

# THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

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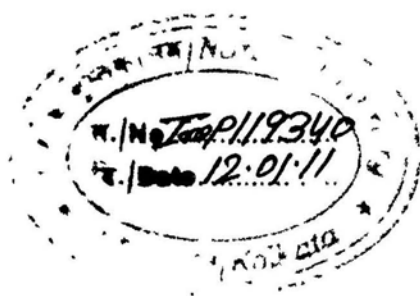
# THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

BY  
DEWITT MACKENZIE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

PEOPLE often hesitate about going to India, not so much because of the distance, but because of the amount there is to see and do when they get there. They think it hardly worth while to make a short visit, while they have not the time to spare for a long stay. But there is no country to which a short visit is better worth making. I have frequently told my doubting friends that if they can spend only a week in the country it is better to give India even that little time rather than go through life without ever seeing India at all.

You will not understand India if you have spent only a week there. You will not completely understand it if you have lived there a life-time. There are very few Indians themselves who really understand India. But if you have once *seen* it, if, from looking at it out of the window of your railway carriage, you have realised its vast extent, its teeming life, the extraordinary variety of its people, its natural

features, its vegetation and its climate ; if with your own eyes you have seen the dignified and gorgeously-apparelled Raja, the equally dignified cultivator with scarcely any apparel at all, the intellectual Bengalis, the bearded virile Sikhs, the noble Rajputs, the fierce tribesmen of the Afghan frontier and the primitive aborigines of Central India ; if you have ever seen the flat, unbroken Gangetic plain and the towering Himalaya ; the deserts of the Punjab and the tropical vegetation of Bombay, Bengal, and Southern India ; and if you have personally experienced the scorching heat of the plains and the freezing cold of the mountains ; then India ever afterwards will have real meaning for you, you will understand something of its place in the world, you will appreciate the complexity of its social and political problems, and you will be interested in watching its progress. India will be to you a vivid reality. I always therefore advise people to go to India, even if only for a week.

Mr. Mackenzie had fortunately more than a week to spare. He had a few months. He had what was better than time, that is, opportunities. for seeing most of the leading men in India, both British and Indian. And from a perusal of his book I should say that he made ample use of those opportunities. Moreover, he visited India at a particularly interesting moment. All

countries are changing now. Even before the war India had been rapidly changing—so rapidly indeed that men who had left the country for four or five years were told they knew nothing about it, though they might have spent a quarter of a century there. The population had been increasing—rising by 28,000,000 in the last decennial period; the revenue had risen in a quarter of a century from £55,000,000 to £83,000,000 sterling, the railways from 15,245 to 33,599 miles; the number of passengers carried from 111,000,000 to 437,000,000, the freight tonnage from 22,250,000 to 87,000,000; the area actually under irrigation by canals from 11,000,000 to 17,000,000 acres, the number of cotton mills (which are chiefly in Indian hands) from 125 to 258, of jute mills from 26 to 59, and the production of coal from a little over 2,000,000 to 12,750,000 tons. In the same period the exports had risen from 60,000,000 sterling to £166,000,000 and imports from £43,500,000 to £127,000,000. There had been an increase of wealth, and this wealth had been generally diffused in consequence of an increase in the value of agricultural produce and in wages—an increase greater than the increase in the cost of living. And besides this material progress, there had been no less striking intellectual progress. The number of pupils had risen from 3,250,000 to over 7,000,000 and of university

students from 13,000 to over 40,000, and the expenditure on education from £1,750,000 to £5,250,000 sterling.

This increase of material prosperity and the wider diffusion of education had profoundly affected India.\* The very prosperity had produced discontent and unrest, some harmful but mostly healthy. New life was stirring in India. Indians were becoming more fitted for and had gradually been given a larger share in the Government of their country. The number of elected and non-official members of the municipalities was constantly increasing as well as the importance of the work these bodies had undertaken, such as initiating and executing schemes of water supply and drainage, while districts and local boards in rural areas took care of roads, primary education, water-supply, sanitation, medical help and markets, and in some parts even developed light railways. But it was in the higher councils—in the Imperial Legislative Council presided over by the Viceroy and in the Provincial Legislative Councils presided over by the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors—that Indian participation in the Government of their country had made most notable progress. The Councils had been enlarged, the elective principle had been recognised and freely applied, and the right of introducing resolutions developed so as to enable members to bring the administration under

effective criticism. Indian members had also been appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State for India in London and to the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and Governors in India.

All these changes had been made during the quarter of a century before the war, and the rate of change was being steadily accelerated. There was not only change, but the rate of change was quickening. It was into this stirring India that the war came, and the rate of change has necessarily been still further quickened. Especially valuable, therefore, must be information of what India is to-day—now during the war. The present was a propitious moment for Mr. Mackenzie's visit.

It is well too for India that America should be interested in her. For Indians have great regard and respect for Americans, and certainly those Americans I have met both in India and America have a particular sympathy with India. And India must have a wonderful future before her. I have shown how it was opening out before the war. But the war itself is a stimulus such as she has never had before. It has forced her out into the world. Her soldiers have fought in France, in Turkey, in Arabia, in China, in East and West Africa. She has made this war her war. Her princes and peasants alike have taken their share. And her representatives have been summoned to take part in the deliberations

of the Imperial War Conference at the centre of the Empire. Furthermore this Conference recommended that steps should be taken to enable India to be represented at future sittings with the same right of speech and vote as is accorded to the representatives of the Governments of the Mother Country and the Overseas Dominions. India will also be represented at the annual session of the Imperial Cabinet by a nominee of the Government of India as well as by the Secretary of State for India, and this nominee, except under peculiar circumstances, would be an Indian. As Mr. Chamberlain remarked in the House of Commons, these decisions mark an immense advance in the position of India in the Empire, for they admit the Government of India to full partnership in the Councils of the Empire with the other Governments represented at them. It is a great stride forward to Indian political development.

And the war has had this result also—that it has forced India diligently and earnestly to search for all that she can possibly bring forth in the way of food supply, raw material, and manufactured articles. Hard necessity has compelled her to find out what she can by any manner of means produce, not only for her own needs, but to supply her armies and British armies in many fields of warfare. Some things—the higher types of machinery, for instance—she must get from

Great Britain. Some things—wheat and jute and cotton, for example—Great Britain must in great part get from her. But war has made her strive to be as little dependent as possible upon outside supplies and to produce in fullest abundance all that her soil and climate enable her to produce with ease. Consequently she has had to take severe stock of her resources and to bend her intellect and her energy to the purpose of developing them to their utmost and increasing production to its maximum.

The impetus given by the war will be continued after its close. Both India itself and the Empire at large will need all the wheat, the cotton, the jute, the oil-seeds, the palm-oil, the tea, the coffee, the sugar and the coal and iron that India can produce. Much she already does towards introducing better plants (more productive types of wheat and cotton, for example), improved agricultural implements, better fertilisers, better methods of cultivation. Efforts in this direction will be redoubled. Railways will be extended, both main lines and feeder lines. Other great irrigation works, like those Mr. Mackenzie has described, will be undertaken. In every direction the material condition of India is sure to improve.

But the future of India will lie not only or chiefly in material progress. Political and material progress should and will but lead up

to spiritual progress. The spiritual progress should be the flower and fruit of the whole process—and the seed, too, for still further progress. There are signs of promise here also. Of the beautiful spiritual fruit of India the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore is an exquisite example, full and sweet and with a rich kernel which gives hopeful promise of perhaps yet more favoured products in the future.

Of this side of India Mr. Mackenzie has also been able to see something. And fortunate it is for us of the English-speaking race that we can enjoy the products of Indian spiritual development through their having been given forth in our own language. Fortunate also for Indians is it that their second language is one which will carry them not only over India (as none of their own languages will), but over all the world, reaching the 100,000,000 Americans as well as the whole British Empire and those of other nations who have been attracted by our literature or by business or social interests to learn our language.

FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.



## PREFACE

DURING a recent extensive tour of India in pursuit of my duties as an American newspaperman, I was accorded a large number of interviews by eminent authorities, on important subjects relating to the Indian Empire. At that time it had not occurred to me to make use of these statements in any other way than originally intended, namely, to tell the people of the United States through the press something of present conditions in India. Upon my return to England, however, it was urged upon me that these interviews should be collected into book form, especially in view of the great change wrought in India by the war. Accordingly I have prepared this volume, selecting such interviews as appear best to show the general situation, and adding to them certain facts collected during my visit. Controversial subjects necessarily have been dealt with, but I wish to state emphatically

that the book is intended in no way as a criticism of the Government of India or of the Princes and people of the Indian Empire.

DEWITT MACKENZIE.

LONDON,

May 31, 1917.

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# THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

## CHAPTER I

### THE AWAKENING

INDIA to-day is entering upon a new era—an era which bids fair to be marked by progress greater than has ever before been recorded in the pages of that country's history. She has been touched by the magic wand, and at last has been aroused from the lethargy which for so long has acted as a damper to advancement.

The transformation has been sudden, startling in its abruptness, and the line of demarcation between the old life and the new is clearly defined: it may be set in the early days of August 1914, when the great World War had its beginning. For this universal conflagration has stirred India as she has not been stirred in half a century, and, by awakening her to a knowledge of herself, has moved her to a strong desire for better things.

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Up to the beginning of the war, India, as a whole, had been following the well-beaten track of tradition. She had been advancing, to be sure, under the guidance of the British Government, and in many respects had made strides which for her were remarkable, but, measured by Western standards, her progress had been slow, due largely to her own lack of initiative and an unresponsiveness that was the outgrowth of ignorance. She was, so to speak, an empire bound up in herself, knowing little of the outside world, and having small disposition to change her mode of life.

This did not apply to all India, of course, for there were many of the more advanced Indians who, having become tutored in the ways of the West, had read the signs of the times and were trying to lead their fellow-countrymen on to the broad highway of progress. But these pioneers were few in number as compared with India's vast population of some 315,000,000. The great majority of the people, being either totally illiterate or having but a narrow perspective of world affairs, declined to be led.

At the outbreak of the war the King-Emperor called on India for assistance in the life-struggle against Prussian Militarism, and for the first time the people of Hindustan were brought to a realisation of their relation to the rest of the Empire. They responded loyally to the call,

and with that response came a quickening of the impulses to rise to the level of their new-found dignity. They were comrades in arms with their brothers from across the seas; and should it be said that India was a weak link in the chain which formed the British Empire?

Furthermore, a new world was thrown open to India by the war. She had forced home upon her the importance and the power of the great nations which were engaged upon the battlefield. They had, literally speaking, meant little to her before. She was aware, in a vague sort of way, that these countries existed, but her knowledge of them was meagre. Now, however, she began to realise their strength, and learned that this strength was the outgrowth of Western education and ideals.

Then, too, as time went on she found herself shut off from many necessities which had been imported before the war. She had never given much consideration to her source of supply, being satisfied to know that what she wanted was forthcoming, and accepting it as manna from above. She looked about to find why she should be affected by the curtailment of shipping, and found that she had virtually no industries. Raw materials she had in great quantities, but no means of turning them into the finished product.

India saw now that she was sadly lacking in

comparison with other great countries, and her pride was touched, her ambitions were aroused. So she set about to right her faults, and the Government of India, quick to recognise and take advantage of this changed spirit, accelerated its own pace in order to satisfy the new-found ideals. One of the first steps inaugurated by the Government was the appointment of a commission of experts to make an exhaustive study of the ways and means of putting India on her feet industrially.

Another important result of the war has been to urge India on the road to nationalism. India at present cannot be considered as a nation, but rather as an agglomeration of many races, castes, and creeds, who tolerate one another, but who have little in common. So-called Native India is, of course, divided into many more or less independent states which are governed by the Princes and Chiefs. And British India, although controlled by the Government of India, does not differ greatly from Native India, so far as a spirit of co-operation between the peoples of the various sections goes.

The war, however, furnished a common cause for which all could work, irrespective of racial distinctions or beliefs. The people of British India laid aside their differences for the moment to engage in this imperial work, and as to Native India, for the first time in history the world saw



in November of 1916 some forty powerful ruling Princes and Chiefs meeting in Delhi for a conference to consider questions of general importance relating to their states—Princes and Chiefs who scarcely had dreamed before this that they could discuss their affairs with other rulers.

Thus the war has given the cause of nationalism in India a decided fillip. It would be too much to expect an immediate attainment of the goal, or anything near it, but a great stride has been made, and the progress in the future will be faster than in the past.

It is but natural that the aspirations of India should reach out first to those two important questions in the life of any country, the political and the industrial. One of the earliest to note the change in the spirit of India and to grasp its significance was Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, who assumed office early in 1916. It was my privilege to interview His Excellency in October of that year on this subject. Discussing the changing political conditions in India and the fact that certain Indian politicians were advocating that still more of the affairs of government be turned over to them, Lord Chelmsford said :

“No doubt at the present moment political problems are attracting the greatest attention both in and out of India, but none the less it is a mistake to suppose that these are new problems

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which have recently come up, or even different problems from those on which we have worked in the past.

“The political development of India has always commanded our anxious attention and has always been progressive. British statesmen have always conceived in a generous spirit their responsibilities to India and the Indians. Perhaps the rate of definite political progress has been slow, but constitutional development can hardly be other than slow, and I have little doubt that, whatever the future of the Indian policy may be, the Indian historians of its later growth will ascribe no blame to the power which has, with due deliberation, guided their country through the early and difficult ways of political development.

“But the war, affording India an opportunity of displaying in the most dramatic fashion its practical importance to the Empire, has accelerated the pace. It has stirred Indian aspirations, and the new partnership on the battlefield has quickened the sympathy of the whole Empire with those aspirations.”

The Viceroy leaned forward and continued with still greater earnestness :

“It will be my task to endeavour to secure a practical response to these quickened impulses, guarding India, on the one hand, against the cramping influences of undue conservatism, and,

on the other, against unpractical and revolutionary tendencies. I need hardly say how deep and sympathetic an interest I take in this task, since I realise that the problem which now confronts the British Government is one of the most difficult problems that ever confronted any Empire, and it is at the same time a problem by the right and just solution of which the British Empire will be finally judged."

I asked Lord Chelmsford if the signs of the times did not point to the beginning of a new industrial era in India, and whether the extension and development of industries would not have a stabilising influence that would directly affect the political situation.

"Yes, I believe that is true," he replied. "Large as the political issues loom at present, I shall not, for my part, be surprised if the economic development of India shortly brings other questions into even greater prominence. I hope the expansion of Indian industries will reduce the heat of political controversies and carry the more active minds of the country into more vital channels of progress. India now requires a forward industrial policy. We have just appointed a commission, composed of Indian and British experts, to investigate every phase of the industrial possibilities. This commission is about to enter upon its labours, and I look to it to furnish definite proposals which will go a

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long way towards solving many existing difficulties."

In considering the possibilities of advancement in India, this fact must not be forgotten: she still has a long way to climb on the ladder before she approaches the level of the other great nations of the world. Many parts of the country are still in a state of deepest ignorance, and it will be a lengthy process to educate them to the standards of the enlightened sections. But India is on the move, and she will progress faster from now on than she has ever done before.

## CHAPTER II

### A WORD OF EXPLANATION

For the average person of the West, the mention of India undoubtedly raises an altogether vague picture of that country, its people, and its government. India has existed in another world, a land shrouded in darkness and mystery. And so the full import of her awakening may not immediately be apparent.

Now the significance of the arousal lies in this : India, a land tremendously rich in natural resources, contains within her borders one-fifth of the population of the entire earth, a people who, though ignorant, have a mental capacity for almost limitless advancement.

The area of India, 1,802,657 square miles, and its population of more than 315,000,000, are almost as great as those of all Europe, Russia excluded. Or, to put it another way, there are as many people in India as there are in the United States, with the rest of North America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Austria-Hungary thrown in.

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Of the two main divisions of the Empire, British India and the semi-independent Native States, the former is much the larger, having an area of 1,093,074 square miles and a population of about 244,000,000. The Native States contain a little more than 700,000 square miles, and their population is approximately 71,000,000. Nearly three-quarters of the people of the Empire are dependent upon agriculture for existence.

India's claims to nationalism are few. Not only are the people divided by the multiplicity of governments among the Native States, but also by race, religion, and caste. Incredible though it seems, there are 220 languages in use in India. Hindi, which is the leading tongue, is spoken by only about 25 per cent. of the people, and they are widely scattered through the Empire.

Among the religions, Hinduism predominates, there being 217,500,000 followers of this faith. Next comes Mohammedanism, with 66,000,000 adherents. These are the two principal religions. There are also some 11,000,000 Buddhists, 10,225,000 Animists, 4,000,000 Christians, 3,000,000 Sikhs, 1,250,000 Jains, and 100,000 Parsees.

Caste governs the whole social structure of the Empire. Caste may be defined roughly as a collection of families or groups of families which pursue the same calling in life, and there are as many castes as there are occupations. A wide

guilt or intolerance has in the past separated the various castes. Each has looked with contempt upon all those in the ranks below, and an inflexible law has prevented anyone from leaving the caste in which he was born, intermarriage thus being barred. Many observers claim, however, that of late a growing tendency towards tolerance between some of the castes has been noticeable.

The government of a people divided into so many factions naturally presents many delicate situations, and it is moreover rendered complex, as a whole, because of the great diversity of rule exercised by the Indian Princes and Chiefs in their states. The Crown controls the Indian Empire through the Secretary of State for India, who is a member of the British Cabinet, and through the body known as the Government of India, which has at its head the Governor-General, better known as the Viceroy. The Secretary of State presides in London over a council, of between ten and fourteen members, which has control of Indian expenditure, and in general looks after the business done in England by the Indian Government. For several years two members of the Council have been Indians.

The supreme authority in India, executive and legislative, lies with the Governor-General in Council. The Governor-General has in his council six ordinary members, all of whom are

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appointed by the Crown for a period of five years, as is the Viceroy himself. In addition there is one so-called extraordinary member, the commander-in-chief of the army in India. This council is similar to the cabinets of other countries, and the Viceroy may overrule the decisions of his ministers in cases of emergency. One member of the present council is an Indian, the rest being British.

The Viceroy's Council is supplemented by an Imperial Council for the enactment of legislation. In this body are sixty-eight members, of whom thirty-six are nominated by the Viceroy and thirty-two are elected by Indian and commercial interests.

For purposes of administration, British India is divided into provinces and presidencies. There are three presidencies, Madras, Bombay, and Bengal, each of which is ruled by a governor appointed by the Crown, with legislative and executive councils like those of the Viceroy. The Punjab, Burma, the Province of Bihar and Orissa, and the United Provinces are each governed by a lieutenant-governor who is named by the Viceroy with the approval of the Crown. These provinces also have legislative councils. Chief Commissioners, appointed by the Viceroy in Council, preside over still another class of provinces, and there are some smaller tracts which are under the direct administration of the Viceroy.



Each presidency and province is subdivided into districts which are the units of administration, and are usually under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner.

The staff of administration for the Government consists of Civil Service employees, most of the higher posts being under the so-called Covenanted Civil Service. Appointments to the Covenanted Civil Service are made from applicants who have passed competitive examinations which must be held in England. This branch of the Civil Service is made up largely of Europeans.

There are more than 700 Native States, all under some degree of control by the British Government, through the Government of India, the nature of the supervision varying with different states. A British political resident in the states, who acts in an advisory capacity to the Princes and Chiefs, is the medium through which the supreme government exerts most of its direction. Some of the states pay tribute to the Government of India, although this is not true in all cases. Broadly speaking, the Princes are allowed to manage their internal affairs without interference, but all external relations are dealt with by the supreme government. So far as the internal governments of the states go, there is no uniformity among them, each ruler pursuing his own ideas. The Princes have

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no voice in the Government of India excepting in an advisory way. Many of the states have large areas and populations, and the rulers in a great number of cases are fabulously rich.

Those Indians who are advocating a greater degree of self-government for British India claim to find grievances in the complexion of the Viceroy's two councils and in the regulations governing the Covenanted Civil Service. They want more representatives on the Viceroy's Executive Council, and, more important, demand a majority in the Imperial Legislative Council, declaring that the appointed majority now renders the elected minority helpless except to voice an opinion. As to the Covenanted Civil Service, it is asserted that the rule providing for the holding of examinations in England effectively bars the average Indian from participating, and thereby leaves the positions open mainly to Europeans.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL TASK

No more important and at the same time difficult task faces British India to-day than that involved in the education of its huge population.

Something of the magnitude of the educational problem set for the Government—a problem in which are largely bound up the future hopes of the country for self-government and progress along other lines—may be seen from the statement that 94 per cent. of the people are illiterate. Further, many millions are literally primitive folk who are treading the same paths that their ancestors trod centuries ago, and who not only have no desire for learning themselves, but in many cases regard with suspicion the introduction of schools into their communities. Incongruous as it may seem, British India ranks fairly well among the nations in higher education—so far at least as quantity is concerned—while in the matter of elementary training upon which the enlightenment of the masses depends, it is exceedingly backward.

One finds many conflicting opinions as to

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how this great problem should be attacked. The story of the manner in which it is being approached and of the obstacles in the way of rapid advancement was told to me by the man who is reputed to have a more intimate knowledge of the Indian educational question than any other person in the country. He is Mr. H. Sharp, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, who has spent years of study on the subject. Mr. Sharp spoke, not as an official of the Government, but in his private capacity, expressing his personal views. At the outset he referred briefly to the general condition of education in British India.

"Higher education is now well advanced—at least in quantity," he said. "Out of a total of 7,500,000 under instruction, just over 1,000,000 pupils are in colleges or secondary schools. These 1,000,000 pupils comprise 0·5 per cent. of the total population of British India. When we consider that the education of girls is almost non-existent, and that this figure must therefore be calculated against something rather larger than half the population, we then see that, as regards so-called higher education, India can hold her own amongst many of the civilised countries. Of course the secondary schools contain many pupils who are really in elementary stages. But that is the case in some other countries too.

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“Elementary education, that is, the education of the masses as apart from the middle class, is very backward. So are the various forms of vocational education, especially industrial and commercial.

“But the chief thing is that, as I have said, the education of girls is practically non-existent. The female population in British India is nearly 119,000,000. But not much more than 1,000,000 girls are under instruction.

“The slow progress of mass education and the difficulties in the way of getting girls to school naturally make the total figures look very small. Of the male population, 5·1 per cent. are under instruction; of the female, 1 per cent.; of both together, 3·1 per cent. It is only in the higher education of boys that our figures will stand comparison with European countries, with America and with Japan.”

The Commissioner was asked what the difficulties were which were holding back mass education.

“There are four main retarding causes which arise from the circumstances of this country,” he replied. “First, there are many parts of the country where there is no tradition of education at all, save among certain restricted castes or classes. To realise the importance of this, it is necessary to remember that, especially outside the large cities, India is highly conservative.

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Village life goes on apparently much as it did centuries ago.

“Second, India is essentially an agricultural country. This largely accounts for the conservative character of the people. Moreover, many of them do not see the value of education, and they prefer to put their children early to work.

“Third, there is the caste system. Millions of the population are regarded as doomed to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Often the children of the untouchable castes, if allowed to come to school at all, are not allowed to sit near those more fortunately born. Till recently, it was regarded as almost an impious act for a member of a low caste to attain learning. Doubtless there are many who still so regard it, though in other quarters opinion has recently been liberalised. Some people say that the caste system is breaking up. It is still very deep-rooted. Its rules are doubtless loosening in some directions ; but they are also tightening in others.

“The vital importance of the fourth reason is often not realised. It is the reaction exercised on the male population and its educational ideals by the female population which is to all intents and purposes utterly illiterate—only 1 per cent. of it can read and write. When half the population grows up practically illiterate, the incentive to education in the other half must be

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sensibly lowered ; and, when home education is a thing almost unknown, the figures of literacy are affected, and education does not bulk as a customary and natural adjunct of life.

“ Of course these causes do not operate to an equal degree in all parts of India. There are partial exceptions which prove the rule. In Burma there is a tradition of education through the monastic schools, there is no caste and there is no purda (under the purda system, which prevails among the upper classes throughout India, a woman can be seen unveiled by no man outside the members of her own family). Consequently, in that province, the percentage of literates in the male population is more than three times what it is in India as a whole. In the extreme south of India, too, the percentage of literacy is comparatively high ; there is a tradition of learning, and there is a strong Indian Christian community, in which caste and the purda are unknown. Bengal, Madras as a whole, and Bombay come next ; these provinces possess a comparatively long record of British rule, sea-boards, marketable crops, some industries and some traditions of learning. It is in the land-locked and highly agricultural provinces of upper India that things are most backward.

“ There is a fifth cause, which is of a different kind. India is a poor country, though she is growing richer. The revenue is small for the

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size of the country and the population. Much has to be met from it, such as communications, which are still defective in some parts of the country. More money is wanted. The present lack of it affects all kinds of education. Higher education partly pays for itself, through fees; but the quality needs improving. Elementary education falls mainly on provincial funds and the rates; the latter are not easily expansible."

In answer to a question as to whether, if more money were available, elementary education could be made universal on a voluntary basis, Mr. Sharp replied:

"I think that much can be done through the voluntary system; but that would be largely due to the gradual operation of other causes beside the application of funds. At the beginning of the present century, Lord Curzon devoted imperial funds to education. Again, between 1911 and 1915, imperial grants were allotted to education—over and above the amounts previously expended from provincial funds—amounting to some 48,400,000 rupees<sup>1</sup> non-recurring and 12,400,000 rupees recurring. A good deal of this went to elementary education. It has undoubtedly given it a stimulus.

"Since 1901-2, direct expenditure from all sources on primary schools has risen by 125 per

<sup>1</sup> An Indian rupee is equal to one shilling, four pence, English, or thirty-two cents, American.



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cent.' and the number of pupils by 70 per cent. This does not include those who are receiving elementary education in secondary schools, and it also ignores the fact that some expenditure and some pupils of Native States are included in the figures of 1901-2, but not in those of 1914-5.

"Of course part of this money has had to be spent on increasing the pay of teachers, which was deplorably low. Had this not been the case, it would have been possible to open more new schools and to show a larger increase. Nevertheless, it is not always found, in individual districts, that an increase in the number of schools is necessarily accompanied by an increase of pupils. Sometimes the reverse happens. There are some districts where the number of schools gives an average distribution of one for less than two square miles. Yet not nearly all the boys who could come get themselves enrolled.

"I remember the time when schools were most unpopular in many rural areas, and a certain amount of mild compulsion had to be locally enforced to keep the school open at all. Even in recent years I have seen new schools erected and drawing only half-a-dozen boys, when there were forty or fifty who lived within a half mile, could easily have come so far as distance was concerned, and would have had to pay no fees at all. But things are improving.

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People are coming more and more to see that there is some utility in reading and writing."

I raised the much-debated question of whether resort should be had to compulsory education.

"The country is not yet ready for compulsion," replied Mr. Sharp. "You must, in a vast country like India and so conditioned, have mass education on a fairly solid basis before compulsion steps in to fill the gaps. At present compulsion would not be filling the gaps, but creating the fabric. That would be likely to raise great discontent. A progressive ruler in a Native State, who has done much to advance education in his state, gave his opinion as follows :

"Make primary education as free as you choose, add as many further inducements as you can, but do not make it compulsory. In the case of the most advanced classes, it is absolutely unnecessary and would serve only to create irritation. In the case of the poor backward classes it would inflict harm where good was meant, would subject them to great harassment; would be positively cruel and unjust, and would be deeply though silently resented as such."

Asked as to whether education could not be made compulsory in more advanced areas and this measure of compulsion gradually applied to others, the Commissioner said that this was probably what would happen.

"Already the Gaekwar of Baroda has made

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education compulsory in his state and an experiment is being made in the state of Mysore," he continued. "In Baroda and the surrounding British territories the people are naturally rather appreciative of education. The number of those under elementary education in Baroda has risen greatly since compulsion was introduced, and stands now at 12 per cent. of the population. So far as one can judge, the results have been altogether satisfactory. But there would be some difficulty in applying to British India a similar measure, such as was proposed in the Imperial Legislative Council by the late Mr. Gokhale, the well-known Indian reformer. The population of Baroda is something over 2,000,000, which is not greater than that which will be found in some British districts. Indeed, one British district occurs to my mind, which has more than double the number of inhabitants found in Baroda.

"It is possible to introduce a measure over a limited area. But two conditions are necessary. First, the circumstances of the area must be promising for the success of the experiment. Second, the introduction of the measure, however ultimately beneficial, must not lead to its premature introduction elsewhere.

"There are parts of British India where the circumstances are just as promising as in Baroda, but these are not many. The second condition

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is not fulfilled in British India. The administration is largely homogeneous throughout, and the introduction of a measure in one place would inevitably be followed by imitation in places not yet ripe for it. Then we should have the harassment and resentment feared by the Maharaja. Or, if this could be avoided the result would be unjust. For we should have compulsion introduced into the more forward and wealthier parts of a province at a cost which would certainly be great, and would have to be largely paid for by the less advanced and poorer parts which were not deemed yet ready to participate in the privilege. Here, again, Baroda is fortunate in being a small isolated area, self-contained and comparatively wealthy.

“The local rates could not pay for education. Even now, primary education, through the care of the Local and Municipal Boards, receives large subvention from the produce of general taxation. Mr. Gokhale did not think that local funds could contribute more than one-third of the increased cost involved in compulsion. He proposed to raise the rest through indirect taxation. It was noticeable, too, among the numerous opinions received on his Bill, that many local bodies, while expressing a general desire for compulsion, evinced no desire to be saddled with any of the cost of it; and some, perhaps with this possibility in mind, intimated

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that compulsion would be very beneficial everywhere else, but not just in their district.

“Mr. Gokhale said that compulsion would cost 45,000,000 rupees a year for boys. But his estimate was optimistic. It regarded only direct expenditure, making no allowances for training, inspection, etc. Nor did it allow for the necessary increase in the pay of teachers. This second element makes any real estimate out of the question. Most of our teachers, even with recent improvements, are very poorly paid, and not half of them are trained. It is difficult to get teachers at all—far more, suitable teachers. Any very large expansion must be preceded by an immense development of training facilities and accompanied by increase of pay and prospects. Otherwise the teachers will not be forthcoming.”

Mr. Sharp said that the ultimate solution of the problem inevitably would be compulsion, but probably in the distant future.

“When the country as a whole is more ready for compulsion than it is now,” he continued, “we shall have a limited application of the principle in selected areas which, in the conditions then obtaining, will be able to spread rapidly, and without ill effects to counterbalance its benefits, into other areas. How long? There might be compulsion in some municipal areas fairly soon. Their administration and conditions differ from rural areas, and they might be

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treated separately. But the rural areas present a very different problem, and I would rather not prophesy. We have to remember that forty years ago the total number of pupils in both public and private institutions in India was only 1,750,000. Now it is 7,500,000."

The Commissioner turned to the defects of the educational system as it stands.

"It looks top-heavy," he said. "This is partly due to the slow expansion of mass as compared with higher education, and partly to the fact that many boys pursue the high-school and university course who would be better in technical, industrial, and commercial schools. The percentage of those who are in secondary and collegiate institutions is 0.47 per cent. of the total population, and 3.15 per cent. of the school population. But if we take the male population alone, the figures are 0.92 and 6.2. In the United States 1.5 per cent. of the total population is in high schools and colleges.

"A few years ago, I found that, out of the school population of the two countries, the proportion of those in India who were studying university courses was seven times the proportion in Japan, that of those in high schools eight times, and that of those in middle schools nearly three times; on the other hand, the proportion of those in Japan who are studying in normal schools was double the proportion in India, that

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of those in special schools four times, and that in technical schools twenty times.

"There are two reasons for the narrowness in higher education. First, the country is not industrially developed; if such development comes, industrial education will at once become popular. Second, boys follow the type of education which promises a safe career. I have had great difficulty sometimes in employing youths who have had industrial training abroad; and I can remember one or two cases of men who had received an agricultural education at Cirencester and who afterwards had to be put into ordinary civil employ—that is, on the strength of their general, not of their special, education. I believe one of these rose to be a judge."

Mr. Sharp stated that the number of graduates of arts being produced was not greater than the country required, and continued

"There may be large production and lack of employment in certain areas, but that is not generally the case. The trouble is that many embark upon a college career and can't carry it through. As other walks of life become easier than those of government service and the learned professions, such boys will probably enter special institutions, will do better there and will certainly get a better chance in life. At present it is not easy to employ them."

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The Commissioner's attention was called to the statement, often heard, that there is a great deal of cramming and unintelligent instruction in Indian schools.

"Unfortunately that is true," he said, "but not nearly to the same extent in different localities. The chief cause is poor teaching. Most of the higher institutions are managed by private bodies; for example, 80 per cent. of the high schools are so managed. The terms of service for the teachers are unattractive and often the managers pick up anyone they can—perhaps a man who looks on the job merely as a pot-boiler while he studies for the Bar. In these privately-managed high schools, out of a total of 14,904 teachers of English and classical languages, 11,649 are untrained. In these circumstances not much real teaching can be expected, and of course the boys have to cram.

"I once went into a school and looked at the books of the pupils. They none of them possessed the book they were supposed to be studying, but all were learning from the 'Key'—an expensive and worthless production full of elementary blunders. I then found that the teacher was also teaching out of the key and, like his pupils, had never seen the book and never intended to see it. Interference or remonstrance in such matters is often misunderstood and resented.



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"A second cause is the tyranny of examinations. Owing to the unwieldy number of examinees, the matriculations have to be worked out through rather a mechanical system of marking. The standard to be obtained for a pass is very low compared with other countries. Even so, many fail—50 per cent. School-leaving certificates have been introduced to some extent, and have had good effects. But they are popularly decried as a means invented to restrict higher education; really they are disliked because they demand some proper teaching in the schools, and the result partly depends on how a boy goes through his school career; so, in a way, they constitute a more searching test.

"A third cause is the paucity of professors in many of the colleges. The proportion of students to professors is far higher than in most countries. Hence tutorial work, in the true sense of the term, is generally lacking, and reliance is placed upon lectures which the students are sometimes not in a position to understand.

"Now let me tell you something about the curricula. There has been great improvement in recent years, especially in the university curricula. Personally I should like to see a closer correlation in the subjects which can be combined and a closer approximation in regular schools of study. The chief defect is in English.

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"Sufficient distinction is not drawn between English as a language and English literature. A good deal of poetry is set which the boys have difficulty in understanding. Hence time is wasted in explaining and paraphrasing passages into the spirit of which it is difficult for the boys to enter. This is less the case with epic and dramatic works, which are often appreciated, than with idyllic poetry. Take even a very simple piece. The other day I saw a paraphrase made by a candidate at the matriculation of Kingsley's 'Three Fishers.' The candidate explained the line 'though the harbour bar be moaning' by 'although the obstruction at the mouth of the harbour be emitting no sound.' This signifies complete want of appreciation.

"Sometimes, too, the prose books are old-fashioned in language and allusive. More straightforward modern English is required. Of course it should be possible for a boy to take a school of English literature if he wishes. But he should not be compelled.

"The teaching of science has much improved. Practical work is insisted upon. There are many very fine laboratories in India. A good many students take one or more science subjects.

"The curricula in the primary schools are often abused as unpractical, as thin, or again as overloaded. I do not think these strictures are altogether justified. Considering the short

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time which most boys spend in a rural school, not much can be attempted—the three R's, a little elementary geography, and possibly some nature study. Manuscript reading, simple account keeping, the land record papers, and the elements of the law of landlord and tenant are taught in some provinces ; and I have no hesitation in saying that such subjects are of real value and are appreciated. Nature study is linked up with the simple principles of agriculture.

“ It is poor teaching rather than the curriculum which is generally to blame for short-comings in elementary education. Too often subjects are taught as if they had no relation with reality. A friend of mine who was inspecting a village school, asked the teacher whether he taught that the sun went round the earth or the earth round the sun. He said he taught the latter doctrine, but, when pressed as to his convictions, asserted that he nevertheless believed the former. This unreality extends also to higher education. There is a tendency to look upon an examination subject as a sort of hurdle, freakishly set up as an obstacle in the race for employment, and not as a thing useful and interesting in itself. Of course one sees this in other countries too. But it is particularly marked in India, probably because the tradition of good teaching is not yet sufficiently established.”

The Commissioner was asked what the effect

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of elementary teaching, so far as it had advanced, had been upon the masses.

"The duration of school life is often not sufficient to allow a permanent impression to remain," he replied. "Much is forgotten—again a phenomenon by no means peculiar to India. But a boy who will stay at school for four or five years will at least retain the faculty of reading, writing, and simple computations. At the time he leaves school he will know a lot more. But there is very little stimulus in the village, and the women folk are generally quite uneducated; so, much of this fades away.

"The effect of higher education has been better than is usually allowed. English education has killed some bad customs and has undoubtedly made for a higher general standard. Any thoughtful Indian will tell you that. Many will also tell you that it has unsettled the minds of boys and made them irreligious, disrespectful, and discontented. That too is true, though I think not to anything like the extent often represented. You can't put new wine into old bottles, however skilfully, without courting trouble of some sort. In the present case the bottling is not always skilful. The trouble is sometimes aggravated by the half-baked potions bred of inferior teaching and by the false ideas of importance which some students attach to a cheap degree. But those matters will get

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cured in time. The things chiefly wanted are better teachers, more training, and a regular teaching profession. These things are much more important than curricula and appliances."

"How far is Western education likely to influence the mentality and general outlook of the people?" Mr. Sharp was asked.

"It has already had considerable influence in imposing Western methods of thought and conduct," the Commissioner said. "But of course this is only among small classes, and even there the Indian feeling, so to speak, is very strong. But there are two possibilities; if they arise they will greatly increase the effect of our education. We ought to be on the look-out for them. The first is the possibility of industrial development. The second is the possibility of a wide-spread relaxation of the purda system.

"A large part of the unreality of our education is due to the fact that only one-half of the country is capable of being educated. There is a great gulf fixed between the family on the one hand and the school or the college on the other. There are signs that the purda system is breaking down among certain classes, but these classes are small in numbers and one cannot say what is likely to happen. At present the education of girls is a social rather than an educational problem. One is up against a blank wall of passive resist-

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ance. Until that has broken down very little can be done."

Mr. Sharp repeated in conclusion that the views he had put forward were ~~entirely~~ his own, and did not necessarily represent those of Government.