignorant classes whom we seek to represent are still unable in many provinces to take an active interest in the many social and administrative problems which are now engaging the attention of the educated classes ; but history teaches us that in all countries and in all ages it is the thinking who lead the unthinking, and we are bound to think for ourselves and others who are still too ignorant to exercise that important function."

A speaker relied on some words of Mr. Gladstone to the effect that a man would be deemed mad who denounced the system of popular representation. Two other speakers alleged the existence of a political faith common to Hindus and Muhammadans. A note in the introduction to the printed account of the Congress proceedings observed, in regard to the alleged antagonism between the two communities : "We would like very much to know whether Great Britain herself is not divided into two sections, one of which is bitterly hostile to the other and desirous of opposing it on all occasions." The tone of the concluding passages of the same introduction was more antagonistic to British

rule than any previous official Congress utterance. Acknowledgment was made during the meetings of the kind reception in England of certain delegates. (The Congress was supplemented by a Social Conference.

National Social Conferences had begun in 1887, but languished later.) At the social conference of 1895 the following message from the Congress President-elect was read to the meeting. ✓“ The *raison d'être* for excluding social questions from our deliberations is that if we were to take up such questions, it might lead to serious differences, ultimately culminating in a schism, and it is a matter of the first importance to prevent a split.” Mr. Justice Ranade, an ardent social reformer, held different views. (At the Bombay social conference held at Satara in 1900, he said, in his inaugural address :

“ I know that there are those among us who see no advantage in holding local or national gatherings of this sort for the consideration of social topics. There are others who think that though such gatherings have their uses, they should not be joined together in place and time with the political meeting, as they only serve to detract the attention of the workers and lead to no practical results. It may be of use to attempt a brief reply to both objections. As regards the first difficulty, it seems to me to arise from a confusion of ideas which is prejudicial to the right appreciation of our duties, both in the political and in the social sphere. . . . As I understand it, (this distinction between the two spheres of our activities is based on a radical mistake. . . . Politics are not merely petitioning and memorialising for gifts and favours. Gifts and favours are of no value unless we have deserved the concessions by our own elevation and our own struggles. “ You shall live by the sweat of your brow ” is not the curse pronounced on man, but the very conditions of his existence and growth. Whether in the political, or social or religious

or commercial, or manufacturing or æsthetical spheres, in literature, in science, in art, in war, in peace, it is the individual and collective man who has to develop his powers by his own exertions in conquering the difficulties in his way. If he is down for the time, he has to get up with the whole of his strength, physical, moral, and intellectual; and you may as well suppose that he can develop one of those elements of strength and neglect the others, as try to separate the light from the heat of the sun or the beauty and fragrance from the rose. You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice."

These were wise words; but the obstacles to social reform were partly religious, and Indian social reformers have seldom been able to carry their cause far beyond conferences and resolutions. It suffered severely from the death of Ranade, who was a man of genuine courage and character.

A question which arose in connection with the 1890 Congress elicited the following reply from the Viceroy's Private Secretary:

"The Government of India recognise that the Congress movement is regarded as representing what would in Europe be called the advanced Liberal party, as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it. They desire themselves to maintain an attitude of neutrality in their relations with both parties, so long as these act strictly within their constitutional functions."

In 1892 a new Councils Act was passed. Its provisions had been outlined by Lord Dufferin before his departure.¹ It enlarged the Legislative Councils,

See paragraphs 60-69 of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

conferring on local boards and corporations the right of recommending persons for appointment thereto, subject to the approval of the recommendations by Government. It safeguarded the authority of Government by leaving it a majority on each Council and by restricting the right of debate and of asking questions; but it decidedly extended the application of the principle, first admitted in 1858, of associating prominent non-officials in legislation. The Congress of 1892 was dissatisfied, and further expressed disappointment with the orders passed on the report of the Public Services Commission appointed by Lord Dufferin. About this time, the Congress Committee, which had been established in London, and consisted mainly of English Radicals, started the periodical *India* for the promotion of Congress propaganda.

I have now traced in some detail the early history of the Congress movement, allowing its leaders to speak for themselves. I now propose to review briefly the period from 1892 to 1897.

The proceedings of the annual meetings during this period were similar in character to those which I have already described. As English-educated Indians multiplied, adherents of the Congress increased not only in the big cities, but also in the smaller centres, the great majority coming from the classes which had initiated the movement. The tone of the Indian press toward the British Government and British officials did not improve; and although the politicians did not seriously attempt to advance their main position, largely, no doubt, because the period in Britain was one of decided conservative ascendancy, they developed a practice of sending delegates to allege before British audiences the poverty of India, the exclusive and selfish character of the Administration, the need of popular government.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that all the party really meant as much as this. Many were prosperous under the existing order of things, were on friendly terms with European officials, and were perfectly well aware that strong and effective British control was essential for the welfare of the country. And many were capable of bringing Western political ideas into practical relation with the peculiar conditions of India, but were perhaps inclined to keep their least popular opinions to themselves.

Muhammadans continued to hold aloof from the movement; but in 1894 appeared more vigorous manifestations of Hindu impatience with existing conditions.

In 1893, riots had occurred in the city of Bombay, between Hindus and Muhammadans; and, subsequently, in order to stimulate Hindu enthusiasm, persons who wished to widen the breach between the two communities started public festivals in honour of Ganpati, the elephant-headed god of wisdom and success. It was arranged that images of Ganpati should be attended by melas, or groups of young men trained in fencing with sticks and physical exercises, that verses should be sung and leaflets distributed in the streets of Poona, the capital of the Deccan and the second city in the Bombay Presidency. These were to stimulate hatred of Muhammadans and of the British Government, of foreigners generally.

A movement, too, was inaugurated for the repair of the tomb of the famous Maratha Hindu hero, Sivaji, who, more than two centuries before, had successfully revolted against Muhammadan domination. Sivaji had killed Afzal Khan, a Muslim general, at a conference between two armies. Festivals were held in his honour, and the memory of his exploits was revived by enthusiasts in such verses as these:

“Merely reciting Sivaji’s story like a lord does not secure independence; it is necessary to be prompt in engaging in desperate enterprises like Sivaji and Baji; knowing, you good people should take up swords and shields at all events now; we shall cut off countless heads of enemies. Listen! We shall risk our lives on the battle-field in a national war; we shall shed upon the earth the life-blood of the enemies who destroy our religion; we shall die only, while you will hear the story like women.”)

Sivaji had established a Maratha kingdom, but his dynasty had been supplanted by a dynasty of Chitpavan Brahmans (Brahmans purified by the funeral pyre) who had reigned at Poona with the title of Peishwa. The last Peishwa had quarrelled with and had been overthrown by the British. Chitpavans had prospered under British rule. They had shown remarkable ability, and were prominent at the Bar, in education, and in the public services; but some had never ceased to regret the fallen glories of the Peishwas. Ranade’s *Rise of the Maratha Empire* recalled the history of the Maratha country in which their ancestors had played a prominent part. In a book entitled *Sources of Marathi History*, it was confidently alleged that the state of the Deccan under the Chitpavan Peishwas was far superior to its condition under British rule.)

In the year 1880, a Chitpavan Brahman named Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who had, a few years before, graduated with honours in the Bombay University, started two papers, one of which was destined to attain a very wide circulation. This was the *Kesari* (the “Lion”). It was in Marathi, and was supplemented by an English weekly *The Maratha*. Later, Mr. Tilak distinguished himself in educational work, joined the Congress, and became secretary of the Standing Committee for the

Deccan. He was a vigorous critic of government measures, and strongly opposed the Age of Consent Bill, which had been devised in order to mitigate the crying evils of Hindu child-marriage. His political attitude, his learning in the Hindu scriptures, his ability as a journalist, his readiness to assist his poorer countrymen in trouble, all contributed to win for him remarkable influence.

Famine had resulted from shortage of rain in 1896, and the plague had arrived at Bombay and spread to Poona. Famine and plague caused widespread distress; and, according to invariable custom in times of calamity, the masses were inclined to blame their rulers. In order to arrest the spread of plague, the Bombay Government adopted measures which seemed to promise success, but were repugnant to the customs of the people and interfered with their home-life. Persons suffering from the disease were separated from persons not attacked; house-to-house visitations were resorted to; and in Poona it was for some time considered necessary to employ British soldiers on search parties. Popular feeling was keenly stirred, and on 1 May 4th, 1897, Mr. Tilak, who had at first to some extent co-operated with Mr. Rand, the Plague Commissioner, published an article charging the British soldiers employed on plague duty with every sort of excess, and imputing not merely to subordinate officials, but to the whole Government itself deliberate direction to oppress the people. He described Mr. Rand as tyrannical, and stated that the Government was practising oppression. It was useless to petition the Supreme Government, as from it the orders for oppression had emanated. On the 15th of

¹ The statements in this and the following pages are founded on the judge's charge to the jury in the case *Queen-Empress versus B. G. Tilak*, 1897.

the following month he published two further articles in his paper. The first was a poem—"Sivaji's Utterances"—and represented Sivaji waking from a long dream and deploring the present-day state of affairs in what had once been his kingdom. By annihilating the wicked he had lightened the great weight of the globe. He had delivered the country by establishing *Swarajya* (one's own kingdom). Now foreigners were taking away the wealth of the country; plenty and health had fled; famine and epidemic disease stalked through the land. Brahmans were imprisoned. The cow was daily slaughtered. White men escaped justice by urging meaningless pleas. Women were dragged out of railway carriages. Sivaji had protected the English when they were traders, and it was for them to show their gratitude by making his subjects happy.

The second article gave an account of lectures delivered by two professors on the murder of Afzal Khan by Sivaji. They argued that Sivaji was above the moral code. "Every Hindu, every Maratha," said one of the lecturers, "must rejoice at this Sivaji celebration. We are all striving to regain our lost independence." The other professor observed: "The people who took part in the French Revolution denied that they had committed murders, and maintained that they were only removing thorns from their path. Why should not the same principle (argument) be applied to Maharashtra?" Finally came a discourse from Mr. Tilak, who said, after remarking that great men are above the common principles of morality, "Did Sivaji commit a sin in killing Afzal Khan or not?" The answer to this question can be found in the *Mahabharat*.

The *Mahabharat* is the famous Hindu epic. It contains the *Bhagwat-Gita*, or Lord's Song, recited by Krishna, an incarnation of the Preserver of the world, before the great battle of Kurukshetra.

itself. Shrimat Krishna's advice in the *gita* is to kill even our own teachers and our kinsmen. No blame attaches to any person if he is doing deeds without being actuated by a desire to reap the fruits of his deeds. Shri Sivaji did nothing with a view to fill the small void of his own stomach. With benevolent intentions he murdered Afzal Khan for the good of others. If thieves enter our house and we have not sufficient strength to drive them out, we should, without hesitation, shut them up and burn them alive. God has not conferred on *Mlenchas* (foreigners or barbarians) the grant inscribed on copper-plate of the kingdom of Hindustan.

“Do not circumscribe your vision like a frog in a well. Get out of the Penal Code, enter into the extremely high atmosphere of the *Bhagvat-Gita*, and then consider the actions of great men.”

A week after these articles appeared, and on the day of the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, Mr. Rand and another British officer were assassinated at Poona by two Chitpavan Brahman brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar, who were subsequently tried and executed. The former said in a confession, subsequently retracted, but believed by the court that tried him to be genuine, that “as the operations for the suppression of the plague were beginning to cause annoyance to the people and great oppression was caused by the soldiers, they had determined to avenge these acts and to kill the chief man in charge of the plague operations.” The Chapekars had founded an association for physical and military training which they called the “Society for the removal of obstacles to the Hindu religion.” Two of the associates murdered two brothers who had been rewarded by Govern-

ment for information which led to the arrest and conviction of Damodar Chapekar. They were themselves arrested, convicted, and executed.)

Mr. Tilak was prosecuted for exciting disaffection to Government by means of the *Kesari* articles of June 15th, was convicted, and was sentenced to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment, but six months of his sentence were subsequently remitted. For a space he disappeared from the ranks of the Congress politicians; but the *Kesari* continued to issue during his imprisonment, and on his release attained a very wide circulation. Its financial success attracted keen emulation. Its tone was caught by journalists in other provinces.

The criticisms of the Congress probably counted both in the appointment of a Commission which was to advise police reforms, and in the improvements in the revenue system initiated and carried through by Lord Curzon. On the other hand, although the Plague afforded the leaders of the movement an unique opportunity of standing forward and assisting Government to counteract the prejudiced hostility of their more ignorant countrymen to remedial measures, they took small advantage of this opportunity. (And throughout the whole of this period the tone of the majority of Indian-owned newspapers became more and more hostile to the form of British rule established by law. With monotonous regularity their readers were regaled with diatribes against the constitution and policy of the British Government. India was being drained of her resources; India was being plundered and oppressed by aliens. This was the constant burden of a constantly repeated song, varied now and then, when the occasion demanded caution, by conventional phrases about the blessings of British rule. (Grave stress was laid on the unfortunate fact that in 1894 the Govern-