







# REVOLUTION IN INDIA?

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BY

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To those two darlings the  
*Tantines*  
Ange and Blanche  
whose intelligent interest in current  
events is perennial



“ The truth is that India is becoming a subject about which the truth may not be told.”

*Evening Standard*, 8th January, 1930

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## CHAPTER I

**W**ITHIN a week of my arrival in India, twenty years ago, a Subaltern of a British line regiment created some sensation by forcibly ejecting a native Member of Council from a first-class railway compartment. The Subaltern was "broke." Within a week of my departure many years afterwards, a friend of mine, a Colonel of Ghurkas, was refused admittance at Multan to a first-class railway compartment occupied by a native judge of the Punjab High Court. The judge was not "broke." The Colonel said nothing but is thinking still. So in a remarkably short space of time, in my own experience, I have seen the wheel go round full circle, and the beginning and end of its revolution has been an exhibition of bad manners on the part of one of a ruling caste. Twenty years ago the Sahib was somebody—until, like the Subaltern, he tried to prove it. To-day the Sahib is nothing, and by Sahib I mean every sort of gentleman, Indian as much as European. It is, in India as elsewhere, the Age of Yapp. The question clearly is, Are the yappers right? And, if they *are* right, the further question arises—Can they translate their words into effective action? There is a third question, not an unimportant one—If the yappers are *not* right, how account for their quite disproportionate hold upon the attention of the world? It may not be unprofitable to try to answer these three questions. India is a respect-

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able fraction of the British Empire, and its loss would see the latter well on its way downhill, degenerating into a third-class power like Denmark. We would be happy then, of course, but who wants to be happy when assiduous devotion to yap can get an ex-railway driver £5,000 a year for seeking some scheme by which his fellow creatures can earn a possible £2 a week for an uncertain time? The Empire for ever and devil take the hindmost! It is the chief curse of our times that statesmen and politicians—who are indeed one and the same thing—are convinced that history really began on their birthdays. Before these cataclysmic dates things were at a standstill, since then—Progress, the betterment of the people, equality, liberty, a seat in the Cabinet, a peerage at the end to give you just the added touch of dignity you needed to face St. Peter with.

Of all public men the Indian political leader is the most convinced that his ego is the greatest that an all-wise Providence has somewhat belatedly put into the world. There are many reasons for this. The first is that the so-called educated Indian is, generally speaking, woefully deficient in general knowledge. He is very often a lawyer. He knows the law of the West but he has lost the lore of the East. His narrow and conceited mind, enmeshed in a fine web of subtle dialectics, feeds and grows fat upon the contemplation of its own astuteness. He gets a wholly wrong idea of the power of words. He forgets that the ultimate sanction of civilisation is force. Secondly, the educated Indian—educated, that is, in the English sense—is one of a million in a land of three hundred and twenty millions. He is articulate where all

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around him men are dumb, he is listened to by those who are deaf to the loud but meaningless clamour of the masses. No wonder he looks upon himself as an altogether exceptional person. Thirdly, he possesses to an even greater extent than some of his Western compeers the ostrich-like quality of being able to bury his swollen head in the sandy waste of statistics, expediency, and opportunism, and so not to see the grim and bloody realities that come stalking over the horizon. Fourthly, he gets heady with power too easily won. Lastly, and all the time, he is totally devoid of a sense of humour and consequently lacks a sense of proportion. Tickle him with a jest and he wriggles with annoyance, prod him with a gibe and he squeals like a guinea-pig in pain. The utter inability of Mr. Gandhi—the striking exception to most of the above generalisations—to see a joke may yet plunge his country into a welter of blood. Mr. Gandhi is neither conceited nor a fool. He is honest, sincere, and brave. But he has as much sense of proportion as he has original sin, and if India gets the independence for which some of his friends now howl, his will be the first head to fall by stroke of Mussulman *tulwar*, because, unlike his friends, he will not flee the monster that he has raised, the monster that is there but that looms so big that he is unable to take in its full grisly details, the monster that the British are helping him to mould into something really dangerous. For if Mr. Gandhi is devoid of humour the British are either too full of it or have lost the art of successful government—which is merely the dealing out of justice without fear or favour.

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### 2

Are the yappers right? What do they say? In effect what they say is this—India is our country, we did not ask you to come here, we do not want you to stay. You have tried to bribe us with the shadow of power. We will not be fooled. Give us the reality. Give us the army, the Civil Service. We will govern ourselves. If you do not give, we'll take. We know you! We remember Ireland!

“India is our country. *Bandé Matheran!* Long live the Motherland!” This expression is demonstrably humbug, humbug clear, apparent, and proven, and yet it has gulled and beguiled many into foolish excesses and senseless mouthings. It is as though a Portuguese or a Pole exclaimed in a fine patriotic frenzy, “Europe is our country. Long live the Motherland!” The very expression *Bandé Matheran* is incomprehensible, a foreign tongue, to fully two hundred millions of India's population. For what is India's population? The true friends of that country have pointed it out times without number, but like all fundamental facts it is taken so much for granted that political humanity has long since ceased to pay any attention to it at all. Still, one hopes that the ordinary citizen's interest is being a little stirred at Simon Commissions, Lansbury telegrams, bombing of Viceroys, and declarations of revolution. It will be well for the ordinary citizen to begin by grasping what India is. It is the great ethnological exception, the land of cowards and heroes, tall men and short, liars and lovers of truth, assassins and warriors, all in distinct groups, all speaking different tongues, worshipping different

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gods, eating different foods, mutually contemptuous one of the other, intolerant of one another's opinions, and yet all living under one flag, the stranger flag of the English. One imagines this fact by itself must be irksome to high-spirited Indian youth, if any such belong to the Gandhi faction, which I for one seriously doubt.

Of the population of three hundred and twenty millions, 68 per cent. is Hindu and 21 per cent. Mahomedan. There are three million two hundred thousand odd Sikhs. The remainder of the population is made up of Christians, Jains, Parsees, Buddhists, and so on. There are two hundred and twenty-two vernacular languages, Western Hindi, the principal, being spoken by ninety-six million people. A Pathan could no more converse with a Bengali than a Spaniard could talk to a Slovene. In addition, the contempt that a Pathan, say, feels for a Bengali is greater than that of a Turk for an Armenian, or that of Mr. G. B. Shaw for Mr. Hannen Swaffer. This statement brings one abruptly up against the fact that all the ostriches in all the parties consistently bilk. The Pathan's contempt for the Bengali has a clear and solid foundation. The Bengali is a physical coward. To put it mildly, he is not of fighting breed. During the War the teeming millions of Bengal produced one battalion, more as a gesture, one suspects, than because even that number of Bengalis was spoiling for a fight. The Punjab and the Border, the Sikhs, Gurkhas, Maharrattas, and Rajputs, who supplied the armies of India in Britain's need, are inclined to chuckle when bemused politicians talk of India's services to the Empire. Bengal with its forty-six million inhabitants supplied a battalion !

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Macaulay, who, with all his flamboyance, was no fool, and who knew India as well, say, as Sir John Simon, was not far wrong—"The physical organisation of the Bengali is feeble even to effeminacy. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness for purposes of manly resistance; but its suppleness and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration not unmingled with contempt." Everyone should read the whole passage in the essay on Warren Hastings. It is as true to-day as it was in 1841. The fatal habit of politicians of losing sight of history has impelled many of them to believe that because British rule has protected the Bengali for years the latter has been miraculously transformed from a cunning and vindictive windbag into a man.

Madras—with its forty-two million people—did little better than Bengal. Bombay was lucky in having the Mahratta States, actual and reliquar, and nobly did the Mahratta regiments perform. For the rest, it was the Mahomedan of the Punjab, the Pathan, the Sikh, the Rajput, and the Ghurka. The Pathan, hook-nosed, high-handed Border brigand, is a foreigner; the Punjab Mahomedan is a descendant of the Mahomedan invaders; the Ghurka is a foreigner; neither the Rajput nor the Sikh nor the Mahratta is in any way like his neighbours; indeed, one could make out a very good

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case for the proposition that the army of India is not strictly Indian at all. But it is not necessary to do this. Suffice it that the Indian Sepoy belongs to one or other of the fighting races, races apart, descended invariably from one or other of the minorities who have held India with the strong hand. The importance of this surely should be manifest. In no other part of the globe have you got the extraordinary situation of a series of conquering races all settled in a vast territory and all now under a European conqueror. The reason why the indigenous populations so outnumber the conquerors is to be found in the simple explanation that the indigenous races are incapable of resistance. The lion lies down with the lambs, the surviving lambs that is, the lion being surfeited with the lambs already devoured. To-day, the lambs have learnt how to roar, and do so in innumerable warcries, resolutions, speeches, assassinations, and newspaper articles. But lambs cannot learn to bite, and the lions still have teeth. The trouble is that the Lansburys of this world, not being big game-hunters, cannot distinguish one of these quadrupeds from the other, and the Simons, being lawyers, listen to the evidence and pay no attention to the racial hatreds, ancient feuds, and quite different characters of each. A witness is a witness, whether it be a glib dialectician of a *babu* or a bearded warrior from the high hills. Long live the Motherland! Whose Motherland? There is only one answer—the Motherland of him with the sword that is sharp and the claws that are cruel. So when the yappers say that India is their country they are right only in so far as they live therein. In the sense that they could



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govern it they are wrong, but they do not realise how wrong they are. Could the Greeks or the Portuguese govern a united Europe to-day? The parallel is a fair one, though a little unjust to the Greeks and the Portuguese.

### 3

The difficulty about a pamphlet such as this is to know what to leave unsaid. How describe an Indian? A life-long English resident of Calcutta could not describe a Pathan and an officer of Guides might easily know nothing about a Bhil. The Indian himself is in even greater difficulty, for he is full of inherited and religious prejudices. What is there in common between a lithe, long Northern mountaineer and a tubby little plainsman from the Ganges delta? Only one thing can such people have in common and that is hatred of the same thing or person. Indian independence will come out of hatred if it comes at all; hatred the offspring of Oriental lies and the child of English injustice. The broad distinction between the two chief peoples of India is their religions. The Mahomedan believes in one God, the Hindu in a hundred. The Mahomedan judges a man by what he is, the Hindu by who his father was. The Mahomedan is virile (except where, as in Bengal, the climate over generations has proved too much for him), the Hindu effete. The Mahomedan is simple, the Hindu subtle. His multiplicity of gods often enough drives the educated Hindu into agnosticism—the Amils of Hyderabad, Sind, for instance, as a class, have no religious beliefs.

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The above distinction is very broad indeed. The Sikh is a Hindu, but a Hindu who has reformed Hinduism and who has one spiritual god and one sacred book, the *Ardi Granth*. The history of the Sikhs opens up an interesting line of enquiry. He was turned into a warrior by the purging of his idolatries and the abolition of caste. In shedding his superstitions he girded on a sword. In this same singleness of belief is to be found the chief strength of Mahomedanism. A religious fanatic cannot fail to be a fighter if everlasting bliss is to be his reward. A political fanatic cannot fail to be a coward, for his earthly ambitions, the safety of his skin, must needs be his prime consideration. Three stories of the various points of view of Orientals may serve to underline what I am attempting to convey. An Afghan chief came to see me once to ask my advice. He was the agent of the Amir of Afghanistan and he drove a trade in wool. A Hindu merchant had bought a large consignment from him on sample. The consignment had arrived. The Hindu had rejected it as not being up to sample. More, the Hindu was buying against him in the market. Was there any means of his getting out of the mess? The obvious thing was to ask him for the contract he had made. But there was nothing in writing. The next thing was to enquire—delicately—whether the wool had been up to sample. Quite frankly the old gentleman admitted that it was not. The matter really was quite simple—word against word. The Afghan gentleman against the Hindu hucksterer. If the former said that the goods were up to sample a judge or arbitrator would probably believe him.

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“ I see,” ruminated the old Afghan, “ if I tell a lie I shall escape. Well, I am seventy-two years old and I have not told one yet. *Insha-Allah* I never will. I will pay.”

He paid. I thought of two or three citizens of the City of London whom I know.

My second illustration concerns a legal dispute too. A Hindu pundit, a Mahatma, a holy man, was condescending to converse with three Mawari merchants in my presence. The Mawaris are a powerful caste of Hindu merchant-bankers.

“ *Punditji*,” said one, “ Seth Bhagwandas told a lie to-day.”

The Pundit look horrified until Seth Bhagwandas explained. “ I was a witness in a court, *Punditji*,” he said, “ giving evidence for a caste fellow against a Mussulman.”

“ Ah,” said the holy man, “ that’s nothing; a court of law is a court of law.”

The third illustration is the old virgin story. I must tell it, if only to support Miss Katherine Mayo. Her book, *Mother India*, caused a pretty stir. This of course is because it is the truth, and nothing but the truth, though not the whole truth. It hit the Hindus hard. They squealed. She had only been a short time in India, they cried. The reply to that is that the state of things must be shameless indeed to permit of the intelligent observer unearthing it in so short a time.

As far as I remember Miss Mayo did not recount the story as having been told to her at first-hand by one of the warrior class. Indeed, that would be very unlikely.

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Either she or one of her reviewers fathered the story upon the late Sir Pertab Singh. This caused some protest, which is not surprising as Sir Pertab Singh was a great Rajput gentleman, a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. But what Miss Mayo was told undoubtedly is an idea at the back of the heads of not a few of the predatory Border hawks. It was conveyed to me by a Baluchi chief at Quetta in the year 1920. An old full-bodied, athletic, keen-eyed man, he was not above indulging in a gentle jest at the expense of the British Government which had loaded him with honours.

"Tell me, Sahib," he said in the vibrant monotone of his race, "when is India going to get Home Rule?"

"How does that interest you, Sirdar Sahib?" I asked.

"Well, Sahib," he replied, cocking his bright old eye, "in my tribe there are many strong young men with nothing to do. When, through the benevolence and wisdom of the English, India gets Home Rule I am prepared to guarantee that, in my territory at all events, there will, at the end of twenty-four hours, not be one Hindu money-box nor one Hindu virgin intact."

As he said this the old rascal licked his chops. And yet, in his own way, he was an honourable man, hospitable, brave, and generous. It is simply that to him the Hindu is fair game. One suspects that this story has been told to others too, as it crystallises succinctly and ruthlessly the point of view of one section of the Mahomedan fighting races. Their contempt for the Hindu trading classes is only equalled by the Hindu's disdain for the Mahomedan warrior class. It is, alas, only

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too true that when it comes to the ultimate end of an argument the long sword summarily disposes of the long tongue.

Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just,  
But four times he who gets his fist in fust.

### 4

“ You have tried to bribe us with the shadow of power.” That is the next material allegation made against the British by the yappers. Like the statement that India is their country, there is truth in this allegation inasmuch as the ultimate sanction for the enforcement of legislation—the army—is outside the control of the legislature. In many other respects, too, what was granted to India was the shadow and not the substance of power. Indeed, the matter is not worth arguing, because, as Lord Russell, the Under-Secretary of State for India, recently stated, there is no question of India obtaining Dominion status in the immediate future. This makes the recent utterances of the Viceroy the most nebulous and mischievous verbiage that one can well imagine.

The present system of government in India is founded on the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms which were said to be stepping-stones to Dominion status, which, in fact, were a war sop to agitators, which have done not the slightest measure of good, and which have left things so that in the interests of all concerned the political ambitions of the few Indians who have any must either be checked firmly or be given free rein under the British

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Crown. Fine words will no longer suffice. The inarticulate millions desire justice and security to pursue their avocations. The bellowing of Congress, the speeches of English politicians leave them cold. But they cannot understand how revolution can be openly and actively preached against a Government which is worthy of that name. They grow restless, suspicious, and discontented. They are simple people and have a peculiar desire to know where they stand. Those of them with inherited warlike instincts are already no doubt contemplating the future with interest, licking their chops as did the old Baluchi chief in Quetta ten years ago. It is bad for any country for its inhabitants to be uncertain, and India is peculiarly susceptible to the winds of rumour. Only last year in Bombay it was rumoured that Hindu children were being kidnapped by Pathans and murder ensued. Either India is fit for Dominion status or it is not. If it is, it should get it. If it is not, it should be made to realise at once that those who talk of it are merely indulging in idle prophecies based on insufficient material and impelled merely by the wish to please—an Oriental quality of which Englishmen have mercifully hitherto possessed not even the rudiments.

The serious question is, Can we go back ? The present system of government is a freak and has been proved to be a failure. Even if it were good that it should be scrapped, no statesman in this country will be found with the courage necessary to restore the system that was superseded. It is perhaps a pity that Mussolini was born an Italian. He possesses a curious intellectual

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honesty that might have made him loved amongst those in India who really count. What are the real objections to India having Dominion status? Her people are not educated up to it? She is really subdivided into different nations? Her political leaders are incapable? She cannot be trusted? It would be easy to put up a thousand objections, *every one of which is an admission that the only possible government for such a land is autocratic government*. If that is so, the present system is either a farce or a failure. Later on in this pamphlet one may be permitted to suggest what in one's opinion (for what it is worth) should be done to solve this problem.

Meanwhile, what of the Simon Commission? That group of sincere and able men may be relied upon to do their best. Unhappily each one of them has his political prejudices. Not that such prejudices will be permitted consciously to interfere with what they conceive to be justice. Still, one has an unholy suspicion that when the report of the Commission is published the Conservatives will not go so far as the Liberals and the Liberals will be out-distanced by the Socialists. It is not for the ordinary man to criticise so eminent a statesman as Sir John Simon, but it is a sorry scrub who is afraid to be honest in his views: as for me I have always thought that Sir John Simon's historic speech at the time of the Great Strike was the apotheosis of the lawyer mind. I can imagine Hampden or Oliver Cromwell worrying as to the legality of their actions against Charles I, or Mirabeau or Danton studying statutes to justify the French Revolution! A successful revolution automatically ceases to be a revolution with its success and its legality

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or otherwise thereupon becomes academic. The political sores of India cannot, alas, be cured by the application of paper poultices, not even if they bear the signatures of all the eminent lawyers who have ever beguiled judges and charmed juries into giving spectacular verdicts. This, too, is certain. Whatever the Simon Commission recommends, the Indian yappers will demand more. They will create an atmosphere of prejudice and will preach revolution louder than ever. You cannot silence such people save with guns and nobody wants to use those. It is a little one-sided at the moment. Those who disagree with us let off bombs and we reply with Reports. What will be the end? Revolution? Three hundred and twenty million people seething with rebellion? It is consoling to think that the majority of them would fly from a child with a pop-gun. But there are still many millions of fighters left, and there is the spectre of civil disobedience. You can't imprison nations *en bloc*.

### 5

The demands made for the control of the Services follow naturally from the demand for self-government. The difficulty to be met will be the one least anticipated by those who clamour for self-government or independence. If they were granted independence they would, whilst they lived, clamour for the moon. As it is the nature of the hound to give tongue when on the scent, so it is the nature of the Indian agitator to give tongue so long as there is someone to listen. If the worse came



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to the worst he would be satisfied if that one were himself. The difficulty will be the army itself, like O. Henry's trust which is its weakest point. For the army would either lay down its arms *en masse*, or, retaining them, would proceed to found a first-class military oligarchy with the talkers as hewers of wood and drawers of water, as has happened time and again at different periods of Indian history. The results would be chaotic, though in these days of rapid transit the chaos would not last so long as it would have done a century ago. And of course there might be outside influences to reckon with—the Japanese, for instance. But—with Dominion status—one is inclined to the belief that the army would be a shield against most of those things which timid statesmen fear. Taking it by and large the army of India is intensely loyal to the Crown, and so long as it serves the Crown and is paid for doing so (when all is said and done it is a professional army) it will not concern itself with the shifting currents of intrigue and counter intrigue that will trouble the stream of Indian politics. If India were independent? I once asked a respected veteran, a Subedar-Major of the 129th Baluchis, what he would do if India were suddenly to become independent. "Lead the *pultan* [regiment] straight to the jewellers' quarter," he replied grimly. I made the same enquiry of a Rajput Commandant of native State Cavalry. He said nothing. He was in uniform. His hand strayed to his sword and for a fleeting instant there was a bleak look at the back of his fine black eyes. The Men of the Sword have their ideas of power too, though they are less clamant than the Men of Words. But let India be

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but under the Crown, and in the army of India and in the troops of the native States you have the best guarantees of the safety of life and property.

When Akbar was emperor it was said that a child could walk with a bag of gold from Bombay to Delhi and be unmolested. A child would be lucky to get as far as the city boundaries to-day. Akbar was a great ruler, greater even than the late Marquess Curzon. He was a stranger from over the Border, but he gained India by firmness and justice. We had India, too, at one time, but we lost her when she became ours. If we get her back it will be by trusting the right people and refusing to be panicked by bluffers who cannot make good their bluff. If Sir Michael O'Dwyer had permitted himself to panic after the Amritsar riots, a bloody revolution would have started in the Punjab. But the mantle of Clive was then upon Sir Michael's shoulders. It has since been torn off by a Government which reaped the fruits of his labours whilst expressing horror of his tilling. Sir Michael trusted the army. He could hear the steady throbbing of their loyal hearts above the gibberings and threatenings of the prancing politicians on their platforms.

Let it not be forgotten that a large part of India governs itself now, and does it well—shall I say better than the English govern the rest of it? There are seventy-one million people in the Native States and Agencies. These millions are not subject to British Indian law, the Indian Legislature has no right to legislate for them, they are outside the jurisdiction of the High Courts, and have their own Prime Ministers, their own Councils,

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their own armies. An English Resident advises (or not, as the case may be) the Native Government, which can make no war or peace, nor send ambassadors abroad. Their armies are strictly limited and their sovereigns are liable to be deposed for misrule—this is, usually speaking, a euphemism for kidnapping or murder. Despite the handicap of having no Indian Civil Servants, no Congresses, little sedition, and not much Western education, the Native States contrive to get on quite well. It is time that some one pointed out that their inhabitants are more contented, *caeteris paribus*, than those of British India. They have not been dry-nursed, cajoled, and bullied to the same extent as their bewildered brethren across their frontiers. It must not be forgotten, though, that what they have they largely owe to the sanity of British rule. They are in danger, imminent danger, of being dragged into the maelstrom. As it is, with their independent interior rule, their own Councils, their own Courts, what is it they have *de facto* if not *de jure* if it is not Dominion status? Here one may pause. A faint glimmering is apparent. Is there so much difference between the Indian of British India and the Indian of the Native States that what is good for one is bad for the other? Here perhaps is the possible solution of the problem.

## CHAPTER II

### I

CAN India achieve a successful breakaway, organise a revolution? It depends on the British and on the capacity of Indians to unite. Only a rotten or rotting Government can be definitely overset. Revolution connotes collapse of the other party. Have we reached that stage in India? Are we a pricked bladder, a burst airball? Is our Government a joke? To a great extent it is. It is a source of continual amusement to a certain section of the native population. Their risibility is in part excited by the glorious game of Jack-in-the-Box that we play with eminent seditionists. The game is well over ten years old and was perhaps invented by some bright young man during Lord Chelmsford's régime—or, more likely, the patentee is a lawyer, because lawyers are the only people who make money out of it. What happens is this—an agitator delivers a thundering good speech or writes a wonderfully inspiring article—calling upon Indians to rise and slay the oppressor, inciting to armed rebellion, indulging in a general orgy of abuse, a strident trumpeting of sedition. The gentleman is arrested. There is a sensation. He is brought before a magistrate and charged with a fine series of offences under the Indian Penal Code. The Crown, naturally enough, has to be represented by counsel whose fees are commensurate with the dignity of his client. Then the fun begins. Two courses are

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open to the accused. He can administer a *riposte* to the Crown by employing an expensive counsel with a bitter tongue. Or, better still, he can refuse to plead. He is an Indian, he does not acknowledge the right of a British Court to sit in judgment on him. So he sits in the dock and grins defiance at the judge. There are suppressed murmurs of admiration, little intakes of breath, as the crowd gaze upon the martyr, who is acutely aware of the atmosphere of hero-worship. The judge or magistrate, poor fellow, affects a stern judicial dignity, reminiscent of the best Drury Lane melodrama court scene. If there are counsel on both sides there is the customary dog-fight according to Queensberry rules. If there is only one counsel the trial takes half as long. That is the only difference. The result is always the same. The accused is found guilty and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. There is woe and lamentation. The next move is with the Government. The law has exhibited its majesty, it is now the turn of the Executive. Ever since Mr. Lloyd George discovered that the word "gesture" can be used to disguise a surrender to *force majeure* or to wrap up a political bluff, no Government can resist making gestures. The Executive makes its gesture, therefore. It pardons the accused. That ends the game, but the sniggerings of the Indians go sibilantly round the land. The English have been weak again! Have staged another farce! It would be interesting to know how many seditionists of the thousands who have been convicted have served out their sentences. Even that strong man, Lord Lloyd, whose strength is such that the Labour Party were too scared to let him stay in

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Egypt, simply could not resist making these harlequin gestures when he was Governor of Bombay. Sir Michael O'Dwyer—but Sir Michael has not even gone into the City. The point of these exhibitions is that the Indian agitator has come to resemble a spoilt child. He regards any and every governmental threat as a mere *brutum fulmen*. Indeed, it would be absurd to expect him to do otherwise.

Something else that has caused the Englishman to be made a mock of is the case of the late General Dyer. This is no time to go into the merits of the matter. The men on the spot (those convenient shields behind which you can skulk when necessary and break when you think it is opportune) were without exception convinced that by his seemingly ruthless action at Amritsar he averted a terrible catastrophe. And a judge of the English High Court has publicly and openly approved of his conduct. He may have been wrong but he had been indemnified by the Government. His subsequent sacrifice on the altar of Democracy or common funk, whichever it was, filled the enemies of England with a comfortable feeling that Great Britain no longer backs her loyal servants. A Mahomedan friend of mine, a member of the Indian Bar, amongst many other things told me once that that hallowed expression “ the word of an Englishman ” was rapidly becoming a subject for laughter in the bazaars. He said this not only with reference to affairs in India, but to more than one piece of international chicanery of which he said the British Government had been guilty since the War.

There is a further consideration which in the interests

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of truth should not be forgotten. English politicians have been by implication and by actual words dinning it into the ears of the Indians that they are as good as we are. The Indian, not unnaturally, is attempting to explain the seeming miracle of how three hundred and twenty million people who are equal to a population of forty million in all manly qualities can possibly have permitted themselves to be conquered and dominated by the latter whose land is some four thousand miles away. When they ponder how Ireland with its four million inhabitants successfully defied the British Government they must positively foam at the mouth at the contemplation of the numerous English officials who draw large salaries from their land. The answer has, of course, been given above. India is not a homogeneous country, and although some of its inhabitants may be quite as good or better physically and intellectually than the British people, they are not united and will never unite from within, although the indifference and crass ignorance of their rulers may weld them into a whole by repeated insensate blows from without. When that time comes India will be a great and prosperous power, and all her friends will rejoice, except the yappers who now occupy the chief seats in the market-place.

The charming spectacle provided by the explanations and counter explanations and the general inability of supposedly responsible people to say what they mean is a source of grave potential danger in a country where loyal men want clarity and disloyal men are quick to take advantage of any inconsistencies in the utterances of statesmen.

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Long ago the Indians were told that when they were fit for it they would have Dominion status. Suddenly out of the blue the Viceroy announces that India is to have Dominion status. Mr. George Lansbury burns the wires with fraternal congratulations to his friends. Mr. Wedgwood Benn explains that what the Viceroy meant was that India was to have Dominion status at some future unspecified date. Some other panjandrum says that Mr. Lansbury's telegram was sent with the approval of his colleagues. And then Earl Russell sums up the whole position by describing all these jubilant nebulosities as " foolish words." Who can be surprised if in face of this spate of irresponsibility the simple-minded warrior scratches his puzzled head and wonders what new mad dog has bitten the English whilst the astute politician rubs his hands with glee at the thought that the British have put their foot in it again. Of course, under present conditions the ideal Viceroy for India is not a human being at all, but an extra-sized gramophone playing never-ending records of the inanities of modern statesmen. This would possess the advantage amongst other things of being immune from bombing.

### 2

It is not irrelevant to consider whether in truth and in deed the Indians are, under modern conditions, be it understood, the equals of Europeans. It is extraordinary that with so vast a population not one modern invention has come out of India. Beginning with steam down to wireless they have had nothing to do with any of those



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developments that have for good or ill made present-day civilisation what it is. One can think of no scientist that has come out of those regions save and except Sir Jadadis Bose who has made the momentous discovery that vegetable life has emotions, a fact, I am ashamed to confess, that leaves me cold. I get no thrill from the thought that a dahlia can make love. It will be said—it has been said before—that the reason for this is because the majority of the inhabitants of India are members of a contemplative religion. This does not, of course, apply to Mahomedanism, which noble faith is perhaps too stark to be constructive. Anyhow, one imagines that the devotees of a contemplative religion should abstain from political ambition, the grasping at power or the hurling of bombs. India has, of course, produced many fine soldiers, but if the art of war is not exactly extinct, its exponents, whose trade is death, can hardly be expected to do much towards the scientific or artistic elevation of the world. Moreover, deny it who will, Indian troops, from the time that Europe discovered Asia, have given of their best when officered by Englishmen and Frenchmen. This is as much a tribute to the loyalty of the fighting Indian as it is to the quality of leadership of the great European military nations. The mention of Frenchmen makes the temptation to discuss French rule in Morocco irresistible. It is irresistible, but I shall resist it. But why is it that France has a genius for governing warlike races and something like inability to rule down-trodden peoples? Is it that French democracy is too aristocratic?

In considering the question of a possible Indian revolt one is apt to forget that India is an entirely different proposition from every other dominion, colony or dependency. In the Dominions of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand one perceives what are called "White Men's Countries." India is anything but that. In a few generations white men would degenerate. In Canada and Australia and, to a lesser degree, New Zealand the aboriginal populations have been too weak or too few to hold their own. In South Africa and in the Colonies the populations are made up chiefly of members of the negroid race. In India the people are mostly Aryan, too numerous to be exterminated, and too full of teetotal fanaticism to be slowly destroyed with trade gin. The European who goes there goes either from a sense of duty so elevated as to be almost beyond the vision of the ordinary man, or to squeeze a modest pension out of the country, or to gather together sufficient spoil in commerce to enable him to keep an odd racehorse or two at home in his old age. That is one of the great problems in India. The English population is necessarily a floating one and consequently cannot help being viewed by the native as interlopers. It must be admitted that not a few Englishmen emphasise this themselves by their attitude and their manner of dealing with the Indian.

Since the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms there has been introduced a fictitious courtesy in the relations between a certain type of official and a certain kind of

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native which only serves to make more permanent the memory of what things were before. (Who was it said that you cannot make a gentleman by Act of Parliament?) Many a disgruntled agitator in many a country owes his state of mind not to political but to social causes. True that every man is entitled to spend his leisure in such company as he may choose, but it must be irksome, say, to a Rajput nobleman of ancient lineage and perfect breeding to know that he is refused admittance to a club of which some ill-bred, jumped-up little whipper-snapper of an English youth is a member. Clubs open to Indians and Europeans do exist, but their foundation, with the great exception of the Willingdon Club, Bombay, has been due to Indian and not to European initiative. Only the other day Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, a highly intelligent and very charming gentleman, publicly commented on the fact that in English clubs there was not even a room in which Indians could meet their English friends. There are many friendships between Englishmen and Indians and many of us treasure such friendships and their memories, but they are, alas, ridiculously small in proportion to their possible number, and will continue to be so so long as mutual suspicion and lack of understanding keep the races at arm's-length. It is, of course, very difficult for an Englishman to have intimate social relations with nine Indians out of ten. This is because whilst an Indian may call upon you and lunch with you and your family, whilst your wife visits his wife, *vis-à-vis* his womenfolk you are treated as though you were the worst kind of potential criminal. They lurk in *purdah* and you are not permitted to look

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upon their faces or to hold converse with them save in exceptional circumstances. This relic of the days when men went through India with fire and sword is a tremendous barrier to social relations between the races.

But nothing justifies the contemptuous attitude of many Englishmen towards the natives, and to hear some of that kidney pronounce the simple word "native" is in itself an education in offensiveness and a revelation of insolence. The great majority of Englishmen dwell in the great seaports of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Karachi, and outside such cities the official classes are predominant. The European merchant of the town, intent on his own affairs, pitting his wits all day against the astute and not infrequently unscrupulous Indian trader, cannot be expected to know much about the vast Indian hinterland. Over 70 per cent. of the natives of India are engaged in agriculture in its various branches, and only some 10 per cent. in industrial pursuits. The machine has changed the face of England and has but scarred the face of India. The problems of an agricultural people are radically different from those of an industrial. The wind is a nuisance to the captain of a steamer, but a necessity to the navigator of a barque. The gathering cloud that sets the ploughman's heart rejoicing at the thought of a rich harvest sends the townsman grumbling into shelter. The farmer cannot turn on the sun at need as the factory manager switches on the electric light. The simple Indian peasant views the astute lawyer and the eloquent politician with a regard half suspicious and half reverent. What the man of the city rejects the son of the soil swallows. The day

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that the Indian peasant will follow blindly the lead of those whom the factory workers now follow may well be an evil day for the Government that has listened too much to those who talk and neglected the humble ones who work. Mr. Gandhi, whether you disagree with him or not, has the seeds of greatness in him. Like all the truly great, he is quite indifferent to money. His eyes are fixed upon the stars. He believes that English rule as it now is is bad for India. Perhaps he feels that the men of the complicated mechanical age cannot understand the simple needs of the men who work with their hands. The very words "machinery of Government" convey to his mind something of a horrible efficiency, a grinder out of money, but without a soul. So he sits and knits and strives to turn his country towards what is simple. Blessed are the meek for they shall possess the land! But with his head amongst the stars he fails to see the clashing interests that surge and seethe about his feet. He would cleanse the muddy waters of Indian political life, but he would turn them into a lake of blood. Meanwhile, his is the essentially simple mind that the simple Indian peasant can understand. And he does not want their money, neither by way of tax, nor bribe nor gift. They are not quite so simple as to fail to appreciate this. Some of them may even feel that Mr. Gandhi realises their importance. One doubts if the Montagu-Chelmsford school ever did. Certainly out of one hundred and forty-three seats in the Legislative Assembly only seven were allocated to landholders—a truly amazing proportion in a land well over two hundred millions of whose people are agriculturists. And

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amongst the Ministries you will look in vain for a Minister of Agriculture. This is proof that the more you yap the more you get. What time is there to try to find out what the dumb desire? No time until it is too late, the time when they come to employ the only argument they know, the *argumentum ad hominem*, the point of the sword. Mr. Gandhi, however, thinks that he knows a more powerful weapon than many swords. The weapon of civil disobedience. It has been successfully tried in one district of Bombay. If a sufficient number of people in a given territory choose to do so they can undoubtedly dislocate the machinery of government by the simple process of refusing to pay such taxes as may be imposed upon them. The success or not of the enterprise, in other words the necessary length of time for its exploitation, depends upon the strength of the Government and the attitude of the surrounding territories. If a large proportion of the population of India chose to adopt this course there can be no doubt that a staggering blow would be administered to constituted authority. Governments might issue proclamations, police might arrest, troops might make martial demonstrations, but there are limits to such things. If the passive resisters stuck it out they would inevitably win. The trouble is that like a good many of the ideas of exceptionally unworldly men, the scheme entirely fails to take into consideration the important element of human nature. Arrest would be resisted, troops would be jeered at, heads would be broken, the affair would gradually merge into disorder and then culminate in chaos. Mr. Gandhi has had similar experiences before. A peaceful

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strike has ended in a killing. Mr. Gandhi, going into retreat, fasted for many days as a penance for the brutality of his followers. Mr. Gandhi unfortunately has not yet got the power to restore the dead to life. Before long he may wish that he had it. The poison brewed by the seditionists out of suspicion, envy, and an amalgam of truth and falsehood may, assisted by the ignorant hands of their English friends, percolate to the inarticulate masses of India no less than to the warriors, who for wholly different reasons may see fit to join the giddy dance of death.

### 4

It is fairly clear that a united India could sweep away every vestige of British rule. An India united for the placing of power in the hands of the yappers is inconceivable, but disgust at the oscillations of British rule might drive the fighters for their own ends into the arms of the men of words, whilst the *ryots* might be fooled into lining themselves alongside the enemies of England. The strength of a united India was brought home to me very forcibly once by a friend of mine, a Hindu, from the Native State of Bharatpur, who said simply but forcibly, " If we all spat together we would drown you English." It is perhaps typical that he omitted to observe that in the operation he would probably drown himself as well. There remains two things to consider, the police and the army. The Indian police have been much abused. They have been accused of corruption and cruelty. There can be no doubt that

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in their zeal to secure convictions they sometimes commit perjury. This, of course, is a horrifying idea to those who know only the police in the West End of London. But whatever else may be said against the Indian policeman no one can seriously attack his loyalty to those he serves. Poorly paid, abused, the finger of scorn pointed at him, his evidence viewed with the most insulting care by most tribunals, he none the less contrives to inspire those who know him with the belief that he would not hesitate to die in the last ditch for the sake of the salt that he ate. He is a very serious obstacle in the path of the agitators. He is as wily as they are. He is adroit in the employment of spies. He is, it is to be feared, not over scrupulous in the means he employs to secure such evidence as he requires. But, I suppose, even he can be tried too high. When the time comes when his own employers disown him, when those he gets punished are released continually to return and laugh in his beard, he may, in sheer disgust, wash his hands of a service in which there is nought to be gained save dishonour, and stand by with folded arms whilst all around him there is turmoil. The Indian army is as loyal as the police. It is officered by men who know it and love it as much as they themselves are loved. It is recruited from the best of the breeds of men who for generations have lived and perished by the sword. In the far-flung reverberations of a world war one had hardly time to admire the stark uncompromising loyalty of the Indian Mahomedan troops who without question flung themselves against their co-religionists the Turks, whose ruler at that time was to the Mahomedan world



what the Pope of Rome is to the Roman Catholic. The great cry of the agitators is for the Indianisation of the Indian army. By this they mean the elimination of the Indian army, for its troops would refuse to serve under such officers as the Indian politicians would supply them. Whether the Indian politicians know this or whether their heads are so deep in the sand that they do not know it, the fact remains. Pathan regiments, for example, if they could not be officered by Englishmen would only consent to be officered by Pathans. A gentleman from Bengal suddenly finding himself Colonel of a Pathan regiment would not lead them for long, for they are quick movers and they would overtake him. Still, officered by their own people, as are the troops of the Native States, one does not see why the thing might not be a success providing always that the Indian army owed its allegiance to the British Crown. They can be trusted, but the truth is that things have reached the stage when we are afraid to trust the trustworthy because of the incessant clamour of the yappers in our ears. One can imagine nothing that would turn the Indian army from its allegiance save actual desertion of it by a British Government. It would have a merry time then, fleshing its blade in the fat paunches of greasy traders.

In the Indian army one sees something strong and stable, a possible foundation for the building up of a strong and wealthy dominion. One cannot help feeling that the cry for Indianisation by those who know more about a bill of costs than a bayonet is designed to disturb the loyalty of the Indian army. They will find themselves sadly mistaken. They may succeed in raising

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a Frankenstein monster that will devour them. They may even succeed in gradually disbanding as fine a force as ever carried arms, but they will never succeed in tampering with the loyalty of the troops on whose *morale* they may have designs.

There it remains. Without some kind of assistance, active or passive, from the British, the yappers are unlikely to organise a successful effort at independence. A firm hand now, an acknowledgment that there are others besides the yappers, might conceivably cause a reversion to the old state of affairs, but this is almost impossible. Under present conditions discontent will grow. Every word about India uttered by English statesmen will be flashed across the seas, distorted, exaggerated, and used as propaganda to prove to the peoples of India that the English are untrustworthy, unjust, and selfish. If you keep saying a thing long enough about a person, whether it be true or false, provided it be derogatory, the majority will believe it, and if the person libelled, by the stupidity of his actions impels belief in his guilt he cannot blame the world for thinking him what he is said to be. When our statesmen eat their words, the meal, though no doubt nauseating as good medicine should be, comes too late to do any good. Probably it causes indigestion and ends in its repeating itself. Why in the name of all that is wise is it necessary to tell India that she is being led along the path that leads to Dominion? Who is to judge when the path has ended? The Socialist who says it has ended now, the Liberal who says it will end to-morrow, or the Conservative who says the end is not yet in sight? The

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yapper's point of view is that the whole business is flapping, that it is a war of words, a game of bluff that will be won by the noisiest. He has a shrewd idea that the English can be frightened. He thinks of Ireland and Egypt. He can exchange fraternal greetings in their own tongue with his English comrades, to whom he confides the news that he represents the whole of the Indian people. The sneak and the liar flourish like the green baytree, and in the darkness of the shade of its branches the loyalties and the braveries and the truths are lost to sight.

### 5

For an obscure and insignificant novelist, indeed for anyone, to write a pamphlet is no easy task. Circumstances demand speed, and though one may have devoted thought to the subject and reached certain conclusions before being asked to put them into writing, the unfamiliarity of the medium tends to make one too discursive here and too abrupt there. Still—it has its merits. Since I wrote the preceding sub-chapter, I find that Earl Russell has been eating his words. “ I never used the words attributed to me,” he said. “ What I did say was that the ultimate object was Dominion status based upon some kind of democracy.” It is gratifying to learn from the noble Earl that there are different kinds of democracy. I had long suspected this. I suppose when the “ ultimate object ” is attained, the kind of democracy upon which it will be based will depend on the personal idiosyncrasies of the then Viceroy and Secretary of State plus a combination of the personal

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fads of such M.P.s of the Party in power as are interested in India. It will be a kind of democracy of the colour of a chameleon. But do not forget—how delightful it all is and how the intelligent Indian must love it!—he never said that Dominion status would not be for a long time. Heavens. No! All he said was that the ultimate goal was Dominion status; so that anyone who likes can bawl that the goal is in sight, out of sight, round the corner, miles away, this year, next year, some time, never! Earl Russell will go far. He can beat a masterly retreat. He has the beautiful fluid politician mind. Meanwhile, Indians ask themselves whether the real concern of each and every English statesman is not his own personal reputation, and India, like many another thing, only a rung in a ladder of ambition? It is a loose rung, and if it gives the fall of the climber will involve the collapse of the whole ladder.

Earl Russell is reported—he will correct it if it is wrong!—as having said that between Dominion status and complete independence there was not much difference. The paramount difference is that Dominion status involves allegiance to the British Crown, represented by a Governor-General. This means considerably more, perhaps, than even so astute a statesman realises, and in India it would mean even more than it does in the other Dominions. Incidentally, Dominion status, complete Self-Government, would bestow upon India an inestimable boon. She would be spared the attentions of English statesmen and her agitators would have to seek for some new coconut-shy. Meanwhile, let Earl Russell and his friends beware. Events have a way of sweeping

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men along. It is all very well to talk of an ultimate goal. It is a noble gesture to call a round table conference with a view to creating a better atmosphere. When things begin to happen the best laid plans and the best of intentions "gang agley." Who could have foreseen the Russian Revolution? Did Louis the Sixteenth ever see the guillotine in his dreams? Or Nicholas of Russia feel the bullet? There are lessons to be learnt from history, and one of them is that the wise man should expect the unexpected and so forestall it. Another is that events, once started, move like an avalanche, with ever increasing speed. They can be diverted, but not dammed or defied. We have started India upon a certain course. If—unostrich-like—we contemplate the position, there may appear some solution. But it will not be found in Reports. Committees on Indian affairs have sat often enough, and nearly each time events have out-distanced them. Suppose a Commission had toured Ireland and taken evidence and issued a Report? Would Ireland be a Dominion to-day? She would, but it would be because of Michael Collins and his company of poor men, and not through any calm judicial utterance based on evidence. Would a Commission cure unemployment? The great man is he who acts at once, intuitively, on the evidence of his own eyes and on the strength of his own convictions. The granting of Dominion status to South Africa—a land of Dutchmen, English, Zulus, Kaffirs, and East Indians—was such a stroke as astonished the world, a stroke that forged friendships out of enmity, a stroke the echoes of which were heard years afterwards when Louis Botha and Smuts led Englishmen to victory.

## CHAPTER III

### I

**C**AN the yappers translate their words into effective action? I have tried to indicate that by themselves they cannot, though circumstances created for them might help them to do so. It has been suggested that in a sense they are right whilst in another sense they are wrong. The third question propounded was this—If they are not right how account for their quite disproportionate hold upon the attention of the world? The answer to this third question has already been given in repeated references to the fact that as they are the articulate class they are listened to. One apprehends that if an Englishman had found himself in control of the building operations of the Tower of Babel those who had been blessed with the gift of the English language would probably have received a readier hearing—at least until the others started throwing bricks.

Assuming that soothing words will no longer suffice and that the continual eating of them is becoming irksome to the Indians, is there any scheme by which India can be set upon a solid political foundation and each class have its fair share in the government? I have often been struck by the constructive intelligence of many responsible Indians who do not speak English. They are in pleasing contrast to the brilliant but destructive windbags who do nothing but criticise.

The fountain-head of the Government of India is the

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Secretary of State, who represents Parliament and its supreme authority. In India the executive head of the Government is the Governor-General in Council, but he is subject to the direction of the Secretary of State, and he can also under certain circumstances act against the opinions of the majority of his Council. The Indian Legislature is composed of the Governor-General and a Council of State and a Legislative Assembly. Generally speaking, a Bill does not become law until both the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly have passed it. But in emergency the Governor-General can override both these bodies and pass essential legislation himself subject to the approval of His Majesty in Council. The Governor-General also has the power to make the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly debate again rejected Bills, and if some enthusiastic member of either body proposed legislation which in the opinion of the Governor-General affected the safety or tranquillity of British India, the latter would veto it.

With regard to the Budget it is submitted to both Chambers, and the Legislative Assembly can vote upon it with the exception of certain reserved matters; but where they have refused or reduced grants the Governor-General, if he thinks them essential, can proceed to act as though they had been passed, and he can, where he thinks it necessary, for the safety and tranquillity of British India or any part thereof, authorise the spending of money without the sanction of the Legislature. The Government has not a majority in the Indian Legislature, but that does not really affect it, because as its

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responsibility is to the English Parliament it can act in defiance of adverse votes.

This wonderful effort at solving a problem which in truth did not exist at the time, save in the bemused minds of the solutionists, is a source of continual wonder and admiration, not untinged with amusement, to the outside world, and a continual cause of irritation to those in the country where this amazing experiment has been tried. Power remains exactly where it was before, but its exercise depends more than ever upon the personal predilections of the ultimate authorities. One kind of Governor-General would smell danger to the safety or tranquillity of British India in the smallest manifestation of democratic zeal. Another kind might permit the most deadly of Bills. The only solid advantage that the scheme really possessed was the opportunity it gave for the airing of grievances, but in the flood of oratory real wrongs are submerged and the obstructionists have had an excessively long innings. A scheme of this kind is an insult to the intelligence, an aspersion on the loyalty and a defiance of the essential solidity of the best elements in India. It cries aloud for the scrap-heap. It reeks of Limbo. It has been reduced to an *absurdum* by the Indian agitators themselves. Budgets have had to be "certified" by the Governor-General and Governors have been compelled to take over "transferred" subjects from Indian Ministers. The thing is a ghastly farce. Violence has increased. Conspiracies have become rampant, and as we know there is now open talk of revolution accompanied by cries of "Down with the Union Jack." If the Montagu-



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Chelmsford Reforms were intended to be stepping-stones to better things, they have been trampled under-foot by some of those who have stepped upon them and used as missiles by others. Suddenly they find themselves in the full glare of day. English public opinion is focussed upon them. They shrink into the shadows of which they are a part. If they survive effectively at all, it will be as a monument to the crass folly of men. With what a flourish were they introduced! What trumpetings heralded their birth! India had moved a stage further towards self-government! *Bandé Matheran!* Mr. Montagu *ki jai!* Lord Chelmsford *ki jai!* The red dawn of liberty is breaking over the eastern horizon! And then the sun rose upon an abortion! A dismal dead thing, with the germs of disease already multiplying within it, a dead thing upon which vermin battered. The Civil Service, the army, and the loyal majority of Indians did their best to clothe the corpse, to hide its sores from the gaze of men. But they have been unable to create out of nothing. They are not gods. Not even gods out of the machine like many of their masters.

The worst of half-measures is that they always breed mischief. They satisfy nobody. Some protest that they are excessive whilst others bawl for more. The time comes quickly when they must either be cut down or lengthened. Every compromise gives birth to a fresh complication. What, then, should be done? Surrender to the demands for self-government? Or leave things as they are, a perennial menace to the peace of the Empire? There is no inherent disgrace in giving in if good will flow from surrender. That great and powerful

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country that straddles the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans like a Colossus is a living testimony to the glories of surrender. Perhaps Ireland will be the same. Most of the arguments that were advanced against Irish self-government are equally applicable as objections against the granting of self-government to India. They are based on the alleged incapacity of the governed to govern themselves, and are inspired, not infrequently, by fear of the loss of power or profit. "The only argument the British Government really understands," said a well-known Mahomedan seditionist, "is the argument contained in a bomb." And he spoke of George Washington and Michael Collins, and alleged that all that India had got had been wrung out of the English by force. So long as there was content there was no advance. The moment agitation began things moved. It serves no good purpose either to affirm or deny this humiliating proposition. Suffice it that it is more graceful and wise to give willingly than to be deprived of what one has to give by the strong hand. That is, if it be just to give. If it be not just, then neither blustering nor force should be permitted to have influence.

### 2

Can Self-Government, "under some kind of democracy" be it understood, be safely granted to India? If it could be granted it would have manifest advantages—I have pointed out that India would be spared the attentions of English statesmen, seeking from London to govern a heterogeneous mass of divergent races four

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thousand miles away. It would cause many an Indian who now is indifferent to take an active interest in the governance of his country, it would bring into being Public Opinion, a thing that does not now exist though the yappers claim to represent it. It would bring up the yappers themselves with a round turn, for things can be said and done under the shadow of Westminster that would not be tolerated in a self-respecting Dominion. It would waken the vast mass of the people to political activity ; they would have to rely upon themselves instead of others. Their apathy would cease. If it did not, it would make no difference. If it can be done it would see the entry of a great Commonwealth into the brotherhood of nations. It would strengthen the Empire. India itself would prosper.

Many, of course, would like the clock put back twenty years, but we must take things as we find them. It is idle to reach out for the moon. Can the lion and the lamb lie down together ? Fortunately, India is so divided that the different races occupy, broadly speaking, different territories. The North-West, Sind, Baluchistan, and the Punjab are mainly Mahomedan, except that part of the Punjab that is occupied by the Sikhs. The Hindus amongst them are peaceful traders, and such lawyers as there are know quite accurately on which side their bread is buttered. It is from the North-West and from the Punjab that the bulk of the army comes. Bengal is about equally divided between Hindu and Mahomedan, the present-day Bengal that is, since the partition. Madras and Bombay are mainly Hindu, and the same applies to the United Provinces, Bihar and

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Orissa and the Central Provinces. It is peculiar that most of the Mahomedan seditionists come from those provinces where Mahomedanism is the minority religion.

That Mahomedan and Hindu can exist at peace outside British jurisdiction is proved by the case of the Native State of Hyderabad with its population of thirteen millions, the majority of them Hindus under a Mahomedan rajah. The Hindu religion is the most tolerant in the world. It has never persecuted other faiths and it inculcates a large charity. The Mahomedan, like the Portuguese Roman Catholic, has more than once in India attempted to proselytise by the sword, and indeed has had some success. He would not be likely to attempt this strenuous missionary work in those sections of the country in which he is a minority. In Bengal he has grown out of that stage, the climate has made him lethargic, whilst in the North-West and the Punjab the chances of any internecine strife are so remote as to be negligible. The tradition of the Punjab is against that sort of thing. Indeed, the strife between Mahomedan and Hindu, I venture to say, to a great extent has been incited by mischievous interested parties for their own ends. The danger to India would be twofold. Conceivably it might be attacked from the north down those passes from which conquerors have descended from time immemorial, and the poor and the outcast might be tyrannised over and be the victims of corruption from within. The safeguard against the former contingency would be as it is now, the army. Such a force recruited for the service of the King-

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Emperor and officered by its own people, into whom years of English military tradition have been imbued, would be effective, the more so as behind it there would stand the forces of the whole Empire. Tyranny and corruption from within there would be. There is now. But they are no worse in the Native States than they are in British India. Supposing, then, India was split up into different states or provinces as are Canada, Australia, and South Africa to-day, why should one assume the worst? In the one department in which Indians have got absolutely equal opportunities with the English they have been an unqualified success. That is the judiciary, some of the greatest ornaments of which have been natives. The Indian High Court judges are just, independent, and learned, and confident in the knowledge that there were sanctions for the enforcement of their judgments they would be as fine a judicial body as could be found anywhere in the Empire. It is true that a judge to be effectual must be buttressed by surrounding security, and a sort of artificial dignity that gives him an aloofness that *per se* he may not deserve. *Inter arma silent leges*. There have been many great Indian administrators, the Emperor Akbar, for example, and given favourable conditions there is no reason why there should not be again. The thing is to see that conditions are made as favourable as possible.

Without our really realising it the whole of our attitude toward India has undergone an unconscious but radical change. We went there first as traders, remained as conquerors, and then developed into

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political missionaries. Political missionary work, like all other missionary work, consists largely in the promising of rewards. The religious missionary possesses the great advantage of promising his bounties for the next world, the political missionary, poor fellow, has to carry out his in this or reap the consequences of his failures. We have promised India Dominion status and have repeated that promise. We cannot seriously blame the Indian for believing us. We can blame ourselves for our own recklessness, but the more we try to qualify and tone down the effect of our words the more we must expect our neophytes to doubt. Our actions leave us open to the accusation that we are insincere. It would seem that our promised heaven, like that of the religious missionary, is not likely to be won in this life. The generation to whom it was promised therefore grows restive. And under the circumstances who can blame it? In the sweat and labours of our missionary work we have done what so many missionaries do. In our zeal to bring fresh converts into the fold we have a little overlooked those who are already there. In pleading with the suspicious to give us their trust, we have forgotten the millions who trust us already—millions whose numbers are daily slowly but steadily dwindling.

This is the time, if it ever was, for an exhibition of courage; for building instead of tinkering. In the present Legislatures, Indian and Provincial, the bodies of government exist. But no soul has as yet been breathed into them. It would be a noble experiment. And it would possess one great advantage. Its failure could not be concealed. If it broke down it would be a

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thorough break. A Governor-General, representing the King-Emperor, an army of India under his orders as Commander-in-Chief, with a soldier as his Deputy, and a number of Provincial Governments on the Australian model. Each province to have its own Prime Minister and Cabinet, the members of each Parliament to be elected without reference to caste, class or calling. Suffrage to be universal adult male suffrage, so that no privileged class could have any advantage. *There would have to be at least six new Parliaments.* The police and services open to all, even to such Englishmen as chose to make a career for themselves in India. The Native States to preserve their present constitutions until such time as they may think fit to alter them.

You would find this scheme strenuously opposed by the yappers who would see themselves drowned in a rising tide of sanity. All the best elements in India would hasten to the constructive assistance of their country.

There would of necessity be a Dominion Parliament with a Dominion Cabinet, and one would like to see a Senate—its members appointed for life by the Governor-General and the Governors on the advice of the Prime Ministers—forming part of the Dominion Parliament and of each Provincial Parliament, with powers similar to those of the English House of Lords. The outstanding advantages of the above plan would be, firstly, to give the Indians a sense of constructive responsibility; secondly, to cause the best of the Indians, for their own sakes, to enter political life; thirdly, to ring the curtain down on the present farce.

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It is not suggested that the Indian would display the same qualities as, say, Mr. Baldwin in the art of successful government, but to-day, with the world knit so much closer by swift lines of communication, the danger, if danger there be, would not be so great as it is at present. If Indians want India for themselves, let them have it, so long as no prejudice arises therefrom. The sedition-mongers would be compelled to change their warcries. But—would India in time vote for severance from the Empire? This I seriously doubt. Nothing would make them realise their racial differences one from the other so much as the manner in which each province would develop its own separate needs. New South Wales and South Australia have their differing problems. So much the more Madras and Sind. And the vast body of the silent, who now are unheard, would once and for all put an end to any demand for complete independence. Indeed—who knows?—the thing might end in a concerted and vociferous demand for the return of the British with all their imperfections. In the meanwhile a salutary lesson would have been learnt.

### 3

Of the few who read this little book some will conclude that I have written the above of malice prepense, with my tongue in my cheek. To such I would say this—if I had written in 1920 suggesting that Ireland should become a Dominion with a constitution such as she has at present I would have been classed as mad. I might



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possibly have been arrested for inciting to rebellion or disseminating seditious literature. If in 1901 I had advocated the granting of self-government within the Empire to the recently conquered South African Republics, every Conservative in the country would have clamoured for my head. If I had lived a century and a half ago and advocated the granting of the demands of the American colonists, the welkin would have rung with the guffaws of the Die-hards of the period. Ireland govern herself? Ridiculous! The Irish are incapable even of beginning so to do! Give those damn Boers self-government? By gad, sir, you'd send the Empire to the dogs! Surrender to the demands of the American rebels? Let the fellow be taken away in custody and tried for his life for high treason!

I am, I blushingly acknowledge it, being intensely original. I am attempting to be wise before the event. We have the defects of our qualities as a nation. We forget too soon, and so many a valuable lesson is lost to us. It is said, with what truth one does not know, that an American recently pointed out that historic spot, Bunker's Hill, to a young travelling Englishman. "Say," cried the American, "see there. There's Bunker's Hill!"

The young Englishman affixed his monocle to his eye and gazed politely at the eminence.

"Really," he murmured, "how interesting. And—er—who *was* Bunkah?"

Had he remembered, a descendant of his might be spared the necessity of having one day to ask who *was* Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi has recently issued a new ulti-

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matum. " If the British Government invites the Indian National Congress to a conference, to discuss and frame not any scheme but a scheme definitely for an independent Government, and if it fulfils other conditions suitable to such a conference, I take it the leaders of the Congress would respond gladly. There must be some such stage. Whether it is far off or near depends upon how we utilise or waste this year of grace."

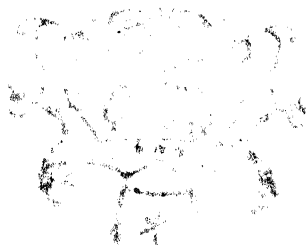
There you have it, neatly and clearly put! No reference there to the necessity of waiting for the Report of the Simon Commission. The clearest possible implication that if the report does not recommend independent government, it will have wasted its time so far as Mr. Gandhi and his friends are concerned. By independent government Mr. Gandhi presumably means Dominion Self-government. After all, one does not dine with a host who to one's knowledge has put arsenic in the soup and powdered glass in the salt. If he means self-government one would like to see how he would take the suggestions put forward here. Incidentally Mr. Gandhi's All India Congress no more represents all India than the Grand Council of Our Dumb Friends' League represents the people of Great Britain. But never mind that for the moment. He wants self-government. All the yappers want self-government. Let them have it, but see that those who have not bellowed for it get treated on equal terms with those who have. If the yappers object they will be giving themselves away with both hands, and " this year of grace " will not have been " wasted."

Many have an uneasy feeling that the real god in the machine of British Government is none other than Mammon. That the real objections to the American demands in 1775, as to the Irish demands and the Indian demands, is the fear of material loss. India, when all is said and done, pays us. Roughly 55 per cent. of her imports (one hundred and fifty million pounds) come from the United Kingdom, and 27 per cent. of her exports go there. Seventy-five per cent. of the vessels that use her ports fly the British flag. She is, with all her problems, a paying proposition, well worth exploiting. That was our primary purpose in going there. The most bemused of hypocrites would hesitate before asking anyone to believe that we entered India in order to hold it in trust for the Indian. One supposes that if the noble Redskin and the Australian aboriginal had survived in sufficient numbers, some similar pleasing fancy would have been invented for their delectation. The trouble with a bluff is that it is liable to be called.

One of the noblest utterances in the whole of English history was that of stout old George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, when the statesmen of his day were seeking some sound hypocritical *casus belli* with Holland in 1665. "What matters this or that reason," quoth the old hero; "what we want is more of the trade that the Dutch now have." With men like that you know where you are. One feels instinctively that when in 1662 Charles II got Bombay as part of the dowry of the plain and long-suffering Catharine of Braganza, George

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Monck's one idea was how best to make the new possession pay. He would have snorted with rage had some Pecksniff of the period suggested that Bombay was really being held in trust for its inhabitants. Had he lived to-day one shudders at the thought of what he might have said. He was not afraid of much, George Monck, and what he saw he saw very clearly. But the old lion has been dead these many years, and the present situation is urgent. It behoves us to deal with it without fear or favour. If we are to give let us give gladly with both hands. If we are to withhold let the announcement be made firmly and once and for all. Let us put aside all subterfuge and paltering with the truth. Let us beware of rendering to Cæsar not only the things that are Cæsar's but also the things that are God's.





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