

INDIA'S DESTINY

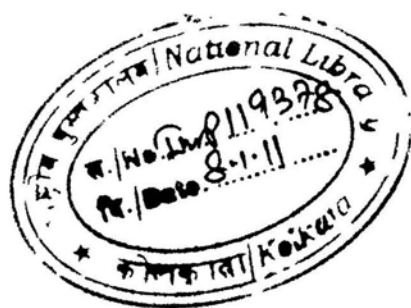
BY

AN INDIAN

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DEDICATED

With respect

To the Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Heads
of Faculties, Professors and student members
of the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay
Madras, Benares, the Punjab and Allahabad

Palma non sine pulvere.

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FOREWORD

I feel it is incumbent upon me to tender an apology to the reading public for having added one more volume to the many that exist dealing with India and written by men far abler and more experienced than myself. My only justification is the dangerous turbulence of the times which has completely effaced, as an earthquake does a familiar spot, the real ideals and goal of the people. We are bending our knees before strange gods and offering the incense of adoration at unknown shrines. As such a political idolatry is bound to result in very grave danger to the country and ruin its future, I thought it my duty to raise my voice against this disloyalty to our ideals, this deliberate destruction of those principles and methods which alone can help us to achieve our destiny. This little volume is, therefore, a reminder, a serious call to the conscience and culture of the country and I address myself specially to the younger generation. The reminder and call are not mine—but the voice of those political sages

and thinkers and patriotic sons of India who, having spent themselves in the service of their country, have passed behind the veil. It is their voice coming from the silence and serenity of their abodes of rest which I have echoed: it is their much effaced footprints which I have sought after. It is their dream, their hope, their ideals, their prayers, their life's work and its teachings which I have attempted to embody in this book. If I have failed, let mine be the blame.

I should add that I belong to no party, to no particular school of thought. My only idea is the good of the country and my only plea the necessity for all parties, creeds and schools joining hands in creating a nation in India. I have written nothing in an irresponsible mood: whatever I have said is the result of long and impartial thought and observation.

Some critics, friendly or hostile, may express amazement at my partial silence in regard to such a "burning topic" as Non-Cooperation. I have not come forward as a literary or political Sir Launcelot to break lances to the right and to the left in the political tournament that

is going on but I am only a sight-seer who desires to call upon the combatants to cease their profitless jousts and go in quest of the Holy Grail—India's nationhood.

At any rate, lest I should be misunderstood, I would remark that however profound may be my veneration, even love, for my great countryman, Mr. Gandhi, I have no hesitation in condemning his campaign, especially in so far as it has tended to the disturbance of the equilibrium of the unthinking masses. Non-Cooperation is eminently justifiable in principle, but altogether impossible of application in a practical form without appalling consequences. We could apply it straightaway if the Government alone were a thing of evil, but we have more evils in us than can justly be attributed to the Government. When they sin, they sin against knowledge, sin against a people who are under them : when we sin, we sin against the light we sin against our own countrymen. Our aim, therefore, ought to be the removal of the evils and the intensification of the good found in both. This cannot be achieved through a

spell of passivity, but only through continuous, ceaseless activity. *We must overcome evil with active good* That is my answer to Mr. Gandhi. That is the principle I have steadily kept before me.

I must now express my very sincere gratitude to my esteemed friend Mr. G. T. F. without whose encouragement and assistance this little volume would not have seen the light of day. I have had frequent discussions with him and though we could not agree on many points, yet I cannot sufficiently thank him for the valuable lessons I have derived from the treasury of his experienced mind and from his personal example as one of Nature's own gentlemen. I trust he will kindly accept this acknowledgment in the spirit in which it is made.

May I also request the gentlemen, officers and students, to whom this book is respectfully dedicated, to accept the dedication, however humble the offer may be?

Finally, I wish to tender my very best thanks to the management of the Pioneer Press for very kindly undertaking to print this book in

the brief period of 30 days which is indeed an excellent record in the printing business.

THE AUTHOR.

1st March 1921.

INDIA'S DESTINY

PART I.

A REVIEW AND AN APPEAL. THE LIBERATION OF THOUGHT.

The true history of a nation, it is said, is written only when its posterity has pronounced its verdict. If human history is to be not a mere dead record of dead events, not the colourless epitaph on an age or a generation, but the medium through which the dead speak to the living; if it is to have a message and a meaning, a warning and an appeal, a lesson and an inspiration, the judgment of an impartial tribunal is necessary. Though not infallible, this judgment leads to the nearest approximation to truth and ensures correctness in narration and liberality in interpretation of events, occurrences and high endeavours, whether followed by success or followed by failure. It has often happened in the world's history and will happen again, continually recurrent, that even those who were in the very core

and centre of great political upheavals or social cataclysms knew but dimly, or recognised as in a dream, the principles or motives, circumstances or accidents, or combinations of them, which originated those upheavals or wrought those changes. It is only when time passes on, when the passions and prejudices of the hour fade away, when the din of conflict is hushed and the dust of controversy settles down, that the historic perspective is established. Then children sit in judgment on their fathers. Removed at a distance, their mind unclouded and their vision free, they see things as they were, not wrapt in the illusory draperies of fiction, *but standing naked in the revealing light* of truth, substance and shadow, signs and symbols, outlined in mass and defined in detail. It is then the seeker after truth finds that which he sought. It is then that wisdom finds an handmaid to it in experience.

Modern India, the generation of to-day, will in time stand before such a tribunal and await its verdict. What will it be? Will it be a severe sentence, a grudging acquittal, or grateful approval? If we free ourselves from petty

prejudices, broaden our vision and soothe our minds into tranquillity, it will be possible for us to anticipate that verdict. It was precisely this calm and exalted state of mind which rendered possible some of the great prophetic utterances of old. Providence never intended the morrow to be a blank uncertainty to man. Man has clothed it with utter darkness through his own ignorance. It is my firm conviction that when modern India stands before the tribunal of posterity, a verdict will be pronounced which will thrill our being, should we be privileged to hear it even after we have long gone the way of all flesh. The verdict will be this and no other. That the India of to-day, our generation, furnished one of the strangest and most stupendous phenomena in the annals of modern times. A phenomenon in an intellectual sense—a phenomenon in the domain of thought. This is no fine conceit couched in a fine phrase. It is a great truth and worthy the earnest consideration of my countrymen ; expressly, the leaders.

Among her many misfortunes, India has had and will continue to have, perhaps, for many

years to come, the sad misfortune of having no foreign nation which has interested itself so intelligently and so sympathetically in her affairs as to act the part of what Stanley called a "contemporaneous posterity." The only foreign nation interested in her is Great Britain and need I say that she rules her and is too much interested in her to perform at once the dual function of an administrator and a critic of the methods and results of that administration? She, therefore, falls out of court. And the vital issues which we Indians ourselves should have calmly seen, understood and judged have become distorted and confused as much by our own deliberate act as by the force or influence of any external agency. The end of it all is that we are now in a perilous position. India has become a riddle to her rulers and an enigma to her own children. But the gods have not sealed the fate of India : there is yet time, yet free field and free scope. The riddle can be solved and the enigma explained. All that is needed is self-analysis and courageous resolve. As in the case of individuals right thinking and right conduct

lead not only to self mastery but also to mastery over external circumstances, so also in the case of nations, right thinking and right conduct will lead not only to self mastery but also to mastery over all circumstances and all manner of situations. But right thinking can only spring from ordered judgment and from an unclouded conscience. Let us, therefore, rightly understand the forces at work to-day and, having understood, proceed to work on right lines

It is because I deeply realise the supreme importance of correctly understanding the situation that I attempted to exercise the thoughts of my readers in anticipating the verdict of the generation to come. In other words, I plead for detachment of mind and careful self-analysis.

Cast your eyes on the pages of India's past history and look at the drama which is being enacted before your eyes—not as an actor in it but as a spectator. What impression does it convey ; what is its psychological import ; what are the philosophical conclusions which you are irresistibly led to conclude ? Does not the India of to-day furnish an astounding and inspiring phenomenon in the domain of thought ? She

has fallen in with the march of events—on a new plane of endeavour and progress—which constitute the world-movement of to-day and to which we are witnesses. It is our duty to see that she falls not too low for redemption by having attempted too much, but on the other hand steadily attains and fulfills her great destiny in international life and in the higher purposes of God.

I do not believe any worker, however hopeful his temperament or exalted his vision, dreamed even two decades back that the people of India would, before the passage of a few years, stand up and challenge the truth of much of what they held to be eternal, inviolable verities. Almost imperceptibly, without much warning and without many signs, a change has come upon the country and this change promises to convulse its millions before many decades are over, perhaps, before many years are counted out. It is not so much a change in the outward garb of things, in the superficial crust of civilisation, as in the mental posture of the people. There has been a great liberation. Thought has been liberated from the thralldom

of ages. In whatsoever direction we may cast our eye, we see changes and the beginnings of changes. The currents of as yet a bloodless revolution are at work, slowly, surely, inexorably, moving on, permeating the minds and consciences of the people, from class to class, from caste to caste, from community to community.

It is this liberation which gives to India a place in the world thought movement of our times, and changes the texture of her destiny. But what is this liberation? It is the free and full assertion of that independence of thought which is the birth-right of every man and every member of the human race—the assertion of the divinity in humanity. Slowly rising to the surface, gaining fresh power and energy with every rising and setting of the sun, it has now attained to such strength that it hurls the spirit of challenge against the spectres of a thousand years—and more. Some call it self-consciousness; some, the evolution of the national spirit; and both are partly right. But these are mere baptismal names: what does the thing named signify? The whole of our future depends upon a correct conception of it.

If you bear with me awhile I will place before you facts which will show you more clearly than elaborate arguments could that the change which I call the liberation of thought is *a real, genuine, tangible change and that it has a power behind it which, unless properly guided and trained, will cease to be the forerunner of good and, sooner than later, plunge the country into a state of such agony and despair which one shudders to contemplate*. Let us now for a brief moment turn the pages of the past history of India.

India in her days passed through many vicissitudes, many phases, many shades of fortune. She swung like a pendulum, drifted forward, drifted back again, from power to impotence, from impotence to power, from plenty to poverty, from poverty to plenitude. To the changes that were etched upon the raw flesh of her body and upon her submissive soul cannot be found a parallel in the history of any nation of equal antiquity. She saw invasion follow invasion; one race succeed another; principalities, dynasties, kingdoms and empires, rise, decline and perish. She has witnessed,

too, the birth of great social systems, religious revivals, great wars, great battles, devastating famines and such and other terrible catastrophes. She furnished a stage on which the reluctant gods saw performed an infinite variety of tragedies. No man has written in prose or verse the true story of even one of them. No man can. The mere outline of some are too terrible for human words. These tragedies were not enacted either by a single race or a single community, but by a succession of them—clashing, struggling, separating, intermingling, sometimes altogether perishing in the attempt. The Scythian, the Tartar, the Pathan, the Moghul, the Persian, the Arab, the Hun—all these at one time or another had stepped on to the stage and there performed their individual and varied parts. But, mark you, throughout these succession of centuries, through all the changes and chances they wrought, never—not once—did the people of India ring the beginnings of a change *in themselves by themselves*. Their destiny was not in their own hands. They never were the

conscious architects of their own fortune. Nationhood, as we understand it, they knew not. It was a sealed book to them. Either fate or a monarch, either circumstance or a minister, either a tyrant or a despot, an invader or an adventurer, either a seer or a cabal, either a slave or a usurper, either a dynasty or a family it was who wrought the changes—who threw India into a crucible, who threshed and winnowed her, who draped her with transient glory or stripped her naked, set a crown upon her forehead or strew ashes upon her head, who either caressed her, wooed her, seduced her, plundered her, or plunged a dagger into her heart. Well might it be said of her that, that which the palmer-worm left the locust ate; that which the locust left the canker worm ate; and that which the canker-worm left, the caterpillar ate. It was always and ever, either one man or a handful, a band or a set, who drove the millions from one stage to another. The external force was ever existing, continuous, ruthless, predominant: the inner force imprisoned and fettered, languished. The people, therefore, wrought by themselves neither

changes in their mentality nor upon their country. Though India was the land of their birth and their God-given heritage they could not call it their own. That is the reason why patriotism has come to us from the West. The exalted patriotism of the Aryans of old, the sensitive, grateful, warm heart which poured itself forth in sublime songs to Bharatavarsa, to mother earth, to the great Ganga, to the great Meru, was stifled and choked as time advanced. We have had to learn from others the rudiments of a virtue which our forefathers understood better than any nation which has ever existed. But, let us pass on. The Khyber Pass was then, as it is now, an ever open door and through it poured periodically, hungry, marauding tribes, either athirst for plunder or ambitious for conquest. When the curtain dropped over an invasion, internal wars served as an interlude and now and again pindaric bands roamed about the country devouring and devastating. The people had no peace; no settled peace. The days of Akbar, Asoka, Vikramaditya and a few others will live in the history of the people eternally, because they were

days of sunshine following almost unending nights of darkness. These bursts of sunshine were few and far between. They were like the lucid intervals in the life of an unhappy being whose mind is unhinged. That calm atmosphere which is the fountain and inspiration of all higher forms of thought, endeavour and achievement, was wanting. Uncertainty was the rule, certainty the exception. A terrible spell was upon the people. Their will was never their own and their mind was bondsman to fear. If it had not been for the supreme consolations of religion, India would many centuries ago have sunk into a state of utter despair. The conditions under which the people lived and the atmosphere they breathed, gave them no opportunity or impetus to exercise and develop individual liberty of thought and then communal thought and feel the fire and the buoyancy of this new state of being. Nor rose among them at any time any prophet or seer to point a way out of the wilderness. Even if such an one had arisen he could not have succeeded. The forces against him would certainly have been too immense. This was probably the reason

why the best intellects of India took religion and metaphysical speculation for their sole realm of activity. Renunciation, annihilation, self-abnegation, transcendental contemplation—these were the noble ideals that were set before the people by the sages and seers, prophets and founders of religions, that rose from time to time. They showed the heaven beyond the grave—but this world they sought not to convert into a paradise preparatory to it. I do not blame them. They gave to the people what they thought it was the best to give. It was outward pressure which led them to believe that men can live by prayer and contemplation alone.

Yet again, there was another insuperable difficulty, in addition to want of settled peace. The people were, as they are now, divided by tongue, by creed, by caste, by colour, by class, by traditions and distance. The very prodigality of nature—her wonderful gifts of mountain, hill, valley, river, vale and dell—served as an evil influence in another direction. It kept up divisions and prevented the people from feeling those common ideas and common aspirations which serve as the nucleus of nationhood.

There was the will of the rulers ; no collective will of the people. The self-contained homogeneity of the village, with its chief, its sub-chief, its civil, social and criminal tribunal in the shape of a committee of elders, which is so much emphasised by some Indian publicists as an ocular demonstration of the existence in the country from time immemorial of a very solid form of self-government, was certainly the result of the dim glimmerings of the democratic feeling in the hearts of the people. It was a legacy of the early Aryan colonial days. But this homogeneity began in the village and in the village it stayed. There was no effort made to weld these units into the formation of a vaster unit to which we now give the name of nation. Like the tortoise the village withdrew itself into its shell and the circumstances to which I have made allusion made expansion impossible. Should concrete comparative illustrations be necessary to give stress to my point, that apart from their rulers, the people had no collective will of their own, I would ask you to call to your mind the Greece of the days of Pericles, Rome of the days of Cicero, Germany of the days of

the Kaiser, the England and America of to-day. Whether the system of government had been or is monarchical, "despotic" or republican, the governing body reflected or reflects the will of the people and it was and is upon this the whole structure of administration was or is placed. England is ruled by a King, but the mightier power is the will of the people. Though it may not repeatedly assert itself, it exists and its existence is firm and sure.

If it had not been for the wisdom and love of learning of some of the Hindu and, in later days, of some Moghul Kings, India would not have had any literature worth the name. The times were too restless and uncertain for the mind of the people to spontaneously burst forth and blossom into the broad sunshine of music and of song. One terrible result of this state of bondage was the birth of the creed of fatalism. Even the Mohamedan succumbed to it. To the former it is karma; to the latter it is kismet. Whatever the real significance of these terms may be—and they have such a significance—the common acceptance among the people clearly shows that they stand

for spiritlessness, semi-despair, mental torpor and a sort of spiritual coma. Life was made to them an existence and a burden, a mere dragging of an heavy chain. Freedom came when the link snapped at the grave. Added to all these was the Brahmanic statecraft and priest craft flourishing in the fertile soil of superstition and nameless fears. The soil was the heart of the people and the ploughmen and the sowers were the Brahmins. Their intentions may have been pure and they may have aimed at the highest good of the people ; but good intentions do not necessarily guarantee good results. The real result was that the people were unmanned, enervated and emasculated. Just as the excessive zeal of the Roman Church was responsible for the frequent periods of gloom we find in the history of Europe in the middle ages—for the stunting of the mind and the dwarfing of the intellect—so also the excessive zeal and arrogant assumptions of the Brahmins ended in the complete mental decadence of the people.

This, then, in hasty outline, a picture of the mental state of India in the past. In our days

the picture has been set in a new frame. An astounding change has come upon the people. The old order has passed away yielding place to the new. Out of their torpor and mental stupefaction the people have arisen. We witness to-day the first awakening, like the red rim of the sun coming out of Eastern waters shroud in cloud and mist. The people are beginning to breathe a new atmosphere and see a fresh horizon. They are free from the thralldom of ages. The burden has fallen off their shoulders. They have passed through a long night of travail and are come into a new heritage. And this awakening came about in this way.

About the time when the strong citadel of the Moghuls was crumbling to pieces under the incessant siege of the nascent Maharatta power. England set her foot firm on Indian soil. What followed is a matter of common knowledge. After wars and struggles and negotiations peace was established and slowly tranquillity cast its benevolent mantle over the whole country. The fear of invasion disappeared and distance was gradually annihilated. Commerce and trade were given a new lease of life. New

cities and towns sprang up either on fresh sites or on the sites of old. Provinces and linguistic divisions of territories were brought into closer contact. Western education revealed new states of society and new ideals of life. The mind enlarged and its horizon expanded. In a word, India slowly began to beat to one pulse, poor though it was. These results were not the results of any deliberate systematic scheme or organised plan, but the inevitable products of collision and contact. It was the East which gave the rudiments of civilisation to the West and the children of the West, as though to make a return, came back with the fruits of new types of endeavour in new departments of human activity yet unexplored in India. They came with new forms of intellectual splendour, new types of conquest in the domain of science and art, with new modes of physical and mental achievement. There was then the union of the galvanic West with the visionary East. Indian thought gradually attained freedom. New yearnings, new feelings, new stirrings of the heart, new hopes, sprang up. The process was considerably

quickened when political leaders began to appear and preach the gospel of the new dispensation. Then the dream of a few became the hope of a handful, the hope of a handful became in turn the faith of thousands and to-day the faith of thousands has become the creed of millions. The Founder of Christianity likened the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. In like manner the new thought in India has grown from insignificance into magnificence.

I do not for a moment wish it to be understood that for ages the people of India have been in a state of mental savagery. Not at all. Nor were they in a state of bondage akin to that of the Israelites in the land of Goshen—hewers of wood, drawers of water and makers of brick, with the lash of their taskmasters continually cracking in the air. I am more keenly, more gratefully, certainly with greater pride than any of my countrymen aware of the superb fact that in spite of all troubles and difficulties, in spite of perpetual unrest and disturbance, in spite of the confusion and chaos attendant upon the birth and clash of dynasties and kingdoms, grateful recognition of God

and the hope of some sort of recompense at His hands for good deeds done, was perennially present in the hearts of the people. Though fatalism took hold of their hearts, materialism sought for no suzerainty. Religion and religious devotion were living factors, though the one has become somewhat debased and the other somewhat of a matter of mechanical routine.

The real change, therefore, that has come upon the country is a change in the mentality of the people. The credulous mind has now become critical. The head that bowed itself uncomplainingly to every storm that raged over it, now lifts itself high and would do battle with it. The temper of the people is no more to run as others drove them ; no more to live as others made them live. Once they were content to be a system of satellites to a system of suns or vagrant meteorites following the eccentric orbit of a vagrant comet. Now they will have a place in the sun and they will be suns themselves. They will not move and have their being in light that is borrowed but in the light that shall emanate from themselves. The great

flood of Western civilisation, with new forms of endeavour and activity, has come bearing in upon the country and has brought to life, endowed with volition and motion, the moribund thought of the people. That which was in us, latent through habit and dormant through pressure, has leaped to the call. The will of the people shall no more be like Mandakini, which is said to have delved into the core of the earth, but like the mighty ocean-going Ganga, roaring between its broad banks in the sunshine of broad day light.

In the history of the evolution of modern thought the liberation which India has attained unquestionably ranks as a phenomenon. Imagine for yourself, a people who lay wrapt for centuries in the slumberous arms of metaphysical abstraction, spiritual coma, mental lethargy, and a pitiable fatalism, have now become possessed of a will of their own, a new outlook and new yearnings. The desert has indeed blossomed as a rose.

AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

Freedom suddenly attained is frequently destructive. Guided aright it becomes a blessing ; misguided it becomes a curse. Exercised with disciplined care it leads to high achievement : used riotously, it leads to failure and misery.

The freedom of thought which India has attained has now gone astray. Naturally, it moved towards the beacon of politics ; unnaturally, it has become entirely hypnotised by it. Wayfarers having to strike through a dense forest may follow the guidance of a familiar star, but they do not get mesmerised by it. Fate, misfortune, or whatever you may call it, which has tracked our country through countless centuries has once more come to claim its fee. Unless we beware, it seems to me we shall pay it and sink back, not as of old into a condition of passive misery, but this time of palpitating agony.

The new thought has become monopolised by politics and the glamour and the fascination of it have taken hold of our hearts. The whelming tide has rushed into this one single

channel and the banks are being overflowed, threatening to engulf all things. I do not blame the people. Seeing their changed *mentality and working on wrong hypotheses*, their leaders told them that in politics lay their salvation, the goal of all their hopes, of their greatness and their ultimate triumph. They believed and followed. To-day in some places squadrons are in advance of the captains who hitherto marched ahead. Discipline has disappeared. The freed men are marching, in companies and battalions it may be, but marching blindly onward, knowing little or nothing of the lay of the land ahead and dreaming of primrose paths and shaded avenues. They are oblivious to the dangers before them and cannot and will not recognise them. They have partaken much of the new wine and they are intoxicated. They are like a man who standing though on the crest of the great Meru saw not the ocean to the South and swore no ocean existed. Because they see no seas, therefore no seas exist for them. Yet again, I say, I will not blame them. Most certainly not. As a matter of fact I have looked upon their joyous

narch, their bid for the rights of rulership, for an ever-increasing share in the governance of their own land, with feelings of genuine thankfulness and hope. The time has, however, now arrived for them to call a halt. They should now pause and ponder over other things, more important, more vital, more fundamentally essential than the soulless triumphs of politics. This, they will not do. So long as their leaders do not strike a note of warning and give the word of command, the will of the people will move only toward politics and "political activities."

Without the warning voice of their leaders, *they will not recognise the innate barrenness* of the soil they are ploughing. They must be told, told immediately and told oft and again, and before it is too late, that they have taken a wrong turning, that there are other things besides politics claiming their earnest attention. Things have already gone too far; instead of the task before us being the initiation of the majority into the glorious mysteries of the real truth, it has become a task of conversion, therefore more difficult. Difficult or not, the

task must be undertaken : for the dangers are far greater than we are willing to believe.

I call upon the leaders of Indian thought, with all humility and respect, to look ahead and cease playing the part they have hitherto played. The infatuation for politics must be ruthlessly brushed aside. It may colour all our aspirations but it must not dominate our being. As it is, we have made a veritable Moloch of it and other ideals equally essential to the real well being of the people are neglected and ignored.

Let the truth be acknowledged at once that India's salvation does not lie solely in political emancipation. What every true patriot is working for is not the outward expression of autonomy in councils and votes, in assemblies and institutions, but for the fashioning of an Indian nation—the welding of the people into one indivisible whole—a nation which shall have a voice in the counsels of other nations, which shall play its part in the affairs of the world with dignity and credit, and above all shall seek and obtain material wealth and contentment and the capacity to bear prosperity with sober good-

sense and charity. If we think that the attainment of true nationhood, the full bloom of the national spirit, can come as a result of political institutions, we are seriously mistaken. We have no right to make such a mistake. India belongs as much to the generations to come as to ourselves. In the cause of generations to come we are called upon to make certain sacrifices, to render certain services, and to bear certain burdens, which make, render and bear we must. If we refuse to accept this responsibility, disdainfully considering it ultra-altruistic, then I would ask every man who is of this opinion to revise the laws governing domestic affairs. Let the father turn his son out and the mother leave her child by the roadside or in a tamarind grove. Let them say they brought them into the world; they gave them life and they have done their duty. After all, I ask, what are future generations, but our children and our children's children?

The greatness of a nation must be founded firm in the hearts and intellects of the people composing it. Have not America and England

more or less the same political constitution? They have, and yet, the national characteristics of the two differ. In the international race, character, not political constitutions and institutions, that count. Germany with all her splendid armoury of organisation went under. The calibre of her guns was no match for the mental calibre of her foe. The bull dog triumphed over the eagle, tore its talons and broke its beak. Yet again, what did the bloody flood of republicanism do for France? She had to find her regeneration in a second blood bath at Sedan. The great Revolution which Rousseau gave birth to, Robespierre nursed with human blood, *with all its fire and unholy enthusiasm*, what did it do? It enthroned human reason and dethroned God: it set a crown of gold upon the banner of fraternity but probed with the point of a merciless sword the heart of humanity. For the bark of equality to weigh anchor and unfurl its sails the Seine was joined with the streets of Paris by canals of red blood. And these things were done in the name of Freedom. Though the Bourbon dynasty went, Antoinette perished under the guillotine, though

the flower of French aristocracy either drooped and withered in the land of its origin or sought new soils in hospitable lands, though the bid for freedom from tyranny was so furiously strong that a sort of demi-monde was given the place of the Madonna, France remained France ; outwardly she changed, inwardly she remained the same. Monarchy vanished, but the mentality of the people only took on a veneer and remained as crude and raw as ever. Let us witness Russia. What has freedom done for her ? For want of proper guidance it has vermillioned her palaces and castles, painted red her vast fields where golden grain used to sway in the northern breezes, resuscitated the buried spectres of barbarism and made her fair cities, towns and villages a howling wilderness. And all these things have been done in the name of the brotherhood of man ! Undisciplined freedom is brutal licence ; disciplined freedom is the pathway to the throne of God. Need I say more ? These things are known to every student of history and every serious thinker.

Knowing these things, it will be a serious crime, which the blood of ages will not wash away, if

the leaders of India allow the people to remain in ignorance and revel riotously in the sphere of their new found freedom. They must no longer continue in the belief that their character is perfect and that with the overthrow of what they consider tyranny or despotism, national character will spontaneously grow. Instead of freedom of thought being to them an amphitheatre where through strenuous exercise they should develop muscle, bone, sinew and spirit, it is to them a gay saloon where dalliance and shallow wit, light-hearted sport and jocosity reign suprême. Freedom of mind and thought, the inward yearning for the new life, are undoubtedly the right soil for the growth of nationhood, but the soil must be ploughed, tilled, fenced about, watered and the right seed sown in the right season. Grapes do not grow on thistles, nor figs on brambles.

It is for this reason that I have struck a note of grave warning. I speak to thinkers and I earnestly beseech the patient and careful thought of all. Those in whose hands the leadership of the people is committed, who are called upon by their consciences and the

unexpressed cry of their countrymen, to shape the destiny of the country aright, are on the verge of committing a sin of omission, which will, before this very generation has passed away, strike such a blow at the future of the country as will practically annihilate her. We are at the cross roads, at the parting of the ways. In one direction runs a road beyond which I can see with my mind's eye an India in the grip of chaos, re-enacting her old tragedies upon a new stage, with new actors and with new settings. In another direction runs a road, narrow and difficult, but leading to a land, which the wisest and best among us pray that the children of to-day may reach and pass it on as a precious heritage to their posterity. The signs of the times are extremely disquieting. Instead of the shepherds leading the flocks, the flocks are leading the shepherds. Optimistic though I am, abundant though my faith in the God who rules all things and guides the heart of man, yet I cannot bring myself to believe that all is well with us, that we are on the right road, the road that will lead us to the land of our hopes and prayers.

The wave of emancipated thought is growing in strength and widening its basic area. It must be forthwith harnessed and its power rightly directed and rightly used. *Autonomy cannot and will not suddenly endow India with national character. But with character autonomy can and will become the divine instrument for the well-being of all.* I pray for an India which shall be great in her own greatness, not great merely by virtue of her political creeds I pray that there may be institutions, which shall be the outward expressions of the inner soul of the nation; not they the foundations of its greatness and glory. I pray for an India which shall be the home of true knowledge and shall be the priest of God among the nations of the world. I pray for an India whose sons shall be the types and patterns of the highest form of citizenship and shall be honoured and praised in every part and province of the world. I pray for an India whose children shall be the custodians of peace and the servants of mankind—men with whom the gods may be pleased.

If this be the India which is the political paradise we are striving to reach, wherefore

are we wandering in the wilderness, making altars in caves and shrines in declivities? Alas, multitudes, multitudes in the valley of indecision! *I beseech the leaders of India to bear in mind that the new spirit prevailing in India is the finest material they could wish for to fashion a national character*, which shall be as a bulwark to the people, strengthening and comforting them in times of distress and inspiring them to high thought, high living and high endeavour in times of peace and tranquillity. If any man thinks that this is not the goal which should be set before India, his thought is out of tune with the ideal which God himself has set before the world as a whole, humanity in general and every nation and race in particular.

We stand in need to-day not so much of political thought as philosophic thought, not so much of the shaping of institutions as the shaping of the mentality of the people. We should understand the psychology of the people to-day and proceed to work in the light of the truths so obtained. Again I repeat, let us make no mistake. Statutes can give us only constitutions, nothing more. These may change the outward

~~form~~ and manner of government, but not the ~~inter~~ self of the people. Take England as an example. Her present constitution is a product of evolution. It was neither forced upon the people nor wrought by a single stroke of the pen. It grew with the mental growth of the people. It has its roots in and derives its strength and its sustenance from the mentality of the people. You may burn Westminster, knock down Whitehall, destroy and demolish every institution and every statute, proclaim tyranny and despotism, but give five years of peace and England will be England again.

I do not say that political institutions and constitutions can have no possible influence in moulding character and characteristics. They have, but only to a very limited extent. The essence must be in the minds of the people: else, when the test is applied the edifice will collapse.

I view with pain and alarm the intensity with which controversy has been and is being conducted on the reforms initiated by Mr. Montagu. It is held by one party that they are enough: by another that they are not enough. The advanced section demands complete

autonomy forthwith, promising the people that the moment this is granted they will enter into a political Canaan. *There is no such Canaan : it exists only in our dreams.* Complete autonomy will certainly bring in many material benefits ; but material benefits are not the only things needed. Man does not live by bread alone. Nor can a nation thrive on constitutions. Rome was not built in a day nor is the Indian nation going to be. Neither councils, reformed councils, ultra reformed councils nor complete autonomy can transmute the Indian haematite into flexible steel. I charge the leaders of India to beware what they do. They have a dual function to perform. This they must do or stand condemned by their own consciences and leave the work for other men. The dual function is this : to work for political reforms and at the same time build up a nation. It is now the sacred duty of every leader of the people, every man of education, every thinker, every head of a family, every chief of a clan, every primate of a religion, to join hands and infuse the spirit of nationhood. The story is told in

the Hebrew scriptures that the prophet Nehemiah rebuilt the temple of Solomon right in the midst of implacable foes—every man and every mason holding a sword in one hand and his tool or his work basket in the other. I ask the leaders of India to instruct the people to fight for political freedom with one hand and with the other gather up the bricks, the mortar and the tools and lay brick upon brick, until at last the splendid edifice of our dreams shall stand before our eyes a concrete reality. If this cannot be consummated in our own time, let us at least set the example to our children. Their hands will complete what ours had begun.

Like piling Pelion upon Ossa I have reiterated and re-emphasised this single point, the need for national character, inexhaustible, unquenchable, because, if the work of nation building is not taken up at once, in a very short time it may be too late. The mentality of the people at this moment is of just the requisite pliability and impressionability and above all, there is enthusiasm. These may pass and never come again. What is gold now

—ductile and malleable—may by some mysterious process of mental alchemy become either mercury and volatile ~~or~~ lead and too soft and lustreless. Let us take the gold, cast it into the crucible, purify it, beat it and produce out of it an ornament, which shall be a lasting possession to us and also extort the admiration of the world.

ENGLAND'S LOST OPPORTUNITY.

England had the opportunity of building a nation in India, but partially lost it. The people of India have more or less passed out of the orbit of her moral influence. She tried a mechanical, soulless form of government and has failed. We are trying to improve, but upon the same lines, and we shall fail too. When the first signs of the people's independence of thought in the realm of politics were detected, England was non-plussed and in haste thoughtlessly and uncharitably, put it down as something unholy, as rank sedition. If British rulers in India had had deeper insight and more philosophic tolerance, were statesmen and not mere administrative machines, however superbly perfect, they would have handled the Indian situation, at the time it blossomed into a situation, with more success, at any rate from their own point of view. They failed to understand the psychology of the people. They failed to see that the people were undergoing a change in their mentality. They failed to recognise, with sympathy and

considerateness, the independence of thought which was asserting itself. The irony of it is that they were in part responsible for the change! They confused the issues, misread the times and attributed everything to sedition. The unrest in consequence deepened. The mistake was with them but they chose to look for it outside. Lord Curzon contemptuously characterised the movement as the result of the discontent of the educated minority, microscopically small. Lord Sydenham, another administrator of the Curzonian mould, thought it to be the diabolic attempt of a small band of Indian *Inteligentsia*. The supreme fact was not recognised that "sedition" was in reality a serious challenge to the whole conception of British rule in India. They should have understood it as such and treated it as such. Statesmanship, British statesmanship—incomparably the finest in the world—like Samson lying on the seductive laps of the Delilah of sentiment and overweening pride of race, lost its locks, and so its chance. The British nation was misled by its statesmen and its journalists and the Indian situation wa

grossly mishandled. British administrators in India, with the moral courage of their breed, should have faced the situation and changed the entire spirit of the government. It should have been recast and the Indians made to realise by open demonstration that the Government was for the good of the country and its interests had first consideration, that whatever might have been the past, henceforth every effort would be made to hasten the grant of self-government and to assist wholeheartedly the creation of a real nation in India. This was not done but concessions were doled out. This produced a revulsion of feeling and the revulsion in some quarters deepened into hatred. And it was this hatred which kindled anarchic acts, bringing discredit upon India. And it was this hatred which was responsible, to a considerable extent, for what was characterised by Sir Valentine Chirol and others as Indian Unrest.

The times have changed since then. The din of the old conflict has died down and the din of a far greater one has commenced. I will nevertheless point out, to prevent a

recurrence and remove misunderstanding, that the immediate and real cause of the Indian unrest of the days of Curzon and Minto was not so much political in character as, if I may so call it, social. The revolt against the Government was essentially a revolt against the insufferable arrogance of the Englishman. The time has arrived for Englishmen to recognise this fact.

They played a great game in India for two centuries: the cards suddenly turned against them. Instead of as suddenly changing their play, they threw down the cards and accused the other party of cheating. British arrogance might have been put on for purposes of administration and may conceal a sterling interior—an interior of unalloyed gold. Unfortunately for England and for India as well, the interior was always within the veil. It was like some sages who, as legends say, are still alive and buried in the mighty slopes of the Vindhya and Satpuras. Such a thing as Indo-British society never existed and perhaps never will. Was it not in the interests of the rulers to tighten the bonds which bound them to the country they had conquered? There was no genuine friendship:

it was all Olympian condescension. Here again Britain failed in her statesmanship. *She failed to recognise the rudimentary principle that a civilised government can only be founded upon society, not merely upon laws and statutes. Where is the society in India on which the great British Raj is built? I challenge any man to show this society.* The aloofness, the intolerable arrogance of the Briton, gave a resenting tone to the new feeling and this single, solitary fact outweighed in the Indian mind all the splendid results of the British Raj.

This may be ingratitude; it is ingratitude. But what would you? If your argument is weighty, so the argument of the other side.

"Behold" says the Englishman "we have given you peace, peace such as you never had before. It reigns from Khatmandu to Comorin, from Coconada to Karachi. We have given you freedom, freedom to live as you please, to practise your religions, carry on your customs and traditions. We have given you roads, railways, steamships, the telegraph, the penny post. We have built you hospitals, museums, schools, colleges and universities.

We have suppressed corruption and overhauled the entire Moghul administration of the country. Our courts of justice are models of their kind. We have freed you from your eternal nightmare—invasion. No marauding tribe or blood thirsty race can now come through the Khyber Pass without passing over our dead bodies. We have suppressed Thuggism, Pindarism. We have done all these things and much more: what have you done for us? You go against one of the commonest and most truthful sayings in India: you are turning traitors to your salt. You are disloyal, seditious, anarchical.”

These are extremely sound arguments and no sane man will question them. But be patient enough to hear the other side.

All this and much more, argues the Indian, you have certainly done for us and we can never be sufficiently grateful. But gratitude does not mean that we should shut our eyes to facts that stare us in our face. You have given us peace, given us tranquillity. They no doubt reign from one end of India to the other. Our nightmare is indeed gone. But did you do these things solely out of consideration for us?

You have given us rails and railroads, roads and grand trunk roads : but are these for our sole benefit ? Steamships unquestionably call at our ports, and a very good sight they present, too, but they take our produce and bring back things for which we have to pay fabulous prices. The greater benefit is yours : not ours. Many thanks for the factories : we only wish they filled as many Indian pockets as English. Here also the greater benefit is yours, not ours. You have given us tranquillity you say, but tranquillity is as much essential to you as to ourselves. We do not see how you have gone out of your way for our sake. Pindarism and Thuggism were indeed suppressed but they were as much a nuisance to you as to ourselves

You have given us education, universities, and all that, no doubt, but you have given them very half-heartedly and the stuff given is of a very sorry type indeed. You did overhaul the administration but as much for your benefit as for that of ourselves. And, finally, all the wonders and miracles you say you have performed have been so performed with our money. And if you say that you have

not taken your full, more than full payment, for every atom of service rendered, then you are departing from truth. You talk about your civilisation. Frankly speaking we prefer our own, with some changes necessitated by modern conditions. Yet again, honestly speaking, we cannot say you have wielded any moral influence upon us. You talk about your courts of law. Justice is no doubt meted out to us, but we suppose any other nation having power over us would have done the same. Yet again, your administration is a fearfully costly one. It is so fearfully costly that we fail to see even the tail end of the glorious spirit of altruism you so much talk about. If a man getting three to four thousand a month cannot work efficiently we do not know who can. Where is the disinterestedness in this? You have had your fee and your reward and let us be done with cant. Cant from an Englishman becomes cant of a special order—specially loathsome. In plain language you are working as much in your own interests as in our own, rather more in your own interests than in ours. In fact you are exploiting us and when we whisper a word about this, you

grumble. When we begin to grumble too, you turn the law against us. You manufacture special acts and special tribunals. We do not see how our gratitude can be justly expected to outweigh all these. And mind you, although you say that you have worked wonders in our midst and turn up your eyes to heaven the moment we criticise your administration, you must admit you never moved with us as man to man. You have always been the august personage, the incomparable soul, and we your lordship's most devoted, humble servants. A Brahmin does not look down upon a Sudra with more withering contempt than you do upon us. We would like to tell you that your superiority over us consists only in the progress you have made in attaining political manhood, in nothing else. Morally we are your equals. Intellectually we are your equals. Given equal chances we can hold our own with you in any department. You have come into our country, taken the reins of government, spent our money, benefited yourself, and yet you treat us in your heart of hearts as something below human. Where, in the name of common sense, is the

value of your railroads, your steamships, your hospitals and your factories? The Brahmin may lord over us, but he has to some extent the sanction of religion : you are aliens and you are morally not superior to us. After all, what did we do to you? We wanted some reforms. You refused : you became adamant. You became more arrogant. Your statesmen talked about our crying for the moon. You granted some reforms grudgingly, reluctantly. It was like showing us the moon in a mirror. The real thing we were not given. We turned to the only course open to us, we tried a little plain speaking. What did you do? You put your fist down. Some of our hot-headed youths without the sanction of the saner heads tried a little violence and you allowed your feelings to grow more embittered than ever. The young men were certainly very wrong and we condemn their action as ignoble, but your attitude does not strike us as in any way an improvement, for are you not the great British nation? Your model courts of law began to work as the Delphian oracles of old. They did very much what they were told to do. You

deny this charge, then why in the name of all your codes have you not separated the executive and judicial functions? We asked for it a thousand times.

An Indian speaking at the moment I am writing would put the whole matter in extremely bitter language. He will add: what in your omniscience you denied us on one ground and another but a decade back you have granted us now—majority in the councils. Have we so wonderfully advanced in the last ten years that you deem us fit now while we were not then? The very things we asked for and you denied, we have now. Be candid now and say who was in the right—the man crying for the moon or the sage who attempted to give it by catching its reflection in a mirror. We do not for a moment believe that you ever gave us anything without our asking for it. When we press our point we become ingrates and seditionists. Your model law courts come down on us and when these do not work you call to aid your still sublimer law—the law of the sword. And you have some splendid interpreters of it too! Look at that band of men in the Punjab—

O'Dwyer, Dyer, Bosworth-Smith, Johnson and others. These are, of course, in your eyes, honourable men. Some of you held dances in their honour and will probably raise marble mausoleums when they are dead—the great defenders of the sacred British Raj!

These are the arguments on the Indian side. There are fallacies and false premises in both: but I must confess that England claims too much credit for what she has done for India. There are a thousand and one things which she ought to have done and has not done. For instance, agriculture is to-day what it was some centuries back. Yet again, England did nothing directly and deliberately to promote the growth of a nation in India. She left the people to attain their own political puberty and wilfully or otherwise attempted to stunt and dwarf the growth.

I have said before and say it again that England has partially lost her opportunity in India. Mr. Montagu's reforms which would have satisfied the people even five years back have rather fallen flat. The Englishman is the same as before. He has given us bread,

but not the butter. It is a change in the heart which would have satisfied the people and that change is not to be seen. Personally, I am satisfied with the reforms: for I am looking to higher things. But if the people choose to disagree and feel that they are still to be treated as before, no amount of persuasion from even a man like Mr. Ghandi will change their attitude towards England. The opportunity which England has lost has partially gone for ever. British statesmen would do well to reconcile themselves to this fact and seek another.

This very opportunity is now before my countrymen. What will they make of it? Will they use it or abuse it. Heaven forbid the latter.

THE ORDEAL BY BLOOD.

India, as I said, stands to-day at the parting of the ways. The people, drunk with the new wine, intoxicated, almost delirious, believe that the end of their journey is nigh at hand. Some of their leaders encourage them in that belief, and most of these are men who have either risen from the ranks or been recruited by beat of drum and wave of banner. The veterans, who bore the burden and heat of the day are standing apart, in vain admonishing and pleading. The crowd would move on. Finding Moses exacting or dilatory under compulsion, they have elected Aarons for their captains, and while Moses is taking down the commandments, they are with the Aarons burning incense before calf-gods of their own creation. Who will now speak to the people? Who will show them the error of their ways? I say it with all solemnity that it is the duty of every man, every father, who has not forgotten that his sons and sons' sons will be the generation of to-morrow, to treat not lightly those who bore the burden of leadership, when the burden

of it was great indeed, when the way was strange and the light but dim, when opposition was great and response but little.

I beg of them to take note of this fact. If the people persist in their attitude—attitude of reckless criticism, obstructionism, disrespect to old leaders, paralysing the reforms of Mr. Montagu, non-co-operation with the Government—*believing that all this is but the prelude to the birth of a great Indian nation, then, there is but one result before them, before India, before our children. That result is an ordeal by blood.* I am not an alarmist: nor am I a pessimist. I am not attempting merely to spin platitudes and weave truisms. Nor am I a dreamer and a visionary. I wish I was all these! Then at least I would have the consolation of thinking that the things I dread may be mere beliefs born of a gloomy imagination.

I have given my most earnest thought to the subject and what I write I write with a full sense of responsibility. My premises are not hypotheses drawn from my imagination, but concrete facts drawn from the mentality and the feverish

temper of the people. The logical conclusion to all their disorderly thought, delirious enthusiasm and unwarranted outbursts of criticism, is chaos. It may materialise or it may not materialise. But it stands threatening us, as sure as the fact that the sun will rise in the East on the morrow. He that hath eyes let him see.

This is my solemn warning. *If the present tendency to sacrifice all the people's manifested energy on the altar of politics continues, the day will soon come when there will be waiting and weeping in the land.* Then will disappear not only the political fabric which Great Britain has raised in our midst, but also the embellishments which our own political architects have super-added. Then will disappear also the great heritages of India from the laps of antiquity—her religion and her society. From the smouldering ashes of her ruined self she may, phoenix-like, rise again, as other nations have done in the past, into the sunshine of a new life. But the death agonies would be terrible, far too terrible for human words to depict. France scended the funeral pire in 1770 and has not

yet cured herself of the wounds and scars of the ordeal. The fire is still in the heart of the nation. Russia is now in the midst of such an ordeal. Whether she would rise again from the burnt embers of her dead self and reinstall herself in her old position among the civilised nations of Europe is a question for the answer to which one must consult the gods. It may be, she would emerge broken and shattered, fit not to advance, but only to lapse back again into the darkness of years gone by. India is on the brink of such a catastrophe. I pray that God in His great mercy may save her.

India, lacking discipline, lacking a national soul, with her hundred divisions and antipathies, with her immaturity of mind and purblind enthusiasm, is fast moving to one goal and one goal only, chaos. The vigour and energy we see around are not deep : they are partly born of righteous ambitions and partly of a heated mind. They have no root in the sane and unprejudiced sector of the people's brain. There is little of philosophical depth and little of philosophical outlook. The people's thoughts to-day may be likened to a mighty river whose

waters should be harnessed by science to fertilise the fields along its banks. So long as the dam stands strong and the sluices work, there is perfect safety and perfect benefit. Once the dam breaks and the sluices go out of control : there is ruin and misery. Unless the thought of the people is harnessed and trained it will soon overflow and overwhelm all things. What is to-day hailed as a sign of salvation will then be seen to have been a sign and a portent of destruction.

There are only two ways of India attaining nationhood ; one is through systematic self discipline, the other through a blood bath. The greater consciousness can only be born through either of these two ways—discipline or the wisdom that comes through suffering. If we do not reform our ways the great calamity I foresee may come in the form of a great national horror, or a great catastrophe. When that evil hour is signalled all the sublime things in thought and custom we know and cherish will disappear. Then religion will go, justice will go, humanity will go, pity will go, love will go, and will stand towering above them all the repulsive figure of the

monster in man. O land of the green palm and the green fields ! O land whence Heaven heard in the dawn of civilisation the best chants which human lips could yet sing ! Land of saints and poets and virtuous mothers, is this thy destiny, is this the end before thee ? Shouldst thou who, in thy days, taught wisdom and learning to half the world, O land which gave to humanity a Gautama, a Yuthisthra and a Krishna, shouldst thou seek wisdom through sorrow ? Should thy children anoint thy sacred head with the dear blood of their brethren before they proclaim to a blood-surfeited world " Behold, this our mother, has attained the nirvana of political greatness ? "

What shall I say ?

The question I ask every lover of India is this : are you prepared to let the country with her millions go through this terrible ordeal—through this agonising ceremony of baptism, baptism with the blood of her own children, her sons and her daughters ? Shall this be the form of her initiation into nationhood ? Shall this be the manner of her casting aside her widow's weeds ? Who will answer ' yes ' ? No man. Not