

laid special emphasis on the growing spirit of nationality in India. The awakening of India to political consciousness to which testimony is being given on all sides resolves itself in the desire that the people should have a share in the administration of the country. It is practically a revolt against the present absolute form of government, though not against English rule, which is indispensable in the present condition of India. The tide of national feeling is subject to certain important limitations. It demands a transfer of power from the present administrators of the country, but to whom? There lies the weakness of our position. If it could be said in a broad and general way to the representatives of the people elected by them regardless of race or creed or class the principle of self-determination would be easy of application. But unfortunately the devolution of power is to be in favour of Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, non-Brahmins, Christians, Europeans, land-holders and indeed a number of other bodies of men, all of whom are clamouring for separate representation. While I am writing this I find the Hindus of the Punjab and the rural population of Madras busy in the assertion of their claims to special representation. That communal representation is based on mutual distrust, that it is subversive of the very essence of responsible government and that it will perpetuate class and sectarian divisions cannot be disputed. That it may produce discord in self-governing institutions and in the end defeat the very object for which they were brought into existence is a contingency which ought not to be ignored. The Indo-British Association is the most formidable opponent of constitutional reform. It has taken non-Brahmans under its protection; it would be no exaggeration

to say it has brought them into existence. The reason is obvious. The very fact that communal representation is favoured by the Association ought to put us on our guard. The newly formed alliance between the political leaders of the Hindus and the Moslems is a matter which should afford gratification to all those interested in the progress of India, but as it was the result of a bargain its stability depends a good deal on the disposition of the parties to continue the bargain. And as to this, the bureaucracy will not be slow in making what capital they can out of it. They have done so before and if they do it again it will be on the same plea—the welfare of the country. Strong efforts have just been made, which were almost successful, to hold the annual Moslem League meeting at some place other than that where the Congress is to meet. The dissolution of the newly formed partnership will undoubtedly afford relief to some ill-disposed persons. The evidence of recent events is certainly in favour of the view that the relations between the two communities are now more amicable than before, but is not much of it due to political wine-pulling, apart from which, our experience tells us, there is a good deal of lee-way to make up in the everyday affairs of life, political, social and material; and not only as regards Hindus and Mahomedans, but as regards others also who will have an active interest in the self-governing institutions of the future.

Another rock we have to steer clear from is the growing tendency that is so much in evidence these days of allowing political animosities to run riot. When people come to think for themselves it is but natural that there should be a difference of opinion; hence a cleavage was

inevitable amongst the leaders of public opinion and there is nothing to complain of in the fact that the younger generation should be more advanced in their views and should desire to move faster than those who are older and more conservative in their ideas. England has been nurtured and has thriven under the party system and the existence of political parties in India is taken as evidence that it is at last awakening from her slumber of ages and has so far assimilated western ideas of Government that the splitting up into groups of the *intelligentia* has followed as a natural sequence. But it should be borne in mind that there are two strictly defined parties already in existence, the one composed of the bureaucracy, fortified with power and prestige and opposed to progress, especially when it affects what they consider are their vested rights, and the other of the nationalists, to use a general term with reference to those who desire to be released from official leading strings and to work out their political salvation. To enable these to cope with reactionaries demands on their part indomitable courage and perseverance, and above all that they should present a solid phalanx and not emasculate themselves with internal jealousies and dissensions and needless bickerings. And if a difference of opinion is unavoidable it need not lead to the exhibition of a spirit of intolerance and of a bitterness of feeling which renders co-operation impossible. But when this descends to abuse and vituperation and misrepresentation and when considerations of age, experience and past services are flouted and ignored and the worst of motives are imputed it makes one apprehensive of the future of India. Political rivalries must be taken into account but not at the expense of what is proper and

decent and conducive to the interests of the country. A wave of extremism has passed over the land and has captured the imagination of the younger generation. A great responsibility rests on the leaders so to carry out their propaganda as to avoid the imparting of a distorted idea of the political condition of India and the means by which salvation can be obtained. The progressive party in Egypt and in Turkey had their day of triumph, but the sequel has been other than what had been anticipated. Extremism, unless kept in check, may sow the seed, especially in untutored and inexperienced minds, of the worst of all diseases; the tendency to look for relief to revolutionary methods, than which no greater disaster can befall a country, as is emphasized by the past history of Europe and the dark deeds which in these days have brought about the downfall of certain countries and degraded them to a position beyond the pale of civilization.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RACIAL PROBLEM.

The authors of the Reforms Report deprecate the discussion of the racial question as calculated to increase the existing bitterness between the English and Indians, and the hope is expressed that in course of time their relations, which are considerably strained at present, will be appreciably improved. But recent events in the Punjab have accentuated the worst features of this problem, and as it involves issues the most momentous in connection with British rule in India and the future welfare of this country, it needs to be faced boldly instead of being quietly ignored. To meet the pressing demand for constitutional reform English statesmen have formulated a scheme whereby Indian Ministers will have certain functions to discharge. Sir Michael O'Dwyer says Europeans will be averse to serving under them, than which there can be no more barefaced assertion of racial prejudice. English officials in the Punjab have been accused of conduct that has aroused universal indignation, but they are members of a nation that has given incontestable evidence of the possession of high ideals by acts of conspicuous self-sacrifice and devotion to the cause of humanity. The disclosures before the Disorders Inquiry Committee demonstrate that racial feeling was largely accountable for the campaign of frightfulness. When an Indian politician goes so far as to express the view that he would like to dispense with the bureaucracy in India,

though he knows that such a step is not desirable in the interests of the country, it only indicates he is so fed up with the racial airs put on by some of this class that he would be glad to be rid of them at any cost. Go where we will the racial question obtrudes itself, and is not altogether a question of colour. At any big railway station will be found a dark Anglo-Indian who, on the strength of an English name and an English garb, treats Indians far removed from himself in colour, in culture and in respectability, with the utmost contumely and this because he fancies he is a member of the ruling race, quietly ignoring the fact that he is paid off in his own coin by one who is a few shades fairer than himself and who again is looked upon as a curiosity by the real European. Much of the alleged disaffection ascribed to Indians would disappear if this racial question could be solved. There are indications that the process of solution will soon commence and credit for this is largely due to Mr. Montagu.

India, before the dawn of history, was convulsed by the operations of race. The Aryans after their migration to this country evolved the caste system in their anxiety for the preservation of their race and culture, and to a large extent they did succeed. And what is the non-Brahman question of South India but the revolt of a large community, stamped with the badge of inferiority, against the domination of a handful of foreigners? The distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan was never lost sight of and racial antagonism is still at work, and is evidenced by the rigidity of the caste system from which even Indian Christians are not free. As we go further north there is noticed an increasing laxity owing to the racial

intermixture, which was unavoidable by reason of the Aryan immigrants being forced to form alliances with the aboriginal inhabitants owing to the paucity of their own women. But as between the English and the bulk of the Indians of Upper India there should be no racial antagonism as they are of the same Aryan stock. The other day in discussing with an American lady the race problem in America, which is accentuated there by the presence of the undesirable Negro, I asked why the Indians from the east were treated differently to the Negro? She replied "are we not members of the same race?" Not long ago, by a judicial decision of one of the American courts the Indians were placed in the category of "white men." And in England also there is an absence of racial feeling which accounts for so many English women marrying Indians, and yet there can be no question of this feeling being most pronounced in India.

That the English when they first came to India were destitute of any racial feeling is evidenced by their having freely fraternised with the indigenous inhabitants. The mixed population bears eloquent testimony to this fact, for it is by no means entirely the outcome of an illicit intercourse. But it is a curious problem that racial feeling is most pronounced in the Eurasian, who by reason of a few drops of European blood in his veins entirely ignores his Indian origin. He treats with contempt those with whom he is most akin, and to speak freely any Indian language is repugnant to him. Lord Bryce writing in "The American Commonwealth" about the growth of race consciousness among the Negroes of the United States draws attention to the "growing sense of race solidarity and a perception that instead of seeking favours from the

whites or trying to cling to their skirts the Negro must go his own way, make his own society, try to stand on his own feet, in the confidence that the more he succeeds in doing this, the more respected he will be. This feeling of race consciousness has in most cases included and now more and more includes the people of mixed blood...that racial consciousness to which I have already referred has been drawing all sections of the African race together, disposing the lighter-coloured, since they can get no nearer to the whites, to identify themselves with the mass of those who belong to their own stock." Just the reverse is the case of the mixed population in India. In spite of slights and affronts the most pointed they cling to the nationality of their English progenitors though these have played but a minor part in bringing them into existence. The advertisement in the newspapers, "none but a pure European need apply" tells its own tale.

It is not that the Eurasian, or Anglo-Indian to give him his new name, has become colour-blind, but he is merely worldly wise. He finds the European as a member of the ruling race dominates over the Indian, who is delegated to a position so inferior as not to permit any mutual intercourse, and he imagines it is his prerogative to act in a similar manner. The racial question then resolves itself finally not into one of colour but to the relations that exist between the ruling race and a subject race, or as it is sometimes put a conquering and a conquered race. But was India really conquered by the English? We look in vain for any battles by which this result was achieved. The merchant adventurers who came out to India so utilised their opportunities at a time when it was torn with internal dissensions that by hiring their

troops which were mostly Indian to one or other of the contending powers or factions they were rewarded with slices of the subjugated country. To start with, they administered these for and on behalf of the donors till these, by reason of their misrule, having gone the way of all flesh, the enterprising foreigners were left in the full enjoyment of their reward. I take it that a beneficent Providence had intended England to be the instrument for introducing peace and order and good government in India, so that in the fulness of time it could work out its political salvation. But it was never intended that the aliens should appropriate to themselves the status and privileges of conquerors and reduce the indigenous population to their present subordinate position as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

In so acting the English have been true to their tradition. The desire for domination and the spirit of exclusiveness have ever been most pronounced in their own little island. The masses there were originally no better than serfs in the feudal ages, and it took centuries for them to emerge from their thralldom and to secure their freedom and the political rights they now enjoy. And even in these democratic days there is a broad line of demarcation dividing the aristocracy from the rest of the population. A great gulf intervenes between the professional class and the tradesmen, never mind how wealthy and cultured the latter may be. There is an artificial meaning attached to the word "gentlemen," to enter which class is the ambition of those who have been made to feel what it is to be out of it. Practically, social distinctions provoke almost similar sentiments to those aroused by racial feelings. Herein the English differ from the oriental nations.

The Mahomedans came to India as conquerors, but they created no racial animosity. They were religious enthusiasts, who were desirous of bringing the whole world to the feet of the prophet of Islam. They received large accessions to their community partly by forcible measures but mainly by proclaiming the political equality of mankind and by freely fraternising with the conquered peoples. Go to any mosque on a Friday and you will find high and low, rich and poor standing side by side engaged in their devotions. Go to an English church and it will be enough for the clergyman to jump off his pulpit to find a clerk trying to occupy a seat usually reserved for those high in office. And if an Indian Christian ventured to do this there would be a total collapse of the service. In India official position regulates the social position of a man. The son of a tradesman if he gets into the Civil Service will ignore the existence of the son of a gentleman who happens to hold an inferior position in some other department and whose nod of recognition at home used to give him comfort for a whole week.

The eagerness with which some Englishmen have been making capital out of the caste system in India is somewhat amusing. To serve a political end, that of hampering constitutional reform, the European Association in India and the Indo-British Association in England have started a campaign against the Brahmans of South India. Only the other day the English Civil Surgeon of Amritsar, giving evidence before the Disorders Inquiry Committee, stated that he was a democrat and that he considered a sweeper just as good as a Brahman, but if the subject had been followed up and he had been asked whether the Brahman was as good as an Englishman I wonder

what the answer would have been. And yet this officer is not an Indian hater. I met him only once and curiously enough it was at dinner at the house of an Indian gentleman, who is now enjoying the King's hospitality, being one of the victims of the crusade started in the Punjab against political agitators. The English caste-haters have started a new caste in India, and that is the ruling caste; which is as much distinguished by the desire to be dominant and exclusive as are the Brahmans in South India. These have assumed certain privileges in that part of India, but the English assert many privileges in all parts of India. They claim the exclusive right to hold certain appointments, not by reason of any special fitness, but as rulers of the country, and this in the face of repeated assurances that the disabilities of Indians have been entirely removed. The law professes to make no distinction between one man and another, but British born subjects have special courts fitted up for their benefit. Where an Indian has killed a European he has been hanged for it, but where a European causes the death of an Indian it has usually been found that the latter has been suffering from an enlarged spleen. I had the privilege of being fined Rs. 200 for having defamed a medical officer who had stated in a *post mortem* report that a punkah cooly who had been killed by a European soldier and had died, had been suffering from double pneumonia. My offence consisted in allowing as Editor of a journal a correspondent to express his surprise that a man suffering from double pneumonia should have been able to pull a barrack room punkah, which was by no means a light performance. The Indian clergyman of a North India station often officiates for the Chaplain

in his absence, but his daughters have been refused admission in the parish school which receives a grant-in-aid from Government. A European goes to a station and calls on the Europeans but leaves out the Indians, though some of them are holding high appointments. An Indian official goes to a new station and he must pay his respects to the European officials who seldom return his call. In the early days of British rule an Indian made a salaam to a European as a token of respect and esteem. Now a days, certainly so far as the educated classes are concerned, these feelings are very much at a discount. The salaam has therefore come to signify the recognition that the one is the inferior of the other, and the number of Europeans and Anglo-Indians having also increased it is usually omitted, and is resented by the latter. The Punjab disorders brought this out in broad relief, for opportunity was taken of the martial law to decree that Indians "riding on animals or in wheeled conveyances will alight and those carrying open and raised umbrellas shall lower them", and people were actually flogged for omitting to make a salaam. It is needless to give any further illustrations, but it is a matter of general complaint that whenever the Englishman comes into contact with the Indian he is made to realise the inferiority of his position.

In all fairness it should be admitted that a certain class of Indians by their peculiar habits have aroused and encouraged the contemptuous treatment that is now impartially meted out to the whole community. Unfortunately India was for many centuries the happy hunting ground of foreign invaders, with the consequence that a kind of servility has become inherent in a large body of men. Those who possessed power and patronage were

flattered or a cringing attitude was adopted towards them. To be the exclusive recipients of favour it was essential to keep others out of it, and the most effective method was to indulge in wholesale slander. The Englishman comes to India with an open mind. He is at first puzzled with the behaviour of some Indians with whom he comes into contact, but at last he understands what they are aiming at, with the result that he begins to entertain a contempt for Indian character. By living in this atmosphere he is unable to recognise the fact that there are a good many self-respecting Indians, but that they keep at a respectful distance from him. There can be no question that a good deal of the racial feeling is due to the action of sycophants and toadies. But the most potent cause is the pride of the Englishman that he is a member of the ruling race. It is curious that the people of a democratic country like England should turn out such veritable autocrats, but it was inevitable when according to the traditions of the service each member believed he was a representative of the sovereign. All power was centred in him. His was the privilege not only to control the administration but to shape the policy to be pursued. But in his anxiety for the efficiency of the administration he has been reduced to the position of a machine and has no inclination to cultivate any good relations with the people or to evince any sympathy with the advanced views that are in vogue at present and which would undermine his authority. He has peculiar ideas as to his mission in India, with the result that he has been weighed and has been found wanting.

But English statesmen have passed a verdict that the people are to have a responsible share in the administration

of the country and Mr. Montagu in language that is both clear and emphatic has stated that gradually the Civil Service in India must be reduced to a position analogous to the Civil Service in England. It means the practical dethronement of its members from the proud and exclusive position of rulers. What the effect of this will be on the government of the country is a question quite apart, but of this there can be no doubt that it will in the end result in the cultivation of better relations between the English and Indians. With the representatives of the people in partnership as rulers and a large number of Indians holding high official positions the temptation to assume the airs of an autocrat will have gone. There will be a breach in the citadel of the ruling caste. Englishman will enter the Civil Service with no preconceived notions that they will have to discharge semi-legal functions, but just as those in other departments to perform certain duties for which they will receive an adequate remuneration. Social intercourse is not absolutely essential for the promotion of better relations, though even in this respect their will be a considerable advance. Education is gradually instilling in the minds of Indians a sense of self-respect, and once a Englishman begins to respect an Indian the spirit of exclusiveness and reserve on his part will gradually disappear and be replaced by a feeling of comradeship and sympathy. Let the idea that "we belong to the ruling caste and must keep up our prestige" be weakened and it will be followed by a change in the attitude and demeanour of Europeans towards Indians, and this will react on the greatest Indian-haters, the Anglo-Indians, who will not be ashamed as they are now of their mixed parentage.

CHAPTER X.

'FRIGHTFULNESS' A SOLVENT OF LOYALTY.

In a series of articles contributed some months ago to the columns of the *Leader* on the present situation, with special reference to the Punjab disturbances, I appealed to the people of England to decide whether the disclosures contained therein, drawn entirely from official sources, reflected any credit on a Christian nation, which prides itself and rightly, on its culture, its justice and its humanity. The London *Times* responds to this appeal by the statement that 'the points that have been raised are worthy of attention, for it is unquestionable that the course of events in the Punjab last spring has stirred deep resentment in the minds of the Indian *intellegentia*.' Since then an authentic account culled from official lips of the sequence of events is available to the public. It abounds in incidents and episodes of such a nature that it will startle and I venture to say will shock the conscience of the people of England. At any rate, it warrants my asking a further question, whether frightfulness is a recognized process of government amongst civilized nations and if it is reckoned a proper incentive to loyalty? In a previous article of the present series. I have tried to elucidate the cause of the prevailing discontent in India and to demonstrate that the charge of disloyalty brought against the educated classes has no real basis, in so far that with rare exceptions no desire has been expressed for an immediate or remote separation from England. The

wave of extremism that is passing over the country goes no further than a desire to obtain for India self-governing institutions under the ægis of the British Crown. If, however, this country is to be governed on principles and methods of which the Punjab has recently afforded some notable samples and which have been unblushingly acknowledged by the authorities concerned, I say with confidence that the loyalty of the people will soon be undermined, and for this the responsibility will rest on the agents of British rule in India.

The Disorders Inquiry Committee is engaged in investigating certain specified matters and as regards those I have no desire to forestall their decision, but the question now under discussion is beyond their purview, for it is outside their province to formulate the method on which India should be governed. While on the one hand English statesmen are willing to set India on her feet on the path of self-government and have obtained for her a place in the League of Nations, on the other hand certain officials in this country, with the view of keeping it in subjection, are resorting to measures of which the English nation and indeed the whole world should be apprised, so as to be able to express an opinion whether they are in consonance with the instincts of a civilized and humane government. Since the above lines were written English public opinion has declared itself, and in no hesitating terms. The *Manchester Guardian* says, 'the shooting at Amritsar is as though a mad man had been let loose to massacre at large.' The *Times* draws 'attention to the profound impression made throughout the country by the disclosures of what happened at Amritsar' and says, 'the public has been shocked by the occurrences and at the

delay in publishing facts.' The *Daily News* under the heading of 'Frightfulness' states: 'One of the most shocking features of the whole affair is its concealment for eight months.' The attitude of the Labour organ *Daily Herald*, is sufficiently indicated by its heading Imperial Atrocities. The *News* says: 'The impression created must be removed at all costs, if our credit and honour are not to be fatally impaired.' The *Star* says 'it is the darkest stain on the British rule in India' and the *Westminster Gazette* asks 'for the recall of General Dyer and if he is not condemned by the nation he will be condemned by the world.'

It may here be premised that India's loyalty during the European war has been recognized in the most fulsome terms by the English nation and even by its representatives in this country. Punjab carried away the honours by its numerous activities and by sending more than half the troops which were despatched from the whole of India to the various centres of the struggle. Its devotion to the British Crown and the British cause was loudly proclaimed by its ruler, even to the length of giving offence by making an invidious distinction between the achievements of the various provinces. It was held up as a model to the rest of India, for special efforts had been made to preserve it from the contamination of political agitators from outside, the entry of some of whom in the Punjab was officially forbidden, or the corruption by means of seditious literature, which was freely proscribed, to the extent of excluding certain journals which have a large circulation in other parts of India. But this did not secure its immunity from the tension of feeling which prevailed all over the country amongst the educated classes.

The Announcement of August 1917 brought some mitigation, for the unrest was replaced by an eager expectation of a speedy fruition of the constitutional reforms that had been promised. Suddenly there was a change in the political atmosphere of India due to the agitation respecting the Rowlatt Act and the unfortunate and ill-advised foisting on it of passive resistance. Disturbances more or less serious broke out in several provinces and were put down by the Government by a resort to physical force and at the expense of several lives in each of the places concerned. Order was everywhere restored in the course of a day or two and even at Amritsar, which was the scene of some deplorable outrages, these were committed at the very start and there was no repetition of them after the rioters were dispersed by the military. The executive authorities in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi took no retaliatory or retributive measures and the excitement very soon subsided, thanks to the tact and judgment of the local Governors. But in the Punjab martial law was proclaimed and was continued for over six weeks under such conditions that they have furnished a foundation for a charge being formulated against the executive and military authorities of indulging in a campaign of sheer 'frightfulness.'

It is but natural that every Government should be jealous to maintain its credit and reputation by promptly contradicting or explaining anything wrongly stated or insinuated to its detriment. No exception need therefore be taken to the Indian Government freely availing itself of this privilege. But not a single assertion made by me in the first series of articles has been disputed by the Government for the reason, which is recognized by the *London Times*, that I had relied entirely

on materials that were either official or drawn from Anglo-Indian journals. In dealing further with the Punjab affairs I propose to follow the same lines and to discard all private information. In the proceedings of the last sessions of the Legislative Council there is a good deal of material available in the admissions that have been officially made and the Government cannot complain if on certain points their silence is to be construed into consent. Where categorical questions have been put and no answer has been vouchsafed on the ground that it would be detrimental to the public interests, they cannot escape the ordinary presumption that if given it would be unfavourable to them. And the same would apply where the matter is disposed of by an evasive reply. In certain instances the statements of official witnesses before the Inquiry Committee have made up for the reticence of Government, besides supplying a vast amount of information relating to the disturbances in the Punjab. By a fortuitous combination of circumstances the executive find themselves placed in a very favourable position. Lord Hunter had allowed under certain restrictions both the Government and the people to be represented by counsel with the result that both sides were able at Delhi to elicit facts of the utmost importance for arriving at the truth and thus the subject matter of inquiry was thoroughly sifted. But in the Punjab the Congress sub-committee, which is advocating the cause of the people, decided practically to boycott the Inquiry Committee, as the Government refused to allow the political leaders, now undergoing imprisonment, to be present at the Inquiry. The request was reasonable on the face of it and there were several precedents to support it. It is, therefore, to

be regretted the Government was unable to accede to it. It is difficult to understand its attitude or of those at whose instance the extreme step was adopted to allow the enquiry to proceed *ex parte* so far as the people are concerned, for a fine opportunity has been lost for eliciting important points in their favour. At all events, the Government is a gainer thereby, for it is able to put forward in full force its evidence without any risk of its breaking down under a severe cross-examination.

I have no desire to minimise the outrages committed by the people, and I admit that those to whom the guilt can fairly be brought home are deserving of the most condign punishment. I again reiterate that the fosting of passive resistance on to the agitation in respect to the Rowlatt Act was a great blunder. I still hold the view that the very fact that the political leaders of Lahore and Amritsar were not able to control the rowdy element which committed excesses proves that they miscalculated the effect of associating the masses in their political propaganda, and so far they cannot be acquitted of blame. I admit the position of a foreign Government is exceptional, and delicate, owing to the failure to understand the people, and their temperament, and that it is entitled to greater allowance for blunders that may be committed by it. I recognize that in a moment of panic reason surrenders its sway and passions are aroused and acts are committed which under other circumstances would be scrupulously avoided as outraging the sense of decency and propriety. I would again emphasize the fact that, in forming an estimate of English character and conduct and their capacity to govern a country with tact, justice and humanity, we ought not to overlook the evidence furnished

by Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi where a situation similar to that of the Punjab was dealt with in a manner entitled to evoke the utmost admiration and respect. Making all these allowances and taking into account these various considerations no fair-minded person can help arriving at the conclusion that the disclosures now being made before the Inquiry Committee do in no way redound to the credit of the English nation and that they are of such a nature that they are calculated to deal a severe blow to the loyalty of the people. In the dark days of the Indian mutiny was issued the proclamation transferring the government of India from the East India Company to the Crown and in it we find the gracious words of the Queen who then reigned over England: 'In the prosperity of the people will be our strength, in their contentment our security and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all Power grant to us and to those in authority under us strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people.' Those who are engaged in carrying out these wishes at the present moment hug the belief that strength lies in the use of bombs and machine guns on a defenceless rabble, a somewhat curious method of promoting the prosperity of the people. To ruthlessly terrorise over them with a callous disregard to their feelings is scarcely calculated to make them contented and by inflicting degrading indignities the most sanguine cannot expect to elicit their gratitude. If then the people are neither contented nor grateful where lies the security of British rule in India?

The political situation in India is somewhat ludicrous. A civilized nation is engaged in the self-imposed task of governing a country in respect to which the idea is in a

general way entertained that it is peopled by heathens, and savages. A comfortable assurance is cherished that it has firmly established its prestige as the most cultured and humane nation in the world, for has it not inveighed at odd times against the savagery and atrocities of other nations, such as the Turks, the Belgians and the present-day Huns? Has it not shed its blood and almost exhausted its resources in championing the cause of truth and justice and protecting the rights of those who ran the risk of being swallowed up by their powerful and unscrupulous neighbours, to whose greed and rapacity there was no limit? Is it not busy at the present moment in devising a scheme for starting the people over whom it is ruling on the path of self-government? For the self-same people to question whether their rulers are bankrupt of public morality, justice and humanity is indeed a bitter irony of fate. And yet this question is either on the lips of every educated Indian or if the terrors of the Defence of India Act prevent a vocal utterance, it is being revolved by him in his mind. And the strictures of the English press will encourage their depreciatory attitude towards those who had the recent handling of Punjab affairs in their hands though they cannot but be impressed with the fairmindedness and justice of the British nation in having no scruples as to condemning its representatives in India for their recent achievements in the art of government. My faith was by no means misplaced.

Some months ago I wrote that the man most to be pitied then was Sir Michael O'Dwyer. To-day I should say the men most to be pitied are Lord Hunter and Mr. Justice Rankin. The President of the Disorders Inquiry Committee when he accepted this position had probably

a hazy notion of the Punjab, and most likely had never heard of Gujranwala, Kasur or even of Amritsar. Recently the *Morning Post* of England, after printing a cable recounting some hill fighting on the North-West Frontier, near Maughi, wrote in an editorial note: 'The operations described above occurred in a mountainous district in the province of Rajputana, to the south-east of Jodhpur.' If the editor of one of the leading journals in England could betray such blissful ignorance, surely it would be excusable on the part of Lord Hunter if he had put down the Punjab as a city or a lake in Central India. As to the matter to be inquired into what could be an easier task? The Punjab had enjoyed the inestimable blessing of martial law, for so it is looked upon by those who had the privilege of administering it, hence to his highly trained legal mind there could only be certain fixed issues in respect to which a decision was called for. These were specified by the letter of appointment, and besides he had former precedents to guide him. But Lord Hunter could never for a moment have imagined that he would be afflicted by the experience he is now undergoing, that of sitting day after day to hear questions put to Englishmen which impugned their notions of sanity, morality, justice and humanity. And these were put not by individuals hostile to the witnesses but by his colleagues in the Committee over which he was presiding. To a high-minded Englishman nothing could be more galling, and yet his spirit of fairness and impartiality cannot prevent these questions being put, for they naturally arise from facts which are being elicited and in respect to the character of which he prefers at this stage to be silent. Mr. Justice Rankin, though equally judicial-minded, could not restrain

himself and blurted out his estimation of the nature of some of the incidents and episodes that are being deposed to in the question he put to General Dyer, the hero of the Jallianwala Bagh slaughter, whether in the firing on the crowd there 'was not a resort to what is called frightfulness?'

This was not an isolated case of frightfulness, for as the inquiry proceeded fresh instances were forthcoming of acts done and orders passed by British officials which later on made it imperative for an Indemnity Act to be passed. It will no doubt protect certain individuals from personal liability, but does the matter end there? What about the effect of a campaign of irresponsible frightfulness on the people of the Panjab? What about the loss of English character and prestige on which rests the foundation of its rule in India? Those at present at the helm of affairs in this country are in a way on their trial for having permitted the commission of misdeeds, and therefore cannot fairly answer or be expected to answer these questions, apart from the fact that the superior is most unwilling to give away his subordinate, however much he may disapprove of his conduct. Those actually concerned in these misdeeds I take no account of. Their task is over, and though an Indemnity Act has been passed it is with certain reservations which are somewhat inconvenient and risky. In self-defence they must therefore plead that these deeds were done in good faith and in the full assurance that the peculiar circumstances of the occasion called for them. And to emphasize this the assertion is so confidently made that they would do the same thing over again. Whether this is likely to serve the interests of the British Raj, as was pertinently asked by one of the

Commissioners, is evidently a question of secondary importance, as also whether it redounds to the credit of the English nation, totally ignoring the wise dictum that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation. Justice and humanity form the basis of English rule in India, and the day a suspicion is aroused as to the absence of these characteristics this rule will receive its death blow. A moral decadence is found to sap the strength of the rulers and to undermine the high ideal of their statesmanship. Not long ago Lord Morley, philosopher and statesman, in writing to Lord Minto, then Viceroy of India, put the question, 'what are we in India for,' and went on to answer it by the assertion, 'surely in order to implant slowly, prudently, judiciously those ideas of justice, law, humanity which are the foundations of our own civilisation.' The gospel of force has had its day, and those who seek to revive it can at best enjoy a success that will be temporary. Lord Roberts, the apostle of force, has stated that 'however efficient and well equipped the army of India may be, were it indeed absolute perfection and were its numbers considerably more than they are at present, our greatest strength must ever rest in the firm base of a united and contented India.' But we have in India at present General Dyer, the hero of the Jallianwala tragedy, who says, 'the one thing is force.' The *Manchester Guardian* has dubbed him a madman and his forceful acts have been described as 'atrocities.' Mr. Montagu says he was kept in the dark about them and that they are 'profoundly disturbing.'

The *Times* before the full tale of woe was disclosed had commented on the indignation aroused by the action of the executive in reference to the Punjab disturbances. That

indignation now that details are being published has developed into a deep and burning resentment. Even moderate Indian journals are commenting on the 'brutalities' and 'atrocities' that were perpetrated not in one instance, but repeatedly. Just below the editorial note in which these expressions occur is another note dealing with some observations made by Sir Michael Sadler at the meetings he has been addressing on Indian affairs in England. In this note is quoted a remark made by him, the irony of which is obvious. 'Service for India at this moment was', says Sir Michael, 'in a special way a service to the world. India was the testing place of Britain. It was in India that the temper of those who went forth from this country revealed the real power of the institutions under which we live.' It would be interesting to know what he thinks of the temper displayed by certain Englishmen in the Punjab, for in all fairness Englishmen in other parts of India should be excluded and even those in the Punjab not directly concerned. It furnishes a curious commentary on the institutions of England, for it would appear as if a practical illustration was being afforded of the principles, that might is right and that it is a case of the survival of the fittest and strongest. Mr. Montagu rebuked Lord Sydenham for slandering the educated classes by the statement that they were more or less seditious, and here we have Col. Johnson, the martial law administrator in Lahore, stating with reference to the Lahore colleges, which are the nursery of the *intelligentia* of the Punjab that 'there was so much sedition to be found in them that it was a matter of indifference if his treatment of the students made these young men imbibe a bitter hatred towards the British

Government for the rest of their lives, for nothing that he did could make them worse.' Col. O'Brien, deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, when asked about a certain order that it would by reason of its being humiliating create resentment and bitterness, stated 'the bitterness was already existing and his order would not add much to it.' It is pertinent to inquire if the policy embodied herein finds acceptance with the English nation. And again, while Col. Johnson admitted the truth of the suggestion made by Lord Hunter that in a large population there must have been many citizens who were not disposed to disorder and were quite willing to obey orders, therefore the duty devolved on him not to issue orders 'calculated to permanently alienate the people or put them out of sympathy with the administration, but he added, 'we were making examples of people who were doing wrong.' Seemingly it mattered little to him if the whole country became disaffected so long as the desire to retaliate for the wrong done by a few was gratified even at the expense of the innocent suffering along with the guilty. Major Darberry, the officer in charge of the aeroplane which fired on the people at Gujranwala and adjacent villages, admitted that innocent people were made to suffer with the guilty as he 'had no time to make any discrimination, but looked to the moral effect,' and the same it may be presumed was his object in firing on crowds that were running away or on groups of persons who may have been innocent sight-seers. It would be interesting to know if he was rightly interpreting the sentiments of the nation whom he was representing in India. And we find General Dyer stating that he was 'doing a jolly lot of good' by firing on a crowd of persons

who it is not alleged were committing a breach of the peace without asking them to disperse and who were running away, for his object was 'to strike terror not only on the immediate crowd but all through the Punjab.' General Dyer was not singular in views he expressed, for there were others who also preached and practised the gospel of terrorism. Mr. Marsden, sub-divisional officer at Kasur, admitted that school boys against whom no complaint had been made were flogged as a 'preventive measure' and to 'strike terror,' and that the same was the object of erecting a scaffold at the Kasur railway station. This is all very well, but the point which calls for consideration is whether a method of Government on these lines is calculated to cement a good feeling between the rulers and the ruled and whether it will stimulate the loyalty of the people of India to the English nation? I had faith in the English nation and entertained no doubt as to the response which would be given, for even Englishmen in India though officials and though serving in the Punjab are unwilling to signify their approval of this incident, in spite of the fact that it had received the sanction of their late chief, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Mr. Kitchen, the commissioner of the division in which Amritsar is situated, when asked by one of the members of the Committee whether he approved of the Jallianwala affair, frankly replied he would rather not answer the question. And Mr. Irving, when questioned if the firing on the crowd without asking it to disperse was to strike terror, did not repudiate this, but stated he could not say what was in General Dyer's mind when he ordered the soldier's to fire, as if he was most anxious to dissociate himself from the military hero. The strain put on the

loyalty of the people of India was great, but I feel convinced that English statesmanship will rise equal to the occasion and by an emphatic condemnation of the policy of frightfulness, which for a time reigned rampant in the Punjab, will restore their confidence in British justice and humanity.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RETICENCE OF A STRENUOUS GOVERNMENT.

The disclosures in connection with the Jallianwala massacre, while they have shocked the English conscience, have at the same time aroused a natural curiosity how an incident of this kind could have for so many months been successfully suppressed. Mr. Montagu has repudiated any knowledge except the bare outlines, from which it follows that even the Viceroy had not been apprized, at least officially, of the details. Sir Michael O'Dwyer is in the country and can solve the mystery, for there were other episodes, pregnant with serious consequences, over which a veil has equally been thrown. Whether the extraordinary reticence on the part of a strenuous Government was due to a pure accident will be evident from a brief survey of certain material that is now available. We have seen that the agitation with reference to the Rowlatt Act led to a series of disorders in various parts of India. Ahmedabad may be put out of this category as local causes were at work there. Full publicity was given by the Governments of Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi to the measures adopted to put down the disorders, nor was any attempt made to stifle or distort them. No embargo was laid on the movements of the people inside or outside the infected area. The military helped the civil authorities in quelling the riots and a few lives were lost in each instance, but there the matter ended. There was no imposition of martial law, no prosecution was started

against the leaders of public opinion and the whole affair subsided after the prominent inhabitants were seriously remonstrated with and were warned that severe action would be taken unless the fooleries being committed by an irresponsible mob were stopped.

But the Punjab, the most loyal of provinces, was at a moment's notice proclaimed to be in open rebellion, and martial law was imposed. It now appears from the official evidence given before the Disorders Inquiry Committee that the civil authorities, prior to the Governor-General in Council sanctioning the application of martial law, had quietly surrendered a portion of the Punjab to the military, who engaged in the task of administration according to their sweet will, of which we have seen and shall see some fine samples. So far as the outside public was concerned the only information vouchsafed by a benign Government was that Lahore, Amritsar and some adjacent cities were in open rebellion and that all the resources of civilization were being requisitioned to quell the outbreak. It would be natural to presume that a martial race like the Punjabees must have played considerable havoc on those they were fighting against, but the total number of casualties they were responsible for was seven Europeans killed and one European lady severely assaulted. If the C. I. D., instead of fooling about to entangle innocent people for imaginary crimes, had tried to spot the individuals who committed the outrage on this lady they would have won the eternal gratitude of the people of the Punjab. But stay, I am forgetting an Englishman was wounded in Lahore who should be added to the list of casualties. It was stated by the *Civil and Military Gazette* that he had received a knock on the head which

had to be bandaged, and was taken to a hotel where he was an object of interest to European visitors. This he certainly deserved to be, for he was in the thick of the fight in Anarkali Bazar and had not been molested by the rioters, but, says the same journal, he had been struck by a policeman by mistake. The wonder is not that this policeman had his wits wool-gathering, but that in a frenzy of panic the officials generally did not run amok striking their heads against each other. Anyhow, full and elaborate details of the foul deeds committed by the rebels were published by means of official communiques and by the Anglo-Indian press; but what about the action of the officials, civil and military, in suppressing the so-called rebellion? 'Let us first get an Indemnity Act passed,' seems to have been the idea with which they were obsessed, 'and then you will hear some details, at least so far as you are able to extract them from us.' But evidently they had not calculated on such a contingency as a commission being appointed to investigate their valorous deeds and the reasons which prompted their committal, and they would have scouted the idea if any one had suggested it, that they, the mighty rulers of the land, might be heckled and badgered and reduced to a state of utter imbecility by Indians sitting as commissioners and prying into the reasons why a particular thing was done or a belief was entertained, as if in those memorable days there was any necessity for the existence of a reason for doing anything or believing in anything. Col. O'Brien, deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, having stated that the unrest was due to 'some outside organisation' and being unable to give any reason at last admitted 'it is only my assumption' adding pathetically, 'I never expected to be cross-examined.'

For the policy of secrecy that was adopted from the outset, Sir Michael O'Dwyer is responsible. On the 10th April 1919 there was a disturbance in Amritsar in the course of which some dastardly outrages were committed by city ruffians. The rioters were dispersed and writes the *Civil and Military Gazette* :—'In the evening news was received that order had been restored.' That same evening a so-called riot took place in Lahore. It is stated in an official communique 'that a mob of city riff-rafs and students were proceeding from the city to the Mall and on its refusal to abandon its progress was dispersed under the orders of the magistrate by musket fire.' As a matter of fact it was discovered afterwards that five rounds of ball cartridges were issued to the police by mistake. Anyhow it is admitted no violence of any kind was used by the mob before or after that. The *Civil and Military Gazette* said : 'The effect of the fire and the appearance of the cavalry was to finally disperse the rioters, and by 8 p. m. the city was quiet. After that no further disturbance occurred.' And yet the very next morning, nothing objectionable having taken place during the night at Lahore, Amritsar or anywhere else in the Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer issued the following order : 'Whereas there are reasonable grounds for believing that the publishers are about to publish in their newspapers accounts of or with reference to the disturbances which have taken place in Lahore and Amritsar and whereas the publication of such accounts is likely to be prejudicial to the public safety, therefore the local Government prohibits the publication of such accounts or of any criticism unless these have been submitted for pre-censorship to the press adviser to Government.' Martial law

was declared a few days later and one of the orders passed by the military commander at Lahore was to the effect : 'By virtue of the powers vested in me I have prohibited the issue of third or intermediate class tickets at all railway stations in the Lahore civil command, except only in the case of servants travelling with their European masters or others in the employ of the Government.' To prevent people from taking the train from adjacent stations the prohibition was extended to these by the General Officer Commanding. Even first and second class Indian passengers could not travel without a permit and this was rarely granted. Rai Bahadur Gopal Das Bhāndari, an official witness before the Committee, stated he took no interest in politics and as there was danger, to his house being burnt he had taken his family from Amritsar to Lahore. A permit to return was refused him till he appealed to Col Bayley, the Lieutenant-Governor's private secretary. At Amritsar, Mr. Irvine, the deputy commissioner, stated: 'No one was allowed to travel without a permit' and he passed on the responsibility for this to the military authorities. At Gujranwala, Layallpur and Wazirabad Major C. J. W. Smith reigned as martial law administrator and he admits the 'educated classes were not permitted to travel in his area, in order to prevent infection'—not of plague or cholera, but of politics, they being 'suspicious characters.' In Kasur not only were the people prohibited from leaving the town but those who had left were ordered to return. Some who failed to do so, most likely because they never heard of the order, had their houses broken into, their clothes burnt and their earthenware broken, all this by way of 'reprisal', says the valliant Commander, Capt. Doveton. The net result of

this was that neither through the press nor through private individuals was it possible to get any news as to what was transpiring in the area credited with being infected, for a strict censorship was exercised on correspondence passing through the post. Both the English dailies of Lahore had to suspend their issue and one of them, the *Punjabee*, has ceased to exist. With the Indian press suppressed and every device adopted to prevent news from leaking out, it was all the more incumbent on the Government, by means of official communiques, as also for the English press, to keep the public apprised of the progress of events. How far this duty was discharged is evident from the fact that a disclosure is now being made by official witnesses of incidents and episodes which have aroused the indignation of the world and which constituted one of the reasons why a certain proportion of the Indian population refused to take part in the peace celebrations.

Let us start first with Amritsar. Graphic details were given of the outbreak there and of the excesses committed by the mob, as also of the measures adopted to put down the riot and for the protection of the Europeans. But what about the reprisals on the inhabitants by which both the innocent and the guilty were made to suffer and in the course of which cruelty was reduced to a fine art? What about the humiliating indignities to which they were subjected? What about the tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh? What about the floggings which were administered at random? All this was absolutely suppressed. Rumours were afloat that some fearful things had occurred, but beyond that the outside world knew nothing. One Gobardhan Das who had the temerity to make some dis-

closures, and as was to be expected had on the basis of rumours made some incorrect statements, was promptly arrested, tried by the Defence of India Act and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It is not denied that terrorism of a flagrant nature was employed; it would have been futile to do so in the face of the facts that are being elicited by the Hunter Committee. General Dyer admits he had revolved in his mind the doing of something that would strike the imagination of the whole of the Punjab, but beyond it was the further idea so to cow down the people that they would have neither the heart nor the energy left to make any disclosures of the sufferings and the indignities to which they had been subjected. Col. O'Brien before he started in the discharge of his amiable duties asked the Chief Secretary to the Government to 'see that his actions were legalised if done in good faith'. Mr. Thompson replied 'it would be all right if he used common sense'. We shall see how that was used. And while this terrorism was in progress any kind of publicity was to be strenuously prevented. And the order of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, practically suppressing the Indian press, served this purpose. British officials are now being charged with 'brutalities' and 'atrocities', and with conduct that is called 'infamous'. But for this order and the policy of reticence adopted by the Government and the Anglo-Indian press such charges would never have been heard of, for English opinion would at once have nipped in the bud the continuance of a course of conduct which drew from Mr. Justice Rankin the remark that it was suggestive of 'frightfulness'.

This was said with special reference to the Jallianwala incident as regards which Mr. Andrews, so well-known for

the services he has rendered to the Empire, states after a visit to Amritsar, that 'the massacre of Glencoe in English history is no greater blot on the fair fame of my country than the massacre at Amritsar. I am not speaking from idle rumour. I have gone into every single detail with all the care and thoroughness that a personal investigation could command and it remains to me an unspeakable disgrace—indefensible, unpardonable, inexcusable.' The details will be dealt with later on. At present the point most relevant is the length to which the reticence of a strenuous Government was carried in this instance. An official communique, dated 14th April, 1917, states 'that at Amritsar all meetings were prohibited, but in spite of this prohibition one was announced to take place in the afternoon. About 6,000 people attended. This meeting, held in defiance of the law, was dispersed by a small force of Indian troops consisting of detachments of the 29th Gurkas, the 54 Sikhs and the 59th Sind Rifles. The casualties were heavy, but quiet has since prevailed in the city and it is expected that shops will open on the 15th.' How very illuminating this account is! If in dispersing a crowd the death had been caused of a dozen persons it may well have been described by the expression 'the casualties were heavy' but it conveyed to no one the idea that from four to five hundred persons had been done to death, as is now officially admitted, though certain Indian leaders from outside, who are advocating the cause of the people, have on the strength of inquiries made by them personally traced out no less than 530 persons who were killed and as to the wounded they were about 1500 in number. But the authorities had no precise knowledge of the casualties as they were absolutely

indifferent about the matter, and it was months later, when there was an outcry by the public for information, that they began to institute inquiries. Mr. Thompson, Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, stated on the 13th September at a meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council that the total number of casualties amounted to 291, though he admitted that probably 'we shall never know the exact number of persons who met their death in the garden.' But Mr. Burton, deputy commissioner of Amritsar, stated before the Hunter Committee a couple of months later that so far 415 deaths had been traced out. As persons from long distances usually attend the Baisakhi fair which was being held on the day this incident occurred, it is obvious how difficult it is to make out a complete list of the killed and wounded and this Mr. Burton admitted. The *Civil and Military Gazette* at first stated that there were heavy casualties among the mob, 'several hundreds being killed and injured.' This was in a later issue toned down to the assertion that 'the troops fired causing severe casualties.' And it is a very significant fact that in the pamphlet published by it, entitled, 'Punjab Disturbances—compiled from the *Civil and Military Gazette*' its own versions of the Jallianwala Bagh incident are entirely eliminated. The Associated Press which is under a contract to supply news relating to the whole of India was silent on the subject of the casualties, though it had a special agent at Lahore. Perhaps the pre-censorship of Sir Michael O'Dwyer was responsible for this. Though in the heat of the moment he had signified by wire his approval to General Dyer of the latter's action, possibly when fully apprised of the details he arrived at the conclusion that the less is known about it to the public the better.

Martial law has been described as the negation of all law. It vests the military commander with full and absolute discretion to do anything or order anything he likes, and it is always understood that he should act with ordinary common sense. But martial law in the Punjab was distinguished by two special features. Certain things were done with the express purpose that they would serve as object lessons, and the doer glories in the deeds and says he would repeat them over again. But the object in view was defeated by these achievements being either kept a profound secret or by their significance being greatly minimised. This is a matter in respect to which Sir Michael O'Dwyer will perhaps vouchsafe some explanation to an inquisitive world. For it is impossible to understand the attempt made to suppress the Jallianwalla incident. It was certainly not due to General Dyer, for he frankly admits having done certain acts and gives us the reason why he did them. He wanted to do something 'strong' and he wanted to do this so that 'from a military point of view it would make a wide impression throughout the Punjab.' Hence the Jallianwalla slaughter. But no sooner the deed is done the object is defeated by every effort being put forward to suppress it as if there was no General Dyer and no massacre. And the same is the fate of what is known as the crawling incident, the details of which merit separate treatment. This again General Dyer admits had its birth after a good deal of 'searching' of his mind. Why then should it have been treated as an abortion instead of a happy event for the delectation of the world? But as a matter of fact it was months after the event that this product of his mind was introduced to the world with many

apologies. The 'public lashings' were administered by him to 'make a good impression.' Why the moral depravity of this world should not have benefited by this good impression is a problem which must be exercising his active and prolific mind? But a perverse Government was ready to fly at a person's throat if even a suggestion was made that flogging was resorted to by the martial law authorities, whereas it now turns out that all over the infected area it was inflicted indiscriminately.

As regards Lahore we shall see later on that in spite of its being the headquarters of Government, from which fact it was natural to suppose a certain amount of restraint would be exercised, there was on the part of the martial law authorities a deliberate and total disregard of the lives and the property of Indians and of their ordinary rights as free citizens. Publicity was given to the martial law orders by their publication in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, but how these orders had been worked the outside world knew nothing till months later, and the people in the Punjab knew of it last of all. So rigorously was censorship being applied that any one city in the infected area did not know what was transpiring in its neighbourhood. For acts which on the face of it are most extraordinary the excuse casually put forward is that they were intended to have a moral effect. If so, then why keep dark these various achievements as if they were dark deeds that could not bear the light of day? Flogging as a punishment, says Col. Johnson, the martial law administrator at Lahore, has four virtues attached to it. It is 'essential' it is 'deterrent' it is conducive to 'health' and 'its value is great.' Then why not have given publicity to each case as it occurred, so that the moral effect

may not be lost to the world? Why should the incident now admitted by him have been kept a secret that a priest and some others belonging to a marriage party were arrested and flogged because they were more than ten in number? What a fine advertisement this would have been of British justice and humanity? Why was Capt. Doveton, the military commander at Kasur, not allowed to tickle the fancy of a frivolous world by the announcement that he was following in the footsteps of his predecessor, King Solomon, and to quote as a sample of his wisdom that he had ordered three of the biggest boys in a school to be sent over to him to be whipped, not because they had done anything wrong, but as an example to the rest of the boys, that he had ordered persons committing a breach of the Railway Act to go to a goods shed and load and unload bales and do other work, that he had made a large number of persons rub the ground with their forehead and thought 'there was nothing humiliating about it' or 'that it was an infliction,' and that he believed he was entitled to vary the monotony of his work with a little entertainment and so he made quite a number of 'middle aged men skip 20 times without a break.' Whether he showed them how to do it is not recorded, but perhaps he did. And why should Col. O'Brien, deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, have been deprived of the glory due to him for teaching Indians the elements of civility by ordering them, at the risk of being flogged, to alight from wheeled conveyances, and to close their umbrellas when passing a European officer? There seems to have been a keen competition in the memorable days of martial law between those administering it as to who could invent the largest number of fancy offences and fancy punish-

ments. But why need we labour the point any further? What we are concerned with at present is the fact that for so many months a veil has been thrown over these brilliant achievements by an over-strenuous and at the same time over-sensitive Government. But if the most 'brilliant administrator' the Punjab has been blessed with had had his way, the present exposure would never have taken place; and now that it has taken place all that the Anglo-Indian journals can say about the Jallianwala affair is fairly represented by the comments of the *Englishman*: 'The kindest, surest, most reasonable action as regards the Punjab is to forget. Nothing will be gained by going persistently into a matter that exhibits neither side at its best.' This *neither side at its best* is certainly rich! The *Pioneer* without admitting that the authorities were guilty of any dereliction of duty, pleads that the amnesty allowed to political offenders should be extended to the authorities; so keen is it to vindicate British honour and justice. These are seemingly articles which in the present degenerate days possess no value. The European Association, apprehensive of the verdict of the commissioners, cries frantically enough 'Let the Hunter Commission be dissolved.' Truly from every point of view a new lustre has been shed by Punjab officials on British rule in India.

CHAPTER XII.

IS POLITICAL AGITATION A CRIME?

India has now arrived at a stage wherein it has a chance of working out its own salvation, for the foundation has been laid for the acquirement in course of time of complete self-government. How has this stage been reached? If the answer be given by Indians affording evidence of having qualified themselves for undertaking the new responsibility, it will fall short of the truth. For it has been their bitter experience that however qualified they have been to discharge certain functions or to fill certain positions and in spite of profuse promises solemnly made that there was no limit to their ambitions, their achievements in this direction have not been very conspicuous. Whatever success can be placed to their credit has been due to their persistent agitation in season and out of season and in the face of calumny and official displeasure. The immediate cause of the grant of certain privileges or the removal of certain disabilities has always been of agitation. Be it said to the credit of the English nation that though they have been at times unsympathetic and somewhat irresponsible they have readily recognized that agitation within certain bounds was legitimate and preferable by far to the in-brooding of grievances to which no outward expression was given. In the Reforms Report, for which Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford are jointly responsible, the genesis and progress of political agitation in India are carefully, and

sympathetically traced, and approval is accorded to its culmination in the union for political purposes of the two main communities, Hindu and Mahomedan. And any remaining doubts are dispersed by the gracious words in the King Emperor's Proclamation—'I have watched with understanding and sympathy the growing desire of my Indian people for representative institutions. Starting from small beginnings this ambition has steadily strengthened its hold upon the intelligence of the country. It has pursued its course along constitutional channels with sincerity and courage. It has survived the discredit which at times and in places lawless men sought to cast upon it by acts of violence committed under the name of patriotism.'

The English constitution owes its origin to the awakening of the people to political consciousness and to their persistent agitation that the methods of government should be adapted to the necessities of an age of progress. And Indians have done no more than copy perhaps a little too slavishly English political methods. Their minds and ideas have expanded by western education and western culture; they have aspired to western institutions and are striving to obtain them by the orthodox western methods of political agitation. By the side of intellectual progress we find accentuated the desire for the commercial development of the country, and in other respects there is evidence of a new national life. That on the whole English statesmen are in sympathy with this new awakening it would be ungenerous on our part to deny. Why then, it will be asked, is the question put, 'Is political agitation a crime?' It is because there is indubitable evidence that very recently in the Punjab political agitation has been treated as if it were a crime and political

agitators have been dealt with as worse than ordinary criminals. The indulgence in a campaign of frightfulness may be put down to the frenzy produced by unreasoning panic, but the attempt to stifle political life was as deliberate as it has far-reaching consequences. If successful it will strangle the progress of a nation, but if this object is not achieved it will recoil on those responsible for initiating a policy so foreign to the instincts of the British nation, and will expose them to the bitter hatred of the people sought to be victimised. It is therefore necessary to deal with this question in some detail and I trust I shall do so fairly and dispassionately.

What are the broad facts? There were some disturbances in the Punjab which in some places were unfortunately attended by deplorable outrages. There were similar disorders in other parts of India though of not so serious a nature. In the Punjab alone was martial law proclaimed. It dealt with two classes of offenders. There were those who were actually engaged in the perpetration of outrages and breaches of the law ranging from the alleged waging of war against the all-powerful British Government by means of bamboo sticks to riding a high horse without dismounting or not lowering an umbrella in the presence of a white face or semi-white face or not tendering it with body double bent a respectful obeisance. The punishments ranged from death to being flogged on the open road or being white-washed with lime and then let loose; to reciting the formula 'we repent, we repent' till such time as Mr. Bosworth Smith's proposed house of repentance, with of course the requisite stool, was ready for occupation or writing an autobiography on the ground with the nose; to inditing a poem on the trying

magistrate or in the case of fat and middle aged persons to skipping twenty times, so as to afford free entertainment to a jaded official. Where so many opprobrious epithets are being freely used it may perhaps be excusable to remark that the behaviour of some of the officials in the Punjab was more like that of the inmates of Bedlam. A country declared to be in open rebellion, tragic events of sorts being enacted in various parts, and here we have the mighty rulers of the land indulging in the most extraordinary antics and more especially in their treatment of men they stigmatized as political agitators.

These were the other class of offenders. There was no overt act of violence brought home to them. Amritsar was the scene of the worst outrage and we have Mr. Irvine, the deputy commissioner, stating before the Hunter Committee that, 'he did not think that any of the leaders intended things to end in violence. As regards the actual rioters they consisted of the lower orders of the city and included Kashmeri Mahomedans, Hindus, Khattris, etc. They were led by hooligans. Whatever the leaders may have thought these hooligans had quite different intentions. The dislike of the mob was shown on persons and property belonging to Europeans. No hostility was evidenced towards Government servants as such and not even the police were molested.' As to Lahore, a Government communique stated that it was the city riff-raffs who were concerned in the alleged riots there, and it is pleaded on their behalf that they did no more than form an orderly procession to interview the Lieutenant-Governor. And in fact in the other centres of disorder, in spite of the most strenuous exertions of the Criminal Investigation

Department, no case could be made out against the educated classes of being concerned in any acts of violence.

What then were the political agitators accused of? Of no less a crime than that of waging war, of abetment in waging war and of a conspiracy to wage war. In the indictment against Mr. Harkishanlal and other leaders of public opinion in Lahore it was recited that they in conjunction with one 'Gandhi' had conspired to wage war etc., the said Gandhi being about the same time eulogised by the Secretary of State for India as a man of unblemished character and of lofty ideals. If there is one man in the whole of India who has rightly earned the title of a man of peace and to whom violence of any kind is utterly abhorrent it is Mr. Gandhi. It only shows the state of imbecility the authorities in the Punjab were reduced to, to find them attributing to such a man the being engaged in a conspiracy to subvert the Government. But what was the actual process by which this war was being waged? Arms the people had none. At one time it was believed that bundles of sticks had been imported in Amritsar in anticipation of being needed in an impending fight, but we have it in evidence that a trader had sent for them in the ordinary course of business and that when the disturbance took place delivery had not been taken of them. In Lahore it is said the mob was armed with brickbats—may be, but, these are curious weapons for meeting an onslaught of machine guns and bombs. Nowhere in the Punjab were any persons found to be in possession of unlicensed fire-arms or of any explosive or other deleterious substance. But it is said the waging of war was not so much a physical as an intellectual process and the evidence of it was to be found in the use of strong

language while protesting against the passing of the Rowlatt Act or other measures of Government, or to put it in general terms in the free exercise of the right of political agitation.

But political agitation could not be openly discountenanced, as all the world over it is looked upon as a desirable means towards a desirable end, and the expedient was therefore adopted of attaching a criminal significance to certain overt acts and stigmatizing them as open rebellion. It served the double purpose of punishing the political agitator and of releasing the Government from a tight corner, that of justifying the proclamation of martial law. The various incidents during this eventful period went no further than to prove that a mob had got out of hand and had in some places committed excesses which putting the worst construction on them could not be brought within the category of acts of open rebellion. A simple solution was to be found in assuming the existence of open rebellion and then any kind of criminality could be attributed to acts which ordinarily would be hardly worth any notice. A mob goes to interview the Lieutenant-Governor and is fired upon and driven back, though it had committed no violence. Certain individuals were tried and sentenced to transportation for life. Why? Because it was held that this occurrence was 'plainly part and parcel of the rebellion which had already broken out.' In the affair at Lahori gate missiles were said to have been thrown, but fortunately no one was hit. For proving such bad shots a few, who were favoured by the testimonials of the police, were prosecuted and sentenced to transportation on the finding of the judicial luminaries who tried them that they had committed the offence of

waging war and 'this needs no demonstration.' In the Fira Mandi affair there was a similar charge and a similar punishment and in the judgment the reason given is that 'judicial notice is taken of the fact that there was already a state of rebellion in existence.' In the Badshahi mosque case a prying C. I. D. officer was beaten and his *pagri* was burnt. Nine men were sentenced to transportation for life. Why? Because it was in all seriousness held that the laying hands on his sacred person was tantamount to waging war. The leaders of public opinion were sentenced wholesale to transportation under the firm belief that thereby political agitation in the Punjab would be wiped out for good. It need hardly be said all the victims of this tomfoolery have been discharged by the clemency of the King. And so far from giving up political agitation they marched straight from the jail to the National Congress or the All-India Muslim League, meeting at Amritsar which were then in session, and horror of horrors were treated there as heroes. Mr. Duni Chand, a member of the municipal committee Lahore, was one of those who had to march hand-cuffed along the streets to and from the courts and of course had the usual sentence of transportation for life and forfeiture of property passed against him. On his release and on his first re-appearance in the committee, which was presided over by a European official president, he had to face a resolution 'congratulating him on his release and welcoming him back as one of the most useful and upright members of the committee,' although on being set free he had renewed his alleged mischievous activity. He had a few minutes before opposed an amendment by which a European member desired to add the name of Lord

Chelmsford to that of Mr. Montagu and Lord Sinha to whom a vote of thanks was being proposed for their services in connection with the passing of the Reform Act.

An impartial writer of the history of the Punjab disturbances and the martial law period which followed it will not fail to arrive at the conclusion that a dead set was made by the Government against the educated classes and specially against the legal practitioners, and this was solely because of their predilection for political agitation. The official evidence marshalled before the Hunter Committee has brought out in broad relief the fact that far from being the actual perpetrators of acts of violence they all over the affected area were most forward in helping the authorities to restore order, and this in spite of the contumely and indignity with which they were treated, including those who had rendered the most signal service to the Crown for which they had been duly rewarded. But, nevertheless all lawyers were suspects. Mr. Tomkins, the deputy inspector-general of police, admitted that he had issued instructions under martial law that 'pleaders should be regarded as suspicious characters,' the reason being that he believed 'some pleaders were instrumental in spreading disaffection'. Being pressed to state the evidence on which he had arrived at this conclusion all he could say was that 'somehow he had received that impression.' Col. Frank Johnson, the martial law administrator in Lahore, can boast of four years' residence in India, during which period he probably never came into contact with a single educated man, yet he entertained certain very precise ideas about them. The extremists he considered highly educated people, hence lawyers and