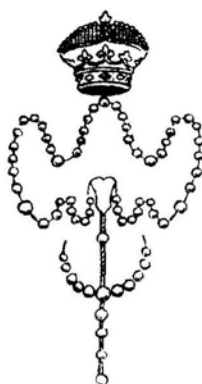


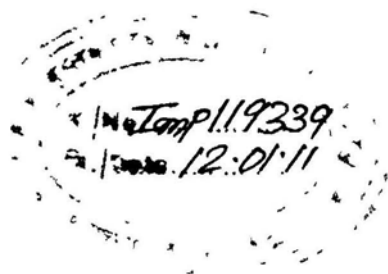
INDIA IN TRANSITION

London
Philip Lee Warner
Publisher to the
Medici Society, Ltd.

INDIA IN TRANSITION
A STUDY IN POLITICAL EVOLUTION
BY HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN



BENNETT, COLEMAN AND CO., LTD
THE "TIMES OF INDIA" OFFICES
BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA



TO
MY MOTHER

For, always roaming with a hungry heart,
Much have I seen and known.

“ ULYSSES,” TENNYSON.

FOREWORD

MR. MONTAGU'S historic announcement last August that he was to proceed to India to discuss the extent and form of the "substantial steps" to be taken in the direction of self-governing institutions, and to receive with Lord Chelmsford the suggestions of representative bodies and others, confirmed me in the intention I had formed on finding I was debarred on medical grounds from Army service in the Allied cause to return to India last winter. I cherished the hope that I might be of some small service to my country in helping to shape some of the representations which might be made, and in contributing to the success of so momentous a mission by a British statesman whose zeal and devotion in promoting the welfare of India had greatly impressed the Indian people during the time of his Under-Secretaryship at the India Office.

My plans and hopes were thwarted, however, by a painful and tedious malady requiring surgical treatment in Europe, and fully six months of rest and retirement in a prescribed climate. The eminent specialists consulted were peremptory in refusing my appeal to be permitted to carry out my plans. They were confident that within two or three weeks of my landing in Bombay I should be laid aside by severe illness, making it quite

impossible for me to render the public service I had in view. Their assurances that acceptance of their advice and the regimen prescribed would most probably restore me to vigorous health are being confirmed as time goes on.

The bitterness of my disappointment was considerably mitigated when, acting on the suggestion of valued friends, I obtained the assent of the specialists to my spending two or three hours daily during my enforced retirement and rest in consecutive literary work, for the purpose of presenting a detailed exposition of my views on Indian reconstruction. I had been approached frequently in the past dozen years or so by publishing houses with requests to write a book on current topics. Though the idea was not without attraction, I did not consider that the time was ripe to bring it to fruition; and I continued to limit my public utterances to speeches in India and in England, and to occasional review and newspaper articles. I now felt it a duty, as well as a privilege, to give a detailed exposition of my thoughts on India, and my hopes and aspirations for the future, as a contribution to the many-sided problem Mr. Montagu has been investigating.

The reader will pardon, I trust, these personal details since they are required for an understanding of the conditions in which my views have been formulated and presented. They may be pleaded in mitigation of shortcomings in execution, of which I am only too conscious. In my retirement the verification of references has not been easy, nor have I had the opportunities of consultation on questions of fact or policy which might otherwise have been available. The revision of proofs,

in the later stages, I have been compelled to leave to others, in order to obviate any greater delay than present difficulties of book production in England imposes.

My limitations, however, have not been without their compensations. Enforced exclusion from the arena of day by day discussion in India, however disappointing, may have contributed at least to the dispassionateness with which I have sought to temper the ardour of my Indian patriotism and my belief in the inherent possibilities of my countrymen under the more favourable political conditions I advocate. Though outside the current, I have been able to watch its course with the help of many kind correspondents and occasional visitors, and by careful study of the organs of opinion in India.

Moreover, writing and thinking almost within hearing of the thunder of battle in Europe, I have been in a better position to apply to the Indian problem the widened outlook derived from a close and frequent contact with political systems and affairs outside, as well as within, my own country. Further, thrown so fully on my own resources, I can at least claim that the work, whatever its demerits, is an original and strictly personal contribution to the Indian problem. Many of the opinions I express will not be new to leaders of political and social thought in many lands with whom for years past I have discussed the future of India. Such views can also be traced in my occasional writings, though they have undergone development in the last four fateful years. We none of us stand where we did before the events of July and August, 1914, brought us to the watershed of

contemporary history. The war has enormously changed the political and social outlook throughout the world in the direction of strengthening those forces of democracy and national self-determination, of liberty and progress, for which the Allies have made so many sacrifices.

One further word of explanation is desirable. I have studiously avoided any attempt to penetrate the plans which may have been formulated by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy as a result of their consultations, and which have still to be disclosed at the time I write. I make no claim to any inspiration in the guise of "intelligent anticipation." The proposals of His Majesty's Government are to be issued for public discussion, and will be embodied in a Bill to be submitted to Parliament in due course. I cherish the hope that this contribution to the subject may be of some service in helping to mould the moderate yet earnestly progressive ideas, both in Great Britain and India, on which, when all is said, the satisfactory and continuous solution of the complex Indian problem depends.

AGA KHAN.

18 May, 1918.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD	vii
I. SOCIAL ORGANISATION	1
II. THE REASONS FOR REFORM	15
III. A FEDERAL BASIS	33
IV. PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION	43
V. THE PROTECTED STATES	54
VI. THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	62
VII. THE VICEROYALTY	69
VIII. LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT	82
IX. THE CIVIL SERVICE	89
X. THE POLICE	98
XI. THE JUDICIARY	104
XII. OVERSEAS SETTLEMENTS	113
XIII. INDIA'S CLAIM TO EAST AFRICA	123
XIV. FOREIGN POLICY	133
XV. GERMANY'S ASIATIC AMBITIONS	142
XVI. ISLAMIC AND TURANIAN MOVEMENTS	156
XVII. THE PATH TO WIDER CONFEDERATION	162
XVIII. ARMY AND NAVY	173
XIX. INDUSTRIES AND TARIFFS	186
XX. CREDIT AND COMMERCE	193

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXI. AGRICULTURE	201
XXII. EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES	215
XXIII. HIGHER EDUCATION	224
XXIV. PUBLIC HEALTH	233
XXV. THE DEPRESSED CLASSES	244
XXVI. THE STATUS OF WOMEN	253
XXVII. BRITISH AND INDIAN SOCIAL RELATIONS	264
XXVIII. EFFICIENCY AND STABILITY	270
XXIX. THE LIMITS OF BRITISH TRUSTEESHIP	276
XXX. INDIA'S SHARE IN THE WAR	286
XXXI. CO-ORDINATED PROGRESS	295
INDEX	303

INDIA IN TRANSITION

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

FOR profitable study of the problems of a country, not only has the political evolution of its inhabitants to be considered, but also the history of their social customs, their economic and legal institutions and ideas, and the spiritual influences that have gone to make them what they are. In the case of India the issues are of unique complexity.

Laying aside all prejudices and looking upon the progress of mankind from the wild and primitive state whence civilisation has been evolved, we find that the early history of development takes two main divisions. The first is represented by the various societies that have advanced from disorganised and, at most, tribal institutions, till they have reached the forms of civilised life represented by laws, civic institutions, systematised religion, and those comforts and luxuries and dreams of beauty to which, in their highest forms, we give the name of Arts. The second stage is the life of the savage tribes as they exist to-day in North America, in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic regions,

in the Pacific, in Africa and, in a small way, in India and on her far-stretched frontiers.

For the purposes of present study, we need not take the earlier stages into consideration, and can confine ourselves to the developed societies. But here new and clearly-marked divisions arise. Disregarding Aztec civilisation, since it was destroyed by the Conquistadores, and has left only indirect influences in Mexico and parts of Central and South America, the world of to-day contains four principal and clearly-defined forms of civilisation. These we will take *seriatim*.

To the first we give the name "Western." It is the body of institutions, customs, etc., common alike to Germany and England, to Chile and Russia in Europe, to Bulgaria and Australia, to Scandinavia and to the Latin States of South America. The moulding influences have been wide and varied: Greek and Roman civilisation, and the many religions that arose in the first century of the Christian era in the Eastern and the Western provinces of the Roman Empire; Christianity and its chequered history; then the Reformation and the counter-Reformation, the hundred and one spiritual movements which, like ripples on a lake, rose and fell in the various churches of the West. Who that has come from another civilisation can fail to see everywhere in the far-reaching areas which I have indicated the influences of Saint Theresa and Saint Francis of Assisi, of Luther and Calvin, of Seneca and Plato, of Lucretius and Homer, of Giordano Bruno and Newton, of Goethe and Darwin?

But this civilisation contains many other important elements. It is the one most permeated by

the influences of those processes of watching and interpreting natural phenomena, to which we give the name of Science. Indeed, the modern inductive method is almost a monopoly of this division of our culture. It has so constantly wrested from Nature her secrets for material purposes, that one can almost say it stands alone in knowing how to bring into the service of mankind the more recondite forces of the inanimate world. Further, its artistic and æsthetic standards and judgments are similarly peculiar to itself. In poetry, in architecture, in painting and sculpture, its achievements are so different from those of the contemporary cultures, yet with such a family resemblance, that anyone belonging to the latter realises, at the very first contact, that here is a great and homogeneous development of the human spirit.

In music Western culture is far in advance of its contemporaries. Its social customs have a certain uniformity that cannot be mistaken for those of the latter. For instance, monogamy and its apparently inevitable drawback, the social evil of the recognised existence of the fallen sisterhood, are everywhere in evidence. In economics, the vast numbers engaged in production largely for the benefit of absent and anonymous owners, to whom we give the name of joint stock companies, differentiate this Western organisation from all others. There is throughout the lands of its supremacy a certain general uniformity of life and ideas and institutions, as of one great family. However distinct its branches may be, there is in all a resemblance that leaves no doubt of the essential unity. Santiago de Chile and Moscow,

Sofia and New York, Berlin and Melbourne, have a basic similarity that is apparent immediately we try to compare these or any other Western cities with, say, Tokio or Teheran.

Though predominant, this Western civilisation is not without rivals. There are three others still in the world, each counting its children and devotees by the hundred millions. First of these, in our survey, we take the culture of the Far East. This name is no less inadequate than the term "Western" in the first of these divisions, but is probably the most general and characteristic word which we can use. Here, too, there are vast differences between the customs and psychology of, say, the Japanese and the Tibetans, or of the Manchus and the Burmans; but there is also a distinct general similarity of fundamental ideas, habits, and outlook upon life, from Tibet to Japan, from the Amur River to the Irrawaddy. The thoughtful visitor from Europe or America is at once struck by a certain correspondence that permeates these vast territories and their myriad inhabitants. No doubt, between the Japanese and the Burmans the gulf is so great that the influence of Buddhism may almost be called the only connecting link; but when we compare either race or the Chinese, with, say, the South Americans or the people of Morocco, we are impressed by a certain harmony of the Far Eastern cultures. It must not be concluded that there is any racial unity. The Japanese and the Chinese probably come from different original stocks, and again the Tibetans and the Burmans are probably different in origin from the Chinese. But, as in the West the many races of Europe and America have been

drawn together by spiritual ideals and social influences; so, in the Far East, similar potencies have worked for a unity of civilisation which is to-day apparent everywhere, from the Pacific to the Bay of Bengal, and from the Northern slopes of the Himalayas to Siberia.

The third civilisation, for want of a better term, we may call Brahmanical. It is found everywhere in India amongst the millions who come from the originally fair foreign stocks. It has permeated myriads of the descendants of the dark aborigines of the country, raising them into a far higher stage of culture than that of the Bhils and other tribes who still remain in a primitive state. The Brahmanical characteristics are well known to all who have been to India or studied its history and literature. Unlike the other living civilisations, its influence, while absolute over some 230,000,000 human beings, is mainly confined to one political entity; though it is not unknown outside the limits of India. In Malaysia and in the Pacific Archipelago, Brahmanical influences have been great in the past and are evident to-day. If ever a truly Irredentist movement were started in India it would be sure to draw the Brahmanical peoples of that country towards the millions of the islands and peninsulas of Java and Sumatra, the Straits Settlements and Borneo. We must always remember that the Brahmans are only a small minority of the people of these lands; but the stamp of Brahmanical civilisation, with the dominance of the priestly caste, has been once and for all impressed on many races who have nothing else in common with the Aryan invaders.

The fourth main civilisation we call Islamic, or Mahomedan, after the great Founder whose personality still dominates all his spiritual children. It is apparent from the Atlantic to Java, and from the Balkans to the Himalayas. Within it are very distinct and different races, such as the white Berbers of Morocco and Algeria, the Arnauts of Albania (perhaps the purest European race) and the many converted Serbs of Bosnia and Macedonia. Then there are the hundreds of millions of every colour and race in Africa, Arabia, Persia, Central Asia, India, China, and the Malay Archipelago. But wherever Islam exists there is the manifest influence of its Founder, that permeates all classes and races. Arabian and Persian culture, too, in architecture, in arts, and in literature is evident wherever Islam is found. You cannot visit a Moslem city without immediately being struck by the minaret of the mosque, which is everywhere the first sign of Islam, turned upwards towards the Great Beyond. The strong mystic influence that permeates Moslem nations cannot be mistaken for any other spiritual force than that of the Koran. There is the less agreeable phase, too, of a certain other-worldliness and coldly calculating devotion which is perhaps inevitable where millions devoutly believe that this world is nothing but a bridge towards Eternity.

It has not been my purpose to give more than the most general description of these four great currents of progress, in order to show that they are the principal lines on which the human spirit has developed. The fact has an intimate bearing on the issues to be discussed in this book, for in India, and in India alone of all the great countries of

the world, these four civilisations are each largely and powerfully represented.

This co-existence of the four main surviving streams of human culture is the dominant fact of Indian life. Side by side with them are the relatively tiny rills of semi-savage races and tribes, scarcely more advanced than any that Africa can show, scattered chiefly in the hills and forests of the South, the central areas, the East and the North-East, and in the Andaman Islands. At the last census the Animistic tribes numbered some 10,800,000 persons.

The main streams have many tributaries, from greater or lesser differences of race and history, of religion and tradition. Special note must be taken of Jewry, that influential and distinctive connecting link between Western and Islamic civilisations. Both Mussulman and Christian are deeply indebted for the foundations of their faiths to its traditional and exalted theology, and while, like Islam, it is Semitic in origin, it is largely Western in outlook and distribution. In India there are anciently settled Jewish colonies on the Bombay and Malabar coasts. But, keeping to our main classification of human cultures, we must see how each of the four reached India, and appraise their relative importance in her life and history.

The oldest and the most powerful of them is the Brahmanical culture. It is the original foundation of Indian society, and to this day it retains sway over at least two-thirds of the population.

Next comes the Islamic, alike in point of age and numerical importance. It entered India through Sind as early as the end of the seventh century, and thereafter greatly increased. To this advance

the successive invasions from the North-West, the Arabian influences carried across the Indian Ocean to Western India, and missionary effort, such as was carried on in Bengal in the eighteenth century, all contributed. Islam has become by now a truly national institution in India, and its adherents form nearly a fifth of the population.

Third in date, but politically the most important to-day, stands Western civilisation. It reached India from the thirteenth century onwards, first through the medium of Venetian, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and British traders, physicians, and adventurers. Later came powerful commercial corporations belonging to some of these nationalities, and the military and political organisations established by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the British at coast factories. The Indian foreign history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is, to a great extent, that of the contests for supremacy of these traders from the West and of the varying co-operation which each competing European nation obtained in India in its own support. However, the Dutch disappeared entirely from the peninsula, though they still have the most splendid of existing colonial empires, next to that of England, in the rich islands of the Pacific. The Portuguese and the French retain small footholds on the West and East coasts respectively, and thus contribute slightly to the representation of Western civilisation in India. But it is the British alone who have carried their power and influence throughout the length and breadth of India and well beyond her borders; who have not only secured political supremacy, but have drawn many sections of

Indian society under the influence of Western civilisation. They have been the chief agents in essential general forms of that culture, such as the watching and interpretation of Nature around us, to which we give the name of Science ; the use of mechanical forces in industry and transport, and the voluntary union of capital, now being accepted and applied by every class in India. Further, Britain, Portugal, and France, with American and other foreign assistance in modern times, have won over small, yet powerful and growing sections of society to Christianity, and have thus sown the seeds of dominant Western influence. Yet again, in the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian communities Western civilisation has direct and permanent representatives.

Last in order as an integral part of Indian life came Far Eastern influences. From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, inevitable causes, but whose action was precipitated by the fact of British dominion over India, brought British and Indian forces, commercial, political, and military, into Burma, and fifteen years before the century closed the entire province, with its essentially Far Eastern social organisation, had become an integral part of India united to the other and fundamentally different societies of that great land by political, commercial, and other bonds. Severance of the political tie has sometimes been suggested, but becomes more and more improbable. Thus, India has not only grown in power and population, but has absorbed into her system the weaker countries beyond.

This process has not been confined to the East and the absorption of Burma. North-westwards,

Baluchistan, an essentially Islamic country, has been drawn by forces beyond human control into the orbit of India; the Durand line marks a definite extension of the "political" boundary in the Pathan country; while across the Arabian Sea Aden and the small protected principalities of the Gulf littoral have been for many years within the territories under Indian Government control. These essentially Mahomedan and foreign lands have been, in the widest sense of the word, Indian, and the political outlook of the inhabitants of Aden¹ or Lahej has not been, in essentials, different from that of the people of Karachi or Janjira.

It must not be concluded that this process of extension has reached its ultimate stage. On the contrary, probably artificial causes have prevented the great united Empire which England has raised in India from making its influence felt on all the surrounding countries to the limits of her natural expanding power. Throughout the nineteenth century, when India exercised far less direct or indirect influence on British policy than she has done in the present decade, issues of European diplomacy made the independence of Persia and the continued supremacy of Turkey in Mesopotamia and Eastern Arabia the foundation of British policy in the Gulf. This necessarily led to the limitation of Indian expansion alike in trade and in political influence, over the thinly-populated lands lying to the west of India. Can anyone deny that, if the Mogul Empire had not been dissolved, or if

¹ Lord Curzon stated in the House of Lords on December 4, 1917, that though for war purposes, the political charge of Aden is now under the Home Government, the question of an absolute transfer from the Indian Government could not be forcibly determined until after the conclusion of peace.

it had been succeeded by a powerful and united Hindu Empire over the whole of India, the lands of the Persian Gulf littoral would long ago have been brought under Indian dominance? Nor can the process of Indian expansion westwards be stopped by any series of treaties or political conditions. Whatever else happens, and whatever the flag that may hereafter float over Basra and Bagdad, over Bushire and Muscat, Indian civilisation, commerce, and emigration must become an increasing power in Mesopotamia, Persia, and Arabia. This process will add greatly to Mahomedan influence in India itself, while, on the other hand, by taking Hindu influences into lands hitherto regarded as the preserves of Islam, it must inevitably lead to a better understanding between the Brahmanical and the Islamic peoples of the peninsula.

Nor are Indian expansion and influence found in Asia alone. Before the advent of British rule Indian maritime relations and trade had been established on the shores of East Africa. An Indian business colony, much on the lines of the Greek trading communities of Southern France and Italy, grew up and was firmly planted by the end of the eighteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century, its members were the standard-bearers of civilisation on the coast and in the then extended dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar. When those vast lands were divided between England, Germany, and Italy in the last quarter of the cycle the Indian settlers became, through natural and inevitable causes, the pillars of the civilised European governments and the go-betweens in commerce and administration. In

British East Africa the railways have been laid by Indian labour, and technical and industrial work which is far beyond the capacity of the African tribes and yet below the standard of imported European efficiency, has been carried on by Indians. This is to a lesser extent true of the territory hitherto known as German East Africa.

The expansion I have described has not been limited to pacific penetration or to the effects of the present war. Northwards, by blunders, by mistakes, by want of policy if you will, but still inevitably, as if it were merely a natural force, pushing on the currents of Indian life to Afghanistan and Tibet, these countries also have been drawn into the orbit of India.

Sooner or later, whatever the preferences of the peoples of those closed lands may be, and whatever the policy of their rulers, yet so strong are the forces of civilisation that these countries will not be able to maintain their political and economic isolation. They will need the goods of Europe and the Far East, more of the products of India and her manufactures of a more elaborate kind than hitherto. To provide exchange of commodities development of the undoubted mineral wealth of these countries will be necessary. There will also be a far larger export of fruits and preserves that cannot be easily grown in India proper, and the culture of which has been for many centuries a regular, though limited, occupation in Afghanistan and parts of Tibet. For geographical and other reasons therefore these States must draw on Indian help and assistance for their instruction and efficiency. European civilisation will thus reach them second-hand; but so

great is the poverty of these secluded mountainous regions that they can only obtain supplies from a cheap country like India instead of from Europe. It may be urged that both Afghanistan and Tibet will turn to some stable element that possibly may be evolved from present chaos in Russian lands; but a study of geographical facts will convince any open-minded observer that through Central Asia, with its sparse population, dismembered Russia with a rigorous winter climate and hemmed in from the sea, cannot be the natural helper or the commercial mainstay of these countries.

Thus, looking forward a few years, at most a decade or two, we may anticipate an economic, commercial, and intellectual India not bounded by the vast triangle of the Himalayas on the north and the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal on either side down to Adam's Bridge, but consisting of a vast agglomeration of states, principalities and countries in Asia extending from Aden to Mesopotamia, from the two shores of the Gulf to India proper, from India proper across Burma and including the Malay Peninsula; and then from Ceylon to the States of Bokhara, and from Tibet to Singapore. The aggregation might well be called the "South Asiatic Federation," of which India would be the pivot and centre.

Thus the Indian problem, taken in its widest connotations, directly affects nearly 400,000,000 human beings, made up of races manifold, so different as Arabs and Burmans, Tibetans and Singalese, Afghans and Bengalees, Mahrattas and Malays. As already noted, while all the four great existing civilisations are here strongly represented, side by side with them are handfuls of semi-

savage men, who have not even taken the first steps towards an elementary intellectual development. Then there are the hundred and one principalities and provinces, minor races and sects, with their local histories, their faded glories and their future hopes. Everywhere, whether directly or indirectly, it is Britain that stands for law and order, for the cement between the ancient cultures of the East and those both ancient and modern of the West ; Britain who, in spite of European rivalries, is still for these hundreds of millions of people the only white and Western Power.

Such is the tremendous problem before us. The future of the Iberian Republics of the New World, the existence or disruption of China, the continuation of rivalry or the dawn of reconciliation and union in Europe—these are the only three other great world issues that can be compared in importance to that which, with diffidence and an appeal for the forbearance and patience of my readers, I discuss in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE REASONS FOR REFORM

SOON after undertaking the preparation of this book I was set thinking by a conversation with one of the most distinguished of present-day British publicists, the greatest living authority on Russia and Central and Eastern Europe. His keen intimacy with world politics embraces mankind from China to Peru, but alas! in the course of his long and busy life he has never had occasion to visit India or specially study her affairs. He asked me why India required any marked change of system. Taking into consideration the divisions of the people, the illiteracy of the masses, the rivalries of religions and races, he asked why, confronted by all this clash and backwardness, England could not go on more or less as she had done throughout the nineteenth century, and rule her vast Asiatic dominions with undivided but conscientiously exercised authority.

My friend maintained that divisions being deep and real and political harmony being confined to a small minority of the upper and educated classes, there will be no real need for a change of policy until such time as the masses insist on their rights and take a share in the responsibilities of government. His purpose was, I think, to draw from me a reasoned statement of the case for reform.

Coming from the incisive critic alike of the reign and policy of Alexander III and of the ultra-democratic Bolsheviks of the hour this view seemed to me singularly unconvincing. If there is one thing which modern history proves, it is this: that unless the government and the governing classes take up the task of raising the masses of the people gradually, but surely, thus founding the fabric of the commonwealth on the widest and deepest basis possible, namely, the whole population, the State renders itself liable to years and years of anarchy and disaster, and perhaps to dissolution.

Look at the Russian portent. Had Alexander II lived a few years longer, had the policy of Loris Milikoff been carried out in 1881, had the last twenty years of the nineteenth century been occupied with construction and education, with uniting the people and the government, and with the evolution of self-government in the various provinces, how different and how happy and healthy Russian history would have been! Taking another instance, the disastrous reign of Abdul Hamid in Turkey might have been one of revivifying forces, had that astute but misguided sovereign devoted the same period to the work of gradual association of the people with the government on the one hand, and to social and cultural development of the masses on the other. In China, had the late Empress-Dowager initiated her death-bed scheme of gradual reform twenty-five years sooner, would that countless and intelligent nation have been to-day a danger to herself and her neighbours, and a real source of weakness to humanity at large?

Conversely there are examples of countries where

a wise and patriotic aristocracy, in association with an intelligent monarchy belonging to the soil, has worked wonders and has so interwoven the interests of every class that even the Socialists are to-day the pillars of the State. Japan is a case in point, and Prussia, whatever its severity and remorselessness towards outside peoples, provides an instance of successful consolidation of all classes through gradual steps of greater association of the people with the government. England herself supplies the outstanding clear-cut example of this healthy development, though she differs from the two other instances quoted by her work having been almost unconscious. Instead of taking place in two centuries, as in Prussia, and in two generations, as in Japan, it has gone on from the dawn of English history.

If the British, on whom historical causes have thrown the ultimate responsibility for the future of India and of surrounding states and nations, were to fail in this their greatest task, Southern Asia would become the theatre of one of the heaviest disasters humanity has faced. Sooner or later, an ignorant and innumerable proletariat, extending over nearly the whole length of Asia from the Red Sea to the Pacific, divided by religion and race and language, would be faced with the problem of self-government and self-development. The course of Russian history in our times provides a tragic warning to those who are responsible for the future of India of the dangers of leaving the apparently well alone, and of not working for the development of the masses in rights and duties alike and in responsibility towards society. It has been well said that the

18 THE REASONS FOR REFORM

British tenure in India must be one of continuous amelioration.

But apart from these lessons of modern history we have to recognise the existence of internal forces in India proper and in the neighbouring states and principalities that render a policy of standing still or of merely nominal concession a practical impossibility since it would work disaster, in the long run, alike for Britain and for India. These forces may not individually be powerful enough to compel renunciation of existing forms of government; but, taken together and in connection with other world forces which react even in remote portions of Southern Asia, they are so enormous in their effect that a radical change of outlook is necessary. A brief examination of some of the more important of them is desirable.

In the forefront we must place the fact that until the summer of 1914 there was a white and European solidarity *vis-à-vis* Asia and Africa which, though officially unrecognized, was yet the foundation of European policy in the widest sense of the term. A small but suggestive point of nomenclature illustrates my meaning. The British governing classes and the white mercantile community were referred to throughout India as "Europeans," and the general line of differentiation as between the governors and the governed was shown by the terms "European" and "Native," or latterly the more acceptable cognomen "Indian." There were many other signs of the concert of Europe at work, though of course officially unrecognized. The German, French or Italian trader or missionary had social union with the British rulers and business men, carrying

inherent privileges that made them members of the same governing European family. But the Great War has broken up that solidarity. The German and Austrian missionary and trader has been interned in India or repatriated, and all and sundry have watched the humiliation of these fallen members of the white race. The most remote villagers have heard of the sepoys who have fought hand to hand with the fairest inhabitants of Europe. The long-maintained racial line of demarcation has been largely replaced by that of allegiance to Sovereign and flag.

For the full establishment of this sound guiding principle the claims of merit and fidelity must become predominant. By universal testimony this war has shown that the loyalty of the people of India to Emperor and Empire is second to none. In no other belligerent country, not even in Great Britain or Germany, have the forces of sedition and anarchy been so minute in proportion to the numbers of the law-abiding as in India. The small and insignificant factions which sought to create difficulties at a time of Imperial stress were but as a drop in the ocean, and all classes came forward to help England in her hour of trial. True the numbers of recruits, though vastly in excess of normal requirements, were small compared to the teeming population. But, as will be seen when we discuss the military needs of India, this was due to obvious historical, sociological, and political causes, not to any want of loyalty. Wherever and whenever any help could be given by the people of India, it was heartily bestowed. Can the annals of any other country ruled by an essentially foreign governing class responsible to an external Power,

show the people coming forward and making equal sacrifices from patriotic motives ?

The explanation of this now historic fact, so puzzling and disappointing to Teutonic enemies of England, is simple. Though to foreigners and onlookers India may be a conquered country, yet British rule was extended (with Indian help) so insidiously and so gradually, it has lasted so long and the work of conquest and administration has from the first been carried on by British heads and Indian hands to such an extent, that the average Indian does not look upon himself as belonging to a conquered people, or on his country as dominated by foreigners. He has awakened to the reality only when he has tried to visit the British self-governing Dominions, which have now agreed to a more liberal-minded policy. This altogether healthy Indian sentiment cannot last unless changes are introduced in the administration so as to give the people a fuller share and voice in the control of affairs in their own country. Many forces, internal and external, are working to awaken Indians in general, and the urban population in particular, to the reasonableness of their claims to a share in their own government.

And if we turn to neighbouring countries within the orbit of India we find that some have enjoyed to the present time forms of self-government, and others look upon themselves as conquering and independent races. Take the case of Mesopotamia. However bad Turkish rule there may have been, yet, even under Abdul Hamid's absolutist government, there was nominal equality of rights between Turk and Arab. Under the Young Turks, however insubstantial constitutional government may have

been, the people of Baghdad and of Basra had the same rights of representation in the Chamber of Deputies as the people of Ismid or Adrianople, though in practice they were reduced to nothing of substantial value.

Yet if Mesopotamia is to become a British or a semi-British province, it is impossible to establish a purely bureaucratic administration among a people who have had at least nominal equality of opportunity with the Turkish rulers. Can it be seriously maintained that Britain can establish a government based in some degree on co-operation of the rulers and the ruled in Mesopotamia, and at the same time continue in India an administration in no sense responsible to the people? Though illiteracy is, alas! still general, though divisions, especially amongst the untaught masses, are deep, there is a general consensus of opinion amongst the upper and middle classes that the establishment of an administrative system more or less responsible to the people, and drawing its forces from their confidence and co-operation, cannot be long delayed.

We all know that the vast Indian majority consists of illiterate peasants and field labourers in the rural districts, but it must not be forgotten that the urban dwellers and the literate classes, though forming but a small proportion of the aggregate total, are still numerous enough to be equal to the population of a secondary European state. In 1911 the urban ratio was 9·5 per cent, and the census recorded more than 18½ million literates. Each year the schools and colleges and factories draw more and more from the great reservoir of the country districts to the towns and cities. No one familiar with modern India will

22 THE REASONS FOR REFORM

deny that everywhere in the towns and in almost every class, there is a growing desire for a form of government that will allow the Indian to carry his head high as a citizen of a free Empire, and at the same time will provide the means for raising the lower classes of the rural population to a fuller standard of citizenship and life.

Again, a fundamental change has come over the Indian outlook on public affairs. I have often been told by English civilians that the Musulmans need another Sir Syed Ahmed, and that it is a pity that his political policy has disappeared. My answer has always been that Lord Beaconsfield and his Mahomedan policy are as dead as cold mutton. I am not sure if the gentlemen who started the conversation on these lines always realised what this answer conveyed. But here it is necessary to put on record the changed perspective within the last generation.

Twenty-five years ago the average Indian Moslem looked upon himself as a member of a universal religious brotherhood, sojourning in a land in which a neutral Government, with a neutral outlook, kept law and order and justice. His political and communal pride was satisfied by the fact that his co-religionists in Turkey, Persia, Morocco, and (nominally at least) in Egypt enjoyed independence and national sovereignty. While his allegiance was to Queen Victoria, his political self-respect was satisfied by the existence of the Sultans at Constantinople and Fez, and of the Shah and Khedive at Teheran and Cairo. The fact that the British Government was the mainstay and support in the diplomatic arena of the independent Mahomedan States was naturally a source of continued grati-

fication to him. Far be it from me to suggest that all this was actually and consciously thought, and deductions made therefrom. But it is the semi-conscious and the sub-conscious that give atmosphere to national even more than to individual life. It was sub-conscious hostility towards Western Europe that drove Germany into war, and it was sub-conscious sentiment that early in the present century drew the peoples of England and France together, long before they were compelled to draw the sword for the defence of the liberty and civilisation of mankind.

Within this generation, the whole Mahomedan world-outlook has changed. Forces beyond Moslem control led to the disappearance of Mahomedan rule and independence in North Africa. Persia gradually drifted into being merely a name for spheres of influence between Britain and Russia. Turkey herself, the last of the independent Mahomedan dominions, was drawn into the Teutonic orbit, first through economic and semi-political causes, and finally by her participation in the Great War on the German side. I do not suggest that the destruction of the independence of these last Moslem States was conscious and deliberate; but so strong are the world forces of this generation that states and societies which have stood still for centuries have now been overthrown by the strong currents of European and American activity. The net result is that the Indian Mahomedan, instead of holding but the outposts of Islam in the East, sees around him nothing but Moslem societies in a far greater state of decay than his own. 'The banner of the Prophet is' no longer in strong hands in North Africa or Persia,

24 THE REASONS FOR REFORM

and Turkey has become the political enemy of England and a satrapy of Germany. Under these circumstances, he necessarily looks upon India more and more as the hope of his political freedom and as the centre that may still raise the other Mahomedan countries to a higher standard of civilisation.

Another point to be remembered is that while, under the old conditions, the Mahomedans were doomed to be nothing but a one-fifth minority in an overwhelmingly Brahmanical India, to-day, as the forces of disruption gain strength in Western Asia, it is not improbable that the South Asiatic Federation of to-morrow, of which India must be the centre and the pivot, will contain not only the 66½ millions of Indian Moslems, but the thirty or forty millions more Musulmans inhabiting South Persia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Afghanistan. If we turn from numbers to surface of territory, the Islamic provinces of South Asia will be almost as great in extent as the India of yesterday. Hence there is little danger of the Mahomedans of India being nothing but a small minority in the coming federation. No doubt these considerations, again, are sub-conscious and semi-conscious; but they are potent. The Indian Moslem of to-day is no more haunted by the fear of being a powerless minority; nor has he constantly to look for his sentimental satisfaction to the Islamic States outside India.

Turning our gaze from the Moslems to the vast Hindu population, we find among its educated members the feeling that the great conflict announced as a war for liberty and freedom, for the protection of self-development in small countries, such as Belgium and Serbia, carries for the Allies

the implication that political freedom is the heritage of every nation, great or small. The principles that render the Allied cause just in Europe are of universal application, *mutatis mutandis*, and lead to the deduction that India, too, must be set on the path of self-government. At this moment India and Egypt are almost the only two stable and advanced great countries where the administration is not in any appreciable degree responsible to the people, and where the foundation of State polity is the theory that the government is superior to the governed. Some fifteen years ago, when, for instance, Lord Curzon and Lord Cromer ruled in India and in Egypt, Russia, Turkey, Persia, and China were all ruled on this principle. But recent transformations in those lands leave the position of India unique. China and the Russias are republics, with nominally the most democratic forms of government, and Persia and Turkey both claim to be considered constitutional monarchies. Thus, in India alone we have a Government that is not only in practice free from internal parliamentary control, but is actually based on the principle that final decisions are in the hands of an administration not responsible to the people, although some opportunities for criticism are given in the Viceregal and provincial legislatures. The contradictory position of the Government leads to its being open to attack from all quarters, and yet to its being considered anomalous that Indians, alone of the great Eastern peoples, should have no control over their administration. These causes, and many others, have led to general expectation and desire throughout the length and breadth of India that, when the

26 THE REASONS FOR REFORM

cause of liberty as represented by the Allied armies has led humanity through victory to peace, the structure of Indian administration also may be brought into line with the spirit of the times and a reasonable share of control and supervision* be given to the Indian public.

If we turn to the Native States and to the fully or semi-independent countries, such as Afghanistan and Nepal and the Arabian principalities, we find a general recognition on the part of the authorities that the time is coming for sharing their powers with the ruled. The best administered of the Native States and most of the princes desire to establish some form of legislative or other constitutional government. This would serve the two-fold purpose of giving their States the prestige and force of national institutions, and the ruling houses the claim of being united with the people by the ties of co-operation in the work of administration. In Afghanistan some attempt, howsoever nominal, has been made by the present King to lay the foundations of a representative institution. In fact everywhere in South Asia we find local forces striving, if sometimes unconsciously, after forms of administration more or less modern in character and leading to association and co-operation between the sovereign power and the nation. It follows that however excellent the present administration of India may be, however efficient and suited to the conditions of the recent past, it is not for the people of England to deny to their great Eastern Empire those forms of constitutionalism which were first developed in Britain and with the manifestations of which, whether in infancy or vigorous growth, England has always.

sympathised in the case of other countries on the European, American, and Asiatic continents.

Apart from the general considerations examined hitherto, there are administrative reasons which render imperative a change of system and policy. To begin with, no sounder political theory has been laid down than that maintained by the English economists, namely, good finance is the foundation of good government. It was bad finance that broke up the monarchy in France, and the most disastrous of present-day examples, Turkey and Russia, point to the same conclusion—that without sound finance ruin overtakes society. In India innumerable Viceroy, Secretaries of State and other competent observers have always held that good finance is fundamental to the moral authority of British rule. If this has been the case in the past, when the work of government was limited, how much more so to-day and to-morrow, when civilised societies expect from their governments the righting of social wrongs, thorough handling of the problems of sanitation and public instruction, and the establishment of a certain level of well-being as the inherent right of every citizen?

Now, British rule in India has been criticised, and rightly criticised, for having allowed the twentieth century to dawn and grow without having grappled fully and successfully with the illiteracy general in India, and with the insanitary environment of the masses so bad that avoidable deaths are counted by the million every year, while the standard of the physique of the masses is deplorably low. The various modern departments of State that lead towards social better-

ment and social welfare in the West have still to be organised. The Indian public conscience unanimously demands that British rule should come into line with progressive modern ideas and tackle illiteracy and other social problems left far too long unsolved.

We shall be told, rightly, that at bottom, these are questions of bearable taxation. How are we to provide the means for meeting such crying needs of India? There are only two ways: either by co-operation between the Government and the governed and by discussion, proving to the representatives of the people the need, and thus making the Indian public itself the judge of the extent of the necessary sacrifice; or by mere fiat and mandate of the Supreme Government imposing taxation. Lord Cromer always held in conversations which I had with him that a government such as that of Britain in India and Egypt could not maintain itself except by light taxation, and Lord Morley's lately published "Recollections" show him to be of a like opinion. But Lord Cromer's own rule at Cairo laid itself open to the pointed criticism that while the Egyptian peasant grew rich he remained dirty and ignorant, superstitious and slovenly. Does not this go to prove that bureaucratic government, when well-intentioned and paternal, is conscious of some lack of moral right to call for those sacrifices from the people that will raise their condition in the cultural and sociological field *pari passu* with, or in advance of, their economic progress?

In India, however, it is far too late to adopt Lord Cromer's policy of light taxation in preference to modern advancement. The best rulers of Native

States have endeavoured in their relatively small way to solve the problems of illiteracy and social betterment. The leaders of India unanimously expect from their Government the steady provision of those agencies which in Europe and America have brought about the fusion of culture between the masses and the classes. It is for the Government to take steps necessary to find the means for carrying out this policy, and this can be done with the co-operation of the representatives of the people and by discussion that will prove to the rulers and the ruled that the resources to be tapped are those that can best bear the burden of greater taxation.

If we turn from the problem of finance to the only other equally important and equally essential principle of government, namely, that of defence, we are forced to the same conclusion: that the sharing of responsibility between the people of India and its government is now necessary. I earnestly cherish the hope of President Wilson that a society of nations may result from the tremendous cost and suffering of these years of conflict, and I am convinced that forms of arbitration and limitation of armaments, through international agencies of control, will arise after the war. Yet no one who looks at the problem of Asia to-day can doubt that India must be prepared and ready to defend herself. Whether Britain keeps Mesopotamia, or whether that rich but neglected land becomes an independent principality or republic under British suzerainty, or whether it goes back to some form of Turkish control, yet its economic relations with India must so grow as to give us in practice a trans-Gulf frontier to defend. The same is true of

Persia, and if we look Eastwards, with the growth of Japan and with the problem of our North-East frontier touching China, we cannot afford to neglect India's potentialities.

Now, a small and professional army, such as India had and has to-day, can never possess the reserves and the natural expanding power to meet modern war, with its terrible casualties, with its heavy technical services, with its lines of communication to be conserved and defended. While the Russias will not trouble us for generations, Germany, directly or indirectly, has become an Asiatic Power. Assuming that Turkey loses Mesopotamia and Syria, German military organisation will yet still be supreme on the other side of the Taurus Mountains and in the uplands of Asia Minor. Howsoever friendly modern Japan may be, and howsoever impotent modern China, yet India can never again be left to depend merely on Japanese goodwill and Chinese weakness for her security against attack from the East. Just as Australia, although she has the sea to protect her from sudden attack, has had to organise her defensive forces on modern lines by universal training, so the India of the next decade must develop her internal forces in such a way as to be able to meet any sudden emergency.

In India, with its 315,000,000 inhabitants, universal military service can be hardly feasible and probably will never be necessary; yet some form of fairly distributed national service falling on, say, 10 per cent of the inhabitants of each locality, to be selected by purely physical tests of healthiness and efficiency, can alone meet her problem of defence. No doubt the military training here

referred to will not be the two or three years of the German and French Armies, but rather the six months of the Swiss forces. Such is, in fact, the proposal contained in a Territorial scheme submitted to the Indian Government in 1916. Still, this will be such a tax on the energy and life of the people that it is inconceivable that any country should willingly accept it without the imprimatur of her elected spokesmen; nor can such representation be merely nominal as at present. It must comprise men drawn directly from the masses and from every locality.

Thus, from the two essential points of view of finance and defence alike, we come to the conclusion that a higher standard of citizenship, with both greater sacrifices and greater responsibilities, must be imposed on the people if the great work of Britain is not to end in failure. The accomplishment of the task which destiny has placed before England cannot be complete unless India is raised, through social laws and institutions, to the standard of at least a backward European or Spanish-American country. The necessary corollary is that India must be so able to defend herself from foreign aggression as to make her independent of the mere goodwill or the accidental and temporary impotence of her neighbours. Yet neither of these two great conditions can be brought about without the co-operation, through representative institutions, of the people with the Government, and without a thorough change of system that unites the administration with the masses by constant discussion leading to unity of aim between the direct representatives of the people and the highest officers of the Crown.

82 THE REASONS FOR REFORM

Thus, from several principal points of view and apart from the many minor lines of argument that lead to the same conclusions, we see that the Government of India needs radical change; that the time has come when it should be no more a mere government of fiat, however excellent the fiat, but an essentially modern State based on the co-operation of every community and of the Government, by giving to the people themselves the right to direct policy. In succeeding chapters I hope to show that this metamorphosis will not only lead to the happiness and contentment of India, but to the strengthening of the British Empire as a whole and to drawing India nearer to England and the Dominions.

CHAPTER III

A FEDERAL BASIS

THE perusal of the last chapter might lead the man in the street to the facile conclusion that the grant of representative assemblies, such as European States possess, would meet the needs of India, and that a full plan of co-operation between rulers and the ruled could be easily brought about by an edict from the King-Emperor. No such short cut to constitutionalism will do in India. To begin with, parliamentary government so far has been markedly successful only in countries of relatively small area, however populous any such given area may be. England, France, Germany, Sweden, Italy—you find no country with a greater surface than two or three hundred thousand square miles. We can draw no conclusions from the constitutions of Canada, Australia, and some of the South American republics, because these States are still at the dawn of national life; their populations are but handfuls compared to what they must be when full development is reached. At present society is limited to certain large cities and emporiums of trade, and small, widely scattered rural communities. In the United States, on the other hand, the very name of the country shows that the Republic consists of independent parliamentary communities.

This view of a State, relatively small in area or population, as the best foundation of parliamentary government was held by Bismarck, as I learned from his son, Count Herbert, in Berlin, only two years after the death of the founder of United Germany. In the course of a long conversation about a federation that has been fraught with such momentous consequences to mankind, Herbert Bismarck told me that one of the features which led his father to expect a successful development was that the great majority of administrative affairs would remain in the hands of each of the individual States of the Bundesrat. The Reichstag would deal only with questions relating to the Army, Foreign, and Maritime affairs. Bismarck maintained to the end that organic parliamentary union, such as exists in France and in the United Kingdom, would break down in Germany since the empire, instead of being a compact geographical unit, was a long and scattered dominion. If this could be said of Germany, how much truer it is of far wider empires. And since Russia secured some parliamentary freedom, we have seen inevitable causes leading to her break-up into smaller state organisms. Though the present rush of disruptive forces may be the result of war, ignorance, and the long period of misgovernment, can anyone doubt that, at best, liberty and freedom in Russia would have led to her division into component states?

If, on the other hand, it is maintained that modern science, through vast railways and still more through rapid aerial navigation, has reduced distances, and that probably before the next few years are over aerial travelling will further abridge them, this contention will not remove the condition

that only the geographically small parliamentary unit can be free and great. For, as we see, while Science on the one side brings distant places nearer, on the other hand, by giving intensive culture to localities and by highly developing local economic interests, it undoes the results of its first and apparent action. In a large primitive area, while distances are enormous and means of communication few, yet unless great natural obstacles, such as mountains and seas, arise, there is a general similarity of interest and occupation that makes for homogeneity. On the other hand, the higher the development of modern civilisation on a continent, the more heterogeneous and individual its parts become. And if this be true of Europe, with its single type of culture, it is far more applicable to India, where all the four main civilisations of the world are found, and where the problem is still further complicated by relatively minor differences of race, religion, history, and development.

Even in a political entity so small in area as the United Kingdom, independently of the embittered controversies caused by Ireland's racial and religious differences, the legislative combination of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland has presented serious practical drawbacks. The efficiency of the Mother of Parliaments is notoriously hampered by the excessive pressure of detailed work, and the impossibility of more than a few members possessing the requisite local knowledge in reference to private bills, and the other wants of varying districts. Suggestions for the setting up of local parliaments, not only for Ireland and Scotland, but for Wales and homogeneous portions of England, were being made with increasing acceptance before the energies of the

Empire had to be concentrated on the mighty task still in hand. France has had a centralised form of government for centuries and, except amongst some of the people of Brittany, and the Basque of the Pyrenees, is as united a nation as can be desired. Yet even in France there are thinkers, in the South at all events, who have yearnings for local parliaments. One of the most successfully governed countries of the world, Switzerland, where you find the ideal combination of liberty and order, is ruled by small, freely elected parliaments over cantons of such compact dimensions that each citizen is a real participant in the affairs of his province. This illustration is specially important because Switzerland, on a small scale, like India on a large one, consists of different nationalities grouped by political union.

Whatever may be said of the general merits of the Indian reform scheme outlined in the joint address of a number of prominent Indians and Europeans submitted to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State in November, 1917, there can be no doubt as to the political soundness of its arguments from history against legislative centralisation in so vast an area :—

“The examples of the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa, as contrasted with India, China and the dependencies of Spain and France in the eighteenth century, prove that under elective institutions provincial administration cannot be made effective for units of population the size of great nations. Had the United States attempted to develop herself on the basis of five or six provinces, each would, for administrative reasons, have been driven to subdivide itself into

minor self-governing provinces commensurate in size with the existing forty-eight States. County councils or district boards cannot take the place of provincial governments, which in nations of a certain magnitude, must be interposed between local authorities on the one hand, and the national government on the other. Hence, the Government of the United Kingdom, with its population of 45,000,000, is increasingly unable to cope with their need for social reform."

In a word, for India, with her vast population, her varied provinces and races, her many sectarian differences (brought to the surface by the present search for the lines of constitutional advance), a unilateral form of free government is impossible. If we include in our survey the far greater grouping of to-morrow, to which we have given the name of the South Asiatic Federation, the idea is still more hopelessly impracticable. It is common knowledge that, even with an administration not responsible to the people and an elaborate bureaucratic system, there have been increasing complaints by the Indian provincial administrations of excessive interference and of being kept in leading strings by the central authority. Masterful Viceroys like Lord Curzon have sought to keep all the threads of administration in their own hands; but when their tenure has expired the provincial officials have renewed their efforts to modify and lessen the control of Simla. Diversified as have been the reform proposals submitted to Mr. Montagu during his Indian tour, there has been an extraordinary consensus of opinion that the growth in recent years of the activities of Government render

imperative the devolution of some of the powers exercised by the central authority.

An outstanding difficulty in providing a central parliament for India is that the vast majority of the inhabitants are alike illiterate and in such deep poverty as to render impracticable their enfranchisement as electors of an Imperial assembly. Still, this argument should not be used by reactionaries, bureaucrats, and Anglo-Indians generally against the Indian educated classes in their plea for constitutional reform. It must not be forgotten that since the earliest years of the present century Indian leaders, under the inspiration of that lamented patriot G. K. Gokhale, have advocated universal and compulsory free education, in full recognition that its cost will have to be borne in some form or another by the taxpayers of the country. The claim for at least a beginning in this direction has been made by the National Congress since 1904. For reasons of a practical kind, which do not seem to me to have been adequate and which are steadily losing their force, officialdom did not see its way to make such a beginning even on a local option basis, until last year, when the Bombay Government supported the Bill of a non-official member which duly passed into law, for giving municipalities power to compel school attendance. It cannot be said that theories of the freedom of the individual and Spencerian ideas of limitation of State activity stood in the way. For, after all, the officials with whom the last word rested have been reared in a country where universal compulsory education has been established for more than forty-five years. The experiment has been tried with substantial success in some of the

Native States, under wise and patriotic princes like the rulers of Baroda, Bikaner, Mysore, Kapurthala, Cochin, and Bhavanagar. I do not deny the existence of practical difficulties in the application of the principle under the diversified conditions obtaining in the vast territories of British India ; but with patient determination these can be steadily surmounted, and it seems to me that there is no strong reason for not giving general local option to confer this great boon on the people, other than the natural reluctance of an overwhelmingly non-indigenous administration to impose new taxation.

Wherever the blame may lie for the illiteracy of the masses, the fact remains that in the face of such ignorance and of the existence of interests so diversified and widely scattered, a central parliament becomes an impossibility. One cannot imagine the Baluch representative in an assembly at Delhi being keen on the needs of Madura, or a Bombay member advocating measures for the development of shipping in Calcutta. The well-known difficulties as to the representation of very small minorities also come in the way. While a mighty minority of many millions, like the Mahomedans, could protect its own interests in a central institution, the smallest and least influential communities, usually to be found in one province, could exert little or no influence at Delhi or Simla.

It should be remembered that the greatest political mistake in Indian annals was when Aurangzeb overthrew the independent states of the South and tried the impossible task of bringing the whole of India under Delhi. Historically, neither in Buddhist, Hindu, nor Mahomedan times has the entire peninsula been under one single

government, and the actual India of to-day contains provinces that were never ruled by either Asoka or Akbar. And to their honour let it be said that, so far, the majority of Indian thinkers have advocated, if not the form, at least the facts of federal government. No doubt, the fear of seeing India again breaking up into component parts has made some Indian thinkers somewhat dubious as to the future under provincial autonomy. As the examples of the United States and Germany on the one hand, and of Russia on the other, have shown, the real danger of a break-up does not come from meeting the wishes of the different component parts, but from over-centralisation and the enforcement of an unnatural uniformity. No, the problem of a free India within the British Empire can only be solved by federalism and by facing this essential fact.

Of course no contemporary federal scheme can be followed in all its details ; there must be adaptation to Indian conditions and historical developments. Before going into details it should be observed that we must not be deflected from acceptance of certain broad principles of federalism because they happen to be applied in Germany, any more than we are called upon to adopt them because the United States of America are their earlier home. I yield to no one in the intense horror and detestation I feel in respect to the remorseless barbarity, the disregard of international obligations as to the rules of war, the treachery and trickery, and the enslavement of the inhabitants of conquered areas which have disgraced the German name in the last four years. But the political, like the theological, investigator

should "seize the truth where'er 'tis found," whether in the the New World or the Old, and must not be blinded to the advantages of certain principles of confederation because they happen to have been applied in a country which has brought so much sorrow and suffering upon mankind.

The bursting of the floodgates of German lust of conquest was due, not to the constitution of her federal system, but to the arrogance and egotism instilled into her people, of set purpose, for a generation past. It is notorious that all classes, and not merely the military and ruling castes, were eager for war. They had grown rich in material things too quickly after the unification of the Empire, and acquired the aggressiveness characteristic of *nouveaux riches*. In the pre-war decade I frequently met middle-class Germans, not of the Junker class, but traders in India and Burma, in the Dutch Colonies, in Siam, China, Japan, America, in various parts of Africa, and on the Continent. They did not conceal their intense longing for war, and usually they blamed the weakness of the Kaiser, derisively calling him "the Pacifist." It is my firm conviction that if Germany had had a Government directly responsible to parliament and removable thereby, the war would have come several years sooner, and probably in 1906 over the question of Morocco.

Wherever we may look for patterns, I now propose to show that for some years to come each Indian province in the initial stages of federalism, must have a constitution that provides, on the one hand, for an independent and strong executive, responsible to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for tenure of office and appointment; and, on the

other hand, for elective assemblies to control finance and legislation. Thus will be built up the future United States of India within the British Empire. This system, leaving the component members of the federation full local autonomy, will best conform to the varied needs of the great peninsula and to the facts of her evolution, and can most readily be adjusted to local conditions.

CHAPTER IV

PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION

ANYONE acquainted with recent Indian political history is aware that nearly all suggested plans of constitutional reform are based on a greater or less degree of provincial autonomy. Lord Hardinge's Government, which included two warm champions of real devolution in the late Sir John Jenkins and Sir Ali Imam, laid down this principle in unequivocal terms in the famous Delhi despatch of 1911. Most of the outstanding and detailed reform proposals submitted to the Viceroy and Mr. Montagu last winter were based on the claim of provincial autonomy, at least over recognised and limited fields. This, too, was the keynote of Mr. Gokhale's political testament, which I had the privilege of publishing shortly before the announcement in the House of Commons of the liberalising policy of His Majesty's Government. Though it leaves the Governor-General in Council for the present great powers of intervention in the affairs of the local Governments, the Gokhale scheme was designed to lead, after a few years of practical working, to a form of federalism.

Though my lamented friend wrote out his plan only a few days before his death, he had long pondered deeply thereon, and had discussed the various points both with the late Sir P. M. Mehta

44 PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION

and myself. He began expounding his ideas on this head to me in London in the early autumn of 1914. Recognising that the scheme led to federalism, I drew his attention to the consideration that the existing provinces had grown out of the accidents of foreign acquisition and the needs, many of them no longer operative, of bureaucratic administration; in area, population, and still more potent matters of race and language, they were ill adapted to become national states. I proposed that he should found his scheme as far as possible on a plan of reshapement providing a national and linguistic basis. I said that self-government must develop on two lines, one being that of provincial rearrangement with something like the unity of a nationality as far as practicable, and the other the separate representation within each province of religions, castes, and communities, small as well as great. Gokhale agreed with this view, and his skeleton plan recognises the need for separate and direct representation of Mahomedans and other non-majority communities. But he did not feel justified in making provincial regrouping a part of his scheme, because he hoped that the Government would introduce, within a year or two from that date, the provincial autonomy foreshadowed in the Delhi despatch, and that its working, by bringing out the defects of present geographical divisions, would lead to the establishment of ethnic and linguistic groupings.

Now that the war has gone on not only months but years beyond the time Gokhale anticipated, even in his least optimistic hours, the currents of political progress to which men direct their gaze for the future have gained cumulative force, and the

foundations to-day must be laid deep and strong. Happily, the task in India, if earnestly faced, does not present insuperable difficulties. I strongly oppose the suggested subdivision of the existing provinces into a considerable number of self-governing states. Such small administrations would unduly narrow down national effort. The unit of provincial self-government must be equal at least to a medium European state. It seems to me that in the Bengal Presidency we have a good example of a suitable and reasonably homogeneous area for federal autonomy. Nor would I divide so ethnically distinct a province as Burma. But in the other major provinces readjustment is necessary. Behar should absorb a few districts from the Central Provinces, and the United Provinces should take from what is now the Nagpur Government the Hindi-speaking districts which were formerly under the Agra Administration. On the other hand, two or three of the western districts of the United Provinces belong by affinity to the Punjab.

The Bombay Presidency as now constituted is unduly heterogeneous. With the disappearance of the Central Provinces the Marathi-speaking divisions would naturally fall to Bombay. The great Southern province of Madras would not be greatly changed, excepting that its most north-western districts would fall to Bombay, being nearer the Belgaum and North Kanara districts in character than to the Dravidian south. Bombay would lose Sind, which would substantially help to form what might be called the Indus Province, possibly with Quetta as the capital, and comprising the North-West Frontier Province as well as Baluchistan. Apart from Assam we should thus have eight "major"

46 PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION

provinces, roughly equal in area, and each capable of developing a national government. It is true that in Bombay there would be the two main varieties of the original Sanskrit in the Marathi and Gujarati dialects ; and in Madras Tamil and Telugu would similarly form the major languages. Everywhere beyond the areas where it is the principal vernacular Urdu would be the recognised home tongue of the Mahomedans. But these and other linguistic variations are inevitable in a sub-continent so diversified as India ; and by such a scheme of redistribution there would be much greater approximation than at present to provinces which could honestly be called nationalities, each *having an importance and coherence ranking with those of at least some European States.*

The Governor of each province should directly represent the Sovereign and hold all official executive responsibility. His powers, while similar to those now vested in the heads of presidencies, would be much larger and far less trammelled by the central authority in India. The appointment would be made, as at present, by the King-Emperor. In one important respect I dissent from most of the systems which have been proposed, for I consider the time has come for including Indians within the field of selection. I grant that there are not many Indians who could fitly hold this exalted office in the reconstituted form ; but a beginning could and should be made. The arguments used by Lord Morley a decade ago in wearing down the opposition to appointing Indians to the Government of India and the presidency Executives, may be applied to this claim that, in conformity with the great principles of Queen

INDIAN PRINCES AS GOVERNORS 47

Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, Indians should now preside over provinces side by side with Englishmen.

The innovation should be made by inviting one of the ruling princes to leave his own territory for five years for the greater field of direction of a provincial administration. To take a concrete case, there is no reason why that patriot-statesman the Maharaja of Bikanir should not succeed Lord Pentland or Lord Willingdon. There are certainly other ruling princes capable of administering great provinces; but I take His Highness of Bikanir as a shining example, whose qualifications cannot be denied. As to the objection that five years is too long a period for any prince to leave his own territory, it may be answered that a well-run Native State reaches such a degree of automatic good administration that, when its ruler dies, the standard is maintained during long periods of regency. Moreover, nowadays there are usually either heirs-apparent or other relatives of the ruler who could well be trusted to carry on the administration for a quinquennium.

During the period the selected ruling chief would undergo a personal metamorphosis; but I am confident that our best modern princes are quite capable of adapting themselves to such a change of situation. They will be able to play their new part and take up their wider responsibilities, exactly as an Englishman forgets that he is a large landowner in Kent or Surrey when he becomes a governor or ambassador. On a small scale something of the kind occurred when the gallant Maharaja Sir Partab Singh abdicated the Idar *gadi*, and returned to Jodhpur to be regent for

48 PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION

his grand-nephew. The English heads of neighbouring provinces would find substantial advantage in the contiguity of an Indian ruler of proved administrative ability, dealing with public problems corresponding to his own. Later on ordinary British Indian subjects should be eligible for appointment to governorships ; but for some years to come the great responsibility should be limited to Indian princes. It may be undesirable to appoint a ruling chief to the governorship of the province in which his State is situated ; but there is no reason why a prince from Rajputana or Central India should not make an excellent head of the Executive in Bengal, Bombay, or Madras.

The Governor should appoint ministers to the various departments of State, for defined periods of, say, four or five years at least, and his choice should be unhampered. Except in the peculiar Helvetian Confederation, no Prime Minister or President in the world has to accept his colleagues at the bidding of an electorate or the legislature. Nor is the exception absolute : for when a federal councillor or minister has been elected, his tenure of office does not depend upon any vote of the Swiss Parliament. The world-wide practice whereby the head of the administration selects his colleagues is based on historical experience, and must be maintained in India. By way of safeguard, however, the legislature might possess the right of removing by a three-fourths majority, an unsuitable or incompetent man at the head of a department. Apart from this minor and negative degree of legislative control, each minister should be entirely responsible to the Crown through the Governor. This would give India the constitution Gokhale and Mehta always

advocated, on the basis of the American or the German principle of freedom of the executive from legislative control so far as tenure of office is concerned. An adverse vote would only lead to the dropping of the measure in hand.

The greatest mistake made in the successive reconstitutions of Indian provincial legislatures has been that of limiting the right of representation, in practice if not always in theory, to what may be termed the privileged classes—the best-educated and richest sections of the population. Owing to this serious error the national conservatism necessary to the evolution of a normal modern State, and in India characteristic of the man at the plough, has been artificially prevented from making its voice effectively heard. An exaggerated mid-Victorian form of Liberalism, natural to the classes that now form the narrow electorates, has been dominant. Taxation and representation have not gone together. The provincial legislatures have been far too small to be really representative bodies in such large areas. I am sure an able and popular Governor, such as Lord Willingdon in Bombay, could rule his province much better if he had an assembly of from 180 to 220 almost entirely elected members, instead of about one-fifth of that number nominated and elected, as now, for it could then be representative of every district; community and substantial interest.

Each of the various religions and races, as recorded in the census, would provincially be a *millet*, to use the Turkish term, and each would have a fair share in the assembly directly elected. The franchise might be based on various grounds—a small income or land tax assessment, public

50 PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION

service, both civilian and military, education and other tests. Old soldiers of a prescribed period of service, especially all who have participated in the present war, men who in various capacities have travelled far out of India, and those who have served in important posts would have special qualifications for the franchise, but each within his own community. There would still remain large numbers of the less fortunate classes and castes who could not at present be fairly represented, since they do not include any substantial proportion of men with such educational or other qualifications as to pass the reasonable tests applied to other sections. For the present, therefore, it should be the duty of the Governor to nominate a few representatives from these backward communities.

Such an assembly, though falling short of the wide bases of such outstanding types as the House of Commons or the French Chamber, would have the merit of truly reflecting Indian conditions of to-day. I am not advocating an institution for twenty or thirty years hence, but one that could safely and advantageously be introduced without delay, since it would be calculated to strengthen the Executive and promote the contentment of all classes. A natural organic epitome of existing conditions, it would grow, as all healthy political institutions have grown, till it reached a standard similar to that built up stage by stage in the best-governed parts of the world. Since Mahomedans and the land-owning classes received special representation under the Morley reforms, and as a matter of practical politics it is impossible to force the Mahomedan to surrender these rights, this principle

must be extended, both on logical and political grounds, to other important communities and interests. This extension would meet the claims, so strongly pressed within the last year or so, of the non-Brahmans of Madras, and of the British and Anglo-Indian communities, as well as of other minority elements, and would stimulate an interest in public affairs on the part of the backward classes.

While the Assembly, apart from the three-fourths vote of censure by which it could remove individual ministers, would not otherwise control the Executive, it would have full powers within its legitimate sphere of influence. But single Chamber government is to be deprecated, and I strongly advocate the establishment in each province of a Senate or Upper House, of, say, forty or fifty members. Here again, for the present, nomination would be exercised in some instances, while in other cases important bodies or interests, such as the greater municipalities, chambers of commerce, universities, and landlords' associations, would send representatives. Europeans sojourning for long periods in India for commercial or professional purposes would have direct representation in the larger Chamber, and indirect representation in the Upper House. The two Houses, in case of difference of opinion, would vote together as a united assembly, and the point at issue would be decided by a majority. The second Chamber should be constituted *pari passu* with the reconstitution of the existing legislature.

The power of the two Houses over legislation and provincial finance should be subject only to the veto of the Governor. But provincial finance and its sources of revenue will have to be carefully

52 PROVINCIAL REORGANISATION

marked out, since the present system whereby the Government of India, or rather the Secretary of State, is the ultimate disposer of these revenues must disappear. At the same time, as a later chapter will show, care must be taken to leave the character of the Government of India sufficiently elastic to provide for ultimate and natural development from a purely British-Indian to a fully South Asiatic federal administration. Once we have the provinces based on nationality, worked out as described, we can well leave them a full measure of self-government for their internal affairs, such as applies to the greater Native States, for example, Hyderabad or Mysore. There would be little for the central Government to interfere with, and that little would be statutorily restricted as time went on.

An objection to be met is that since separate representation may strengthen centrifugal tendencies it is inconsistent with the general language and race bases of provincial readjustment. The answer is that we must legislate to meet actual rather than ideal conditions. The various religions, communities, castes, et cetera, within each great province have very much in common, something national in effort and aspiration, that will meet the difficulty of separate communal representation in practical working and in time. On the other hand, the smaller communities by being assured from the first of their voice in affairs will feel growing confidence in the autonomous system, and the self-respect and self-confidence so necessary to the backward classes in India will steadily grow. There will be awakened in them an enthusiasm for great public interests that

now lies dormant, and an increasing fellow-feeling with the leading communities.

A few years' experience of this system would go far to satisfy the crying needs of India. The diversified problems of education, sanitation, public works, commerce and industry would be solved by each State in a natural, healthy way. Each would develop itself sufficiently to become an independent and worthy member of the great South Asiatic Federation destined to take its place by the side of the other dominions within the Empire of the King.