

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP

BY
ABDUL MAJID

T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.
ADELPHI TERRACE, LONDON

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INTRODUCTORY

PSYCHOLOGY, as commonly understood, is the science of the elements of Mind. The analysis of individual consciousness into its component parts and their synthesis again into co-ordinate wholes is what is generally expected to be found in a text-book of Psychology. How a combination of sensations results into a perception, and that of perceptions into a thought; what is the genesis of an emotion; what are the determinants of volition, how is that co-ordination of the elements of mind brought about that constitutes human consciousness; these are the main problems that a psychologist has to deal with. The structure, genesis and modes of operation of the individual mind have, in short, been almost the sole theme of psychological treatises, and individual adult mind has, till very recently, been the only subject that the psychologist took into account in the course of his inquiry.

The inadequacy of this view of the province

of psychology could not go long unnoticed. It has, in recent times, become apparent that a large field still awaited exploration. Mental phenomena consist of not the phenomena of individual consciousness alone, but include those of mass or group consciousness as well. Wider observation has not been slow in demonstrating that the behaviour of races, assemblies, and peoples in general, is as conformable to definite laws as is the conduct of individuals composing these groups—that the individual minds, while themselves marvellous composites of elementary mental particles (sensations, feelings and impulses) serve in their turn merely as units of that vastly more complex and intricate association of mind with mind that constitutes the varied relations of social life. The recognition of this exceedingly important phase of mental life marks a new departure in the study of the science.

A separate department—collective Psychology—came into existence. Psychology, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, deals with the structure and modes of operation of the individual mind; while collective Psychology has for its province the structure

and modes of operation of the group consciousness—the interaction of minds.

Of all the problems that a student of collective Psychology is called upon to solve, or, at any rate, to state, the problem presented by the mental phenomena of those mobile and transitory collectivities, the masses or crowds, as distinguished from the fixed and determinate ones, the races, is not the least interesting or profound. That the great upheavals that have, to all appearance, transformed the course of history—political and religious revolutions, for example—have been brought about by a group of men apparently wholly incapable of bringing about those changes, inasmuch as they were themselves greatly astonished at the events of which they seemed to be the authors, and were certainly the heroes, has been declared even by intelligent writers an incomprehensible phenomenon. It is in vain to attempt to explain this curious phenomenon by any reference to extraneous causes. The key to the right understanding of the problem lies in comprehending the internal forces of those at whose hands were accomplished these great movements of history—in seeking

to reckon those invisible agencies that have guided the revolutionists in all their conduct.

What, then, are those internal forces, those mental properties, unconscious no less than conscious, that have served as the causes of all great deeds performed in any age and country? The answer of history is that some new doctrine or opinion originates in the mind of a few individuals who have a natural knack of forcing their views on others and who are on this account called the leaders of the movement; their commands are most implicitly and unquestioningly carried out by the masses whose minds are quasi-hypnotically captured by the former, and thus in a remarkably short period changes of greatest moment are effected.

To inquire into the respective rôles of the leaders and masses, to determine the extent to which the popular beliefs and opinions admit of transformation at the hands of a leader, and to show also how far they are stable and fixed; these are the problems examined in the following pages.

The present treatise has not the slightest pretension to be regarded as a text-book of collective Psychology, far less of sociology,

but deals only with that portion of it which consists of a psychological analysis of the conduct of masses, as also of the methods of persuasion so largely employed by all successful leaders.

Till very lately this field has been entirely virgin. In recent times, however, a few investigators have taken up the work in hand, among whom M. Gustave Le Bon, in France; Professor McDougall and Dr. Mercier, in England; and Professor Giddings and Dr. Boris Sidis (the author of that highly informative work, *The Psychology of Suggestion*) in America, deserve particular mention. To all of them the present writer is indebted; but to M. Le Bon he wishes to express his special obligation, whose works he has found most suggestive and stimulating. Of the result of M. Le Bon's investigations he has availed himself most freely; but in justice to himself, he is bound to add that there is not a single statement made in the following pages, no matter however originally suggested to him, the truth of which he has not arrived at by means of his own observation or some independent evidence.

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CHAPTER I

NORMAL MALLEABILITY OF HUMAN CHARACTER

AMONG all the popular notions regarding human nature none is so hopelessly erroneous as a belief in the uniformity of human character. In ordinary speech we always call a man, "good" or "wise," "vicious" or "fool." This mode of speech implies, in popular estimation at any rate, that human character is one continuous chain of actions that connotes either "goodness" and "wisdom," or else "viciousness" and "folly," and that a good man is uniformly good, a wise man uniformly wise, and so on. Nothing could be further from truth.

Human nature is the last thing in the world that could be compared to the even

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and smooth surface of a stream. If comparable at all to a surface, it is full of asperities—its undulations are enormous. It is essentially a varying object ; its essence is change. And the changes that it constantly undergoes, the sum total of which is known as the character, are by no means in a uniform plane. Every virtuous man has committed some grievous sins ; every wise man has made some of the greatest follies ; in short, every human temperament, when closely inspected, is invariably seen to present certain features that we find hard to reconcile with the general character which we have accredited him with. In order to make our meaning clear let us take a few concrete cases and look at them carefully.

Socrates, whose name even to this day is cherished as the apotheosis of piety, was, according to Plato, “ the most prudent and just,” and “ morally the best of his acquaintances,” and, in the estimation of Xenophon, “ the most virtuous and the most happy of all mankind,” the embodiment of piety, justice, temperateness, chastity, veracity and prudence. Yet this same Socrates is found out, on equally unimpeachable evidence, to

be frequenting the houses of courtesans to encourage them in their trade and to have been guilty of certain crimes too degrading even to be named. Is not human nature, in this case, manifestly inconsistent with itself ?

Shibli Nomani has been one of the best and greatest apologetics of Islam that the East has produced in recent times. His was essentially a missionary life, which he devoted to demonstrate that Islam is incompatible with intolerance. Moslems, as he was at pains to show in his lectures and treatises, have never known intolerance, and it is a calumny to accredit to their account the burning of the Alexandrian or any other library. Yet this champion of tolerance, this great advocate of the liberty of thought and action, actually caused the volumes of one of his fellow-theologians to be burnt before his eyes ; thus presenting to the world another instance of the variability of human character in a direction where it could be least expected.

A reverend gentleman was deputed by some humanitarian society in a certain city for the propagation of the doctrines of peace and anti-militarism. To achieve this end

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he exerted his influence not only by means of preaching and writing, but by his actual mode of living as well. In his private, no less than in his public, life he lived up to his sermonising. By the consensus of the opinion of his acquaintance, he was known to be forbearance incarnate, never betraying even the slightest trace of irascible emotion on any provocation. Once, however, when he sat at dinner he found his meal rather insipid, and remonstrated with the cook. The same thing occurred next day, but this time the remonstrance was less mild. But when on the third day it recurred once more, the preacher of mildness and the apostle of forbearance was wild with fury !

All these examples, to which every reader can add a good many from his own observation, clearly establish the undulatory nature of human mind. The following salient points may be noted as deduced from a study of such cases :

(1) To suppose that any human character can remain throughout consistent with itself, is an illusion. The course of human conduct is solely determined by the influence of environment which is in constant trans-

formation. Uniformity of character presupposes the uniformity of environment, which is an impossible fact. In the words of Le Bon, "it is only in fiction that individuals are found to traverse their whole life with an unvarying character." To attribute a definite character to an individual, if rightly viewed, only amounts to saying that he is, on the average, of such and such character. To say that a man is wise does not mean that he is wise in every particular instance, but merely that he is so on the average.

(2) Every human mind contains within it, certain latent capacities or tendencies at times wholly at variance with the more prominent features of the human character. They remain generally hidden from the view of their own possessor, but under altered conditions these potentialities become transformed into actualities, and sometimes burst forth with great violence. It appears as if the stream of human conduct were composed of two distinct parts—the one, like the main current, comprises activities that are conscious, deliberate and controlled by brain ; while another, like an under-current,

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comprehends activities that are subconscious, sub-voluntary and subject to the medullar control. This duality of human self accounts for the otherwise inexplicable, yet generally observed, phenomenon that at the outbreak of some strong commotion (a revolution, for example), loyal, peaceful and law-abiding citizens are at once transformed into savage law-breakers, but once that commotion has subsided, resume their normal character.

Now, observation has proved that the main cause of bringing about such strange yet normal changes in human mentality is the subordination of the conscious, personal self to the sub-conscious, crowd self. What are the psychological characteristics of the crowd self, shall be dealt in the subsequent chapters ; but, how is it that the personal self is affected by the crowd self in this peculiar way, may briefly be described here.

The crowd self is nothing but a disaggregated personality—a consciousness split off. The inferior, ideo-motor and ideo-sensory centres inhibit the superior, inhibitory centres. The guiding, controlling intelligence is dominated by the infra-consciousness. Volition is paralysed ; field of consciousness is narrowed ;

ideo-motor activity is increased ; and nearly all stimuli get immediate response. This state of dissolution is generated by the following conditions, which are so admirably described by Dr. Sidis :

(1) One of the prime factors in the disaggregation of personality is the *limitation of voluntary movements*. “ If anything gives us a strong sense of our individuality, it is surely our voluntary movements. We may say that the individual self grows and expands with the increase of variety and intensity of its voluntary activity ; and conversely the life of the individual self sinks, shrinks with the decrease of variety and intensity of voluntary movements. We find, accordingly, that the condition of limitation of voluntary movements is of great importance in suggestibility in general, and this condition is of the more importance since it, in fact, can bring about a narrowing down of the field of consciousness with the conditions consequent on that contraction—all favourable to suggestibility. Now, nowhere else, except perhaps in solitary confinement, are the voluntary movements of men so limited as they are in the crowd ; and the larger

the crowd is the greater is this limitation, the lower sinks the individual self. *Intensity of personality is in inverse proportion to the number of aggregated men."*

(2) Next to the cramping of voluntary movements is the fixity of attention and the elimination of distracting factors. This condition of monotony is most clearly seen in a large audience. "When the preacher, the politician, the stump orator, the ring leader, the hero, gains the ear of the crowd, an ominous silence sets in, a silence frequently characterised as 'awful.' The crowd is in a state of overstrained expectations; with suspended breath it watches the hero or the interesting, all-absorbing object. Disturbing impressions are excluded, put down, driven away, by main force. So great is the silence induced in the fascinated crowd, that very frequently the buzzing of a fly, or even the drop of a pin can be distinctly heard. All interfering impressions and ideas are inhibited. The crowd is entranced."

(3) But by far the greatest and strongest factor in generating the crowd-mentality is the force of *Contagion*. "In the entranced crowd, every one influences and is influenced

in his turn ; every one suggests and is suggested to ; and the surging billow of suggestion swells and rises until it reaches a formidable height." " The given suggestion reverberates from individual to individual, gathers strength, and becomes so overwhelming as to drive the crowd into a frenzy of excitement. . . . Each fulfilled suggestion increases the emotion of the mob in volume and intensity. . . . The mob is like an avalanche : the more it rolls the more menacing and dangerous it grows."

A word of caution is necessary for understanding the right meaning of " crowd." The term in its ordinary acceptance may denote any fortuitous agglomeration of men. No such meaning is here intended. Material contact of individuals is not always necessary ; it is only the psychical unity, the uniformity in the active influences, that constitutes a psychological crowd. Common history, common faith, common education, common sentiments and beliefs may predispose individuals, that live at long distance and that have never heard of one another, to partake of a crowd mentality as soon as a strong stimulus presents itself abruptly. With mental unity

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only half-a-dozen men may form a crowd, while without it thousands of thousands accidentally gathered together, every one different from the rest in heredity, temperament, passions, sentiments and beliefs, will not constitute one.

CHAPTER II

THE COLLECTIVE MIND

"By reason of its emotional excitability, its high degree of suggestibility, and the diminished sense of responsibility of its members, the behaviour of the . . . crowd is apt to be of a kind much inferior to the average behaviour of its units when they think and act as individuals."—*Professor McDougall*.

THOSE who are familiar with the doctrine of evolution in all its aspects and implications need hardly be reminded that one of the most pregnant applications of that doctrine in the sphere of social phenomena is what for want of a better name is called Social Heredity. The social heritage comprises not only the parental characteristics inherited by the child from its immediate progenitors, but it covers the entire accumulated racial acquisitions, the sum total of all that it inherits as the child of Society—all that can possibly be got from the accumulated wealth of the racial and communal experience. The language, the literature, arts, sciences,

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beliefs, superstitions, the etiquette, the acts of social conformity, the pleasures and pains, in short, every thing that has had any bearing on the formation or continuance of gregarious existence, is included under this comprehensive title.

The immense importance of social heredity, as a factor in the preservation of human species, is too obvious to be expatiated upon. Deny its existence and with it vanishes the very possibility of the communal life, and eventually also of the individual human life. What, however, is proposed here to do is not to lay stress on its existence—an act of manifest superfluity—but to determine the conditions requisite for the same.

Granted that all human beings have a birth-right to the social heredity, is every one of us *equally* entitled to that legacy? Is the mere fact that we are born in the midst of a social atmosphere sufficient to justify our claim to the inheritance? Even a superficial acquaintance with facts would enable one to return the answer in the negative. The asylum, the scaffold, the prison, the reformatory, all bear eloquent testimony to the contrary. The establishment of these

and the like institutions is sufficient to confute anybody who is so audacious as to hold that all human beings are partakers of equal shares in the social heredity.

And now observe what all those that have, by nature or by habit, forfeited the inheritance, have in common. To begin with the idiot or the imbecile. We find in him a social delinquent: he is unfit to fulfil the requirements that society demands of him; he is unable to enter into that stage of mentality that society requires its normal members to enter; and he is incapable of assimilating and putting into practice what society expects every one of its components units to do. So is the insane, incapable of keeping himself under restraints imposed by the society, and possessing a temperament too varying to sustain the complex of relationships that society ordains to be observed among the different elements comprising it. Next comes the criminal with his anti-social propensities. Unlike the unsocial idiot and insane, he may perhaps be sufficiently intelligent to understand what is required of him as a unit of social compact, but, none the less, he is invariably morally incapable

of observing those rules. He deliberately infringes the rights of his fellow-beings, violates the provisions made in the interests of unification and integration of social organism and wilfully deprives others of the enjoyment of social heritage. He is the agent of dissolution, of disorganisation. Sticking to the characteristics that are common to these diverse types of the socially unfit, we find that the solitary point which they all share, is their incapacity to learn (whether in theory or in practice) what society endeavours to teach them. Every instance of social delinquency is an instance of incapacity of learning, which fact may rightly incline one to conclude that the capacity of learning, or educability, is the essence of social life.

Nor has this conclusion merely a negative evidence to rest on. For there is a convergence of evidence towards the same direction when we view the question in its positive aspect. Thus when we look at any of the descriptions of the most social men, we invariably find them those who most unquestioningly conform to social commandments—those who are the most faithful observants

of conventional decorum—those who most loyally follow the prevalent rites, ceremonies, and proprieties of rank and occasion ; and all these qualities have manifestly their root in the individuals' ability to learn.

But what, once more, is this capacity to learn ? The learner's mind must possess a certain degree of plasticity, must be amenable to receive influences from outside, and not that alone, but must also be actively striving to be so influenced. Language has invented two words to cover all these facts, namely, " Imitation " and " Suggestibility." These words do not denote two separate mental facts, they describe merely the two aspects—active and passive—of a single psychical phenomenon. When an individual is a mere passive recipient of the influence of others, his mental state is described as that of suggestibility ; when, on the other hand, he is consciously and actively striving to reproduce in himself certain extraneous ideas or impressions he is said to be " imitating " them.

Hence follows the law that the degree of imitation in any particular individual is always potentially in direct proportion to

the degree of suggestibility possessed by him, and *vice versa*.

To sum up. We have shown on evidence, positive as well as negative, furnished by human life, that imitation or suggestibility is the essence of social life, the starting point of communal existence; and all praise of human progress is so much the praise of his power of imitation. In this light the reader would be able to appreciate the aptness of James's remark that "Man is essentially *the* imitative animal. His whole educability, and in fact the whole history of civilisation depend on this trait which his strong tendencies to rivalry, jealousy, and acquisitiveness tend to re-inforce."

But although imitation is the essential factor in the evolution of social life, it is far from being its sole ingredient. Another mental trait shared by all individuals while they are beginning to live a collective life is known as social inhibition, that is to say, the subordination of individual wills to the collective will. An individual enjoying the blessings of peace, security and protection conferred on him by the society, must pay the price for them, and this price consists

in the surrender of the individual liberty of will.

The phenomenon we are speaking of is of universal application indeed, and there is no reason to restrict its operation to the domain of mind. Its treatment may, in fact, form a chapter in physics as appropriately as it does in Psychology, since social aggregation necessitates the surrender of the liberty of its constituent individuals no less imperatively than does an inorganic or mechanical aggregate the limitation of the motion of its component parts.

When we desire, for instance, to divide an iron bar we find our work much facilitated by heating—softening—it. But what else is this heating if not destroying the integration of the aggregate of the bar atoms by increasing the independent movement of each individual atom? Or again when we are solidifying a liquid by cooling it, we are doing nothing more than decreasing the independent motions of each particle of the less coherent and less stable aggregate, and thereby rendering it more coherent and more stable.

What is thus true of the chemical or mechanical aggregate of inanimate particles, holds

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good, with still greater cogency, in the case of psychological and sociological groups. It is indeed scarcely possible to conceive even the most rudimentary state of society without postulating a certain forfeiture of individual freedom. Any course of action, however wrong or imprudent, if unanimously adopted, is from the standpoint of social utility, preferable to one that is right and prudent, but implies a disharmony and divergence of ways among the members of a social compact.

“If some members,” it has been well said, “of a flock or herd moved in a direction or a rate different from that of the other members, the herd or the flock will be disintegrated by the loss of those members who thus move independently, and if all moved at different rates, or in different directions, the flock or herd would cease to exist. It would be disintegrated altogether into its individual components. A certain surrender of individual freedom of action is necessary to the existence of the gregarious state. On no other terms can a community exist.”*

Again, there is a law of mental life deducible from a close study of human mind and sufficiently apparent to anybody who cares to

* Mercier, “Conduct and Its Disorders, Biologically Considered,” p. 134.

notice it, *that mental traits that have sometimes been of service to the individual or to the species in the struggle for existence, continue to recur, or tend to reappear, with full vigour even when their utility has become nil, whenever their associates or analogues of their associates present themselves.* Though formulated in this way for the first time in the annals of the psychological literature, the present writer claims no originality for this doctrine. It is only a more generalised re-statement of Darwin's principle of the Association of Serviceable Habits as detailed in his work on the *Expression of Emotions*. That shrewd observer of animal life was, however, not enough of a psychologist, and thus singularly failed to recognise the full import of his own most far-reaching enunciation. Psychologically, the principle is of universal application; there is no reason whatever to restrict it to the domain of emotions. It is operative in the sphere of intellect, feeling and volition alike.

Nor are the cases evidentiary of its universal application within the entire range of psychical life far to seek. Of its operation in the sphere of feeling it is enough to advert to the pages of Darwin—not to mention the

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works of Spencer and other later writers on evolutionary psychology—wherein the vast mass of illustrative evidence has been recorded with a thoroughness that hardly admits of improvement. Next, with regard to its action in the sphere of will, every one of us is familiar with the fact that not unfrequently some very slight exciting causes beget, even after one has succeeded in abandoning certain firmly-established habits, lapses and slips into old ways despite one's whole-hearted resolutions ; which fact clearly illustrates the working of the principle under view in the domain of will. Finally, as regards intellect, no better instance of the operation of the principle under review can be found than the persistent recurrence in periods of advancement and civilisation of certain beliefs and ideas (the anthropomorphic conception of Deity, for example) that once formed a useful part of the mental equipment of the primitive people, but are in themselves, on rational grounds, hopelessly untenable.

Conveniently enough at this stage we could, only if we would, proceed further ; could connect these “psychical survivals” with “bodily survivals” so familiar to those who

have received even the elementary instructions in biology ; could easily discover analogous facts in the inanimate nature ; and, subordinating this principle, general as it is, to a generality still wider, might justly denominate it as a universal law applicable to the phenomena of mind and matter alike, but we are psychologising, not philosophising, and must not allow our limits to be transcended.

It is in accordance with this principle that we find in men as soon as they begin to assemble in groups, or in societies, an irresistible pre-dominance of those mental traits that have served as the corner-stone of social life—those that have been the constituent elements of the original gregarious instinct—those mental traits, to wit, that we have already specified. And in the light of this formula it becomes quite clear why, as soon as they begin to form a part of crowds or mobs, individuals suddenly lose their own initiative and become so exceedingly imitative, suggestible, and intellectually impotent, and why they are so prone to revert to the exceedingly low intellectual level of the primitive man. But imitation, suggestibility, and inhibition of individual wills,

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though they are the fundamental properties of the collective mind are yet by no means an exhaustive enumeration of its contents. We proceed therefore to set forth in a serial order all the important characteristics of crowds and assemblies, deducible as corollaries from the afore-mentioned fundamental properties of the popular mind.

CHAPTER III

THE COLLECTIVE MIND (*Concluded*)

(1) IF what has hitherto been said be a faithful account of matters as they stand, one of the most obvious inferences is that *assemblies are less rational than individuals*. In fact, their very nature demands this. Diversity of views among the different members of a group is suicidal, for if every individual could choose his own way the very formation of society would become an impossibility ; while a unanimous course of action, however damaging it may be to some of its members, would yet serve those that survive, and would thus preserve the integration of the social compact. The primary aim of corporate action is therefore to secure, above all, unanimity, to attain which the crowds will sacrifice anything. But this way of action is necessarily hostile to the free exercise of the reasoning faculty of man ; it stunts the development of his intellect and

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thus renders corporate actions less rational than those performed by the individuals.

This explains the outrageousness that so generally accompanies the actions of crowds, and also establishes the principle that individuals as such are psychologically quite different from the same individuals as forming part of an assembly. Every one of us can recall his own instances of the quirks and meannesses of committees, cabinets, and assemblies composed of respectable and intelligent men, which no member of them, in his individual capacity would ever think of doing. The obvious explanation of this apparent anomaly lies in the fact that corporate action being more primitive than action on individual initiative must of necessity have recourse to ways that are less moral and less rational.

(2) *Predominance of feeling over reason is another important feature of the popular mind.* Human life, it need hardly be reminded, partakes of both the organic and animal lives. Now feeling being the starting-point of organic (or vegetative) life and intellect the starting-point of animal life, it is at once clear that chronologically feeling appears

earlier than reason, and in the primitive consciousness the former plays a part more important than the latter.

Those anxious to get a conclusive evidence may look at the minds of savages, women and children—all primitive beings psychically—where reason is in a comparatively nascent stage and feeling does invariably get the upper hand. In common with all individuals who have not reached the highest stages of mental evolution, masses possess so little of reason and so much of feeling that the entire range of their opinions and beliefs has its sole basis in their passions and sentiments. They believe not what is warranted by facts but what pleases their fancy and arouses their feelings. They are utterly indifferent to truth. What is required to carry home an idea to them is to address an appeal, or a series of appeals, to their passions. To be rhetorical and not to be logical, to be persuasive and not to be argumentative, is the way to win the assent of masses. On the negative side likewise, destructive reasoning is as powerless in combating any of their convictions as is constructive reasoning in establishing them.

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This peculiarity of the crowd psychology is so well known to clever rhetoricians that they hardly allow any opportunity to slip away without taking advantage of it. About the middle of the year 1912, when owing to the war in Tripoli, anti-Italian, *ergo* anti-Christian, feeling was at its zenith among the Moslems all over the world, a certain demagogue knowing well that a crowd is insensible to reason supplied a Moslem gathering at Calcutta with a cue, and the following result ensued as reported by the daily papers of the 25th July :

“CHRISTIAN PREACHERS ASSAULTED.

“ Last evening an unwarranted and cowardly assault was made on three Indian Christian preachers in Wellington Square by a band of Mohammedan rowdies numbering about 200. It appears that the three Indian Christian preachers were preaching in vernacular to a crowd of Mohammedans in the square when a Maulvie suddenly appeared on the scene and shouted : ‘ Let us assault the co-religionists of the Italians, the sworn foes of our fatherland Turkey.’ The exhortation had the effect of inflaming the whole audience with mad religious fervour. Before the preachers could realize the situation they were attacked with umbrellas, lathies, and every conceivable missile found handy. Three native constables were close by, but they were unable to restore order, being powerless against such odds. They were

themselves assaulted. *The preachers instead of retaliating appealed to the feelings of their assailants in vain. They asked the mob if they had individually done any harm to any Mohammedan, but the more they repeated the question the oftener was the assault renewed. This lasted for some time until the arrival of police reinforcements. The police removed the preachers, carrying them on their shoulders from the midst of an infuriated mob."*

The fact conveyed by the words we have italicised testifies to the presence of gross ignorance concerning the psychology of a mob among the lay public. Arguing with an infuriated mob instead of allaying their rage simply tends to heighten it. The preachers would have given far greater proof of their prudence, though at the expense of their conscientiousness, by at once declaring their acceptance of Islam—by abdicating to the demands of their assailants—which, in the language of psychology was the method of overcoming a strong emotion by combating it with an emotion still stronger.

The imaginative power of masses is, again, marvellous, almost boundless. No ideal, however unrealisable, no scheme, however Utopian, no absurdity, however glaring, provided it has the solitary merit of flattering to some of their passions or prejudices is too preposterous

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or too fantastic to prevent their fancy from cherishing it. It may be asserted without fear of contradiction that, while existing physically in the actual world of facts the masses live psychically in the dream-land of visions and fanciful imageries.

(3) Complementarily, we may add that *extreme credulity is a further leading feature of the psychology of crowds*. Abnormally-developed imagination and mental indolence coupled with the impairment of reflective power render masses exceedingly credulous, and dispose them to fall an easy prey to illusions. Sifting of evidence, investigation of facts, balancing of probabilities, or any other intellectual activity involving the exercise of critical faculty is utterly foreign to their nature. In cherishing their fond delusions and hallucinations they indulge as complacently as do philosophers in the pursuit of truth.

Like all beings mentally imperfect, masses are incapable of conceptual thought; they think only in images. This explains why they are so often unable to distinguish between the possibility of an alleged event and its actual occurrence; and why an affirmation

of the former is enough in their logic to justify belief in the latter. History abounds with instances where the mere evoking of a certain image has sufficed to convince the people of the actual occurrence of the corresponding event.

What else was Antony's device of persuading the Roman populace to believe in the innocence of Cæsar and the atrociousness of his murder, except the mere evoking of an image of the alleged fact by pointing to his corpse and reading his will to the mob? Further, since imagination is most effectively impressed by the marvellous and the unusual, the crowd is notoriously eager to believe in the supernatural rather than the natural, in the miraculous rather than the normal, in fictions rather than facts.

(4) *Impulsiveness and fickleness of crowds* is a fact too potent to escape the notice of even a hasty observer. Like a child, a crowd is always at the mercy of immediate exciting causes. Subject to certain important qualifications to be made in a future chapter, its opinions and beliefs can undergo any number of changes within a given time, provided there be a stimulus sufficiently

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powerful to influence it. In a moment it may be transformed from an assembly of saints to a gang of rogues.

The vicissitude of fortune happening to the recent Moslem University movement in India is a case in point. Most of those who, in the early days of 1911, had looked at the most enthusiastic popular response to the movement, the most flattering reception accorded to the workers and promoters of it, and the highly hyperbolic language in which even their trifling services were eulogised by the Moslem public, could not but feel amazed at perceiving a directly opposite state of the popular feeling only a few months later, and at finding the very individuals that had been till very recently the objects of public adoration the targets of strongest denunciation and actual abusing and raillery. This sudden reversal in the popular feeling, initiated, of course, by certain malevolent demagogues, is no anomalous fact, however. It is perfectly in conformity with what is known of the mental constitution of masses, and, indeed, could be foreseen by any competent psychologist who had sufficient data concerning the contemporary circumstances.

Another classical instance of the same phenomenon is furnished by a Roman populace. That very crowd which had enthusiastically greeted Cæsar's murderers and had quite unequivocally expressed its approbation of the bloody deed, almost immediately retraced its step when harangued by Antony, and most ferociously turned back on the conspirators, thus presenting to the world one more instance of the impulsiveness and mobility barely possible in the case of an individual excepting, perhaps, the most fickle-minded.

Yet another illustration of the impulsiveness as well as of the other fore-mentioned characteristics of the crowd is supplied to us by the same Roman populace in the murder of Cinna, as given in Shakespeare's account, which may not be historically accurate but is certainly credible. He was a poet and a great friend of Cæsar. Hearing of the latter's assassination he hastened towards the forum where the corpse was to be burnt. While passing through the city he was interrogated as to his name by the angry mob, who, no sooner had they heard it than they rushed upon him taking him for Cinna, the

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conspirator, and tore him to pieces despite all his protestations.

(5) *Morality of Crowds* is the last point of importance connected with their Psychology. But once the truth of the foregoing observations is admitted, there is little difficulty in finding a solution to this question. Two considerations serve as guiding-thread to this inquiry: First, that intrinsically crowds are devoid of character in so far as they lie entirely at the mercy of passing suggestions. In themselves they are neither virtuous nor vicious, but simply obey the suggestions of an external operator. Not any reference to a definite set of ideals or principles, but an immediate exciting cause determines their course of action. They are mobile morally no less than intellectually. Secondly, that crowds being on the level of infra-consciousness, the individuals composing them are incapable of displaying those moral traits that are the outcome of a long and patient discipline of the mind, and the last fruits of the evolution of consciousness.

Passing from theory to fact, we find that masses have almost invariably been the agents of destruction and criminality. And this

is just what the knowledge of psychology of masses leads one to expect. Constructive or reformatory work presupposes, above all, a certain degree of application and of synthetical systematisation, and these are *the* qualities that masses are wholly devoid of.

To deny this, is to betray a lamentable ignorance of history. A revolution is admittedly an expression of popular domination, and the history of revolutions is simply one long record of acts of monstrous fury, and of enormous devastation. As a type of popular revolutions, we take the best known of them, namely, the French Revolution. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were the watchwords of the revolutionists, but scarcely did any crime, barbarity, brutality seem too revolting to be perpetrated in broad daylight and with the sanction of the " Republic " by the champions of " progress " and " reform."

As remarked by Tocqueville, the word " Equality " in the phraseology of the revolutionists only amounted to saying: " No one shall be in a better position than mine." There was hardly a single leader of the revolution that was not actuated by such ignoble motives.

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"Camille Desmoulins," it is narrated on good authority, "the same summer that he, a briefless barrister deeply in debt, had become a popular leader by his inflammatory harangues in the Palais Royal on the eve of the fall of Bastille, wrote privately of his improved condition: 'An additional pleasure is to put myself in my proper place, to display my power to those who despised me, to bring down to my level those whom fortune had set above me. My motto is that of all folks "no superior".' "*"

This was the sort of equality preached and practised by the revolutionary demagogues. "Liberty" fared no better. Proclaimed from house-tops it was the last thing in the world that the revolutionists or the republicists cared for. The revolution was pre-eminently the era of intolerance.

"The emancipation of modern thought was effected by the philosophers who were the products of the ancient monarchy which let them air their doctrines with little hindrance. Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, all contributed to the Revolution, but had they lived until the Terror they would, in spite of their advanced years, have probably shared the fate of Lavoisier and Malesherbes unless they had cheated their guillotine, as did Condorcet in his cell." †

The horrible massacres, notably those of

* Bodley's "France," Vol. II., p. 159.

† Bodley's "France," Vol. II., p. 122.

the 10th August and 2nd September, stand out in history as monuments of the extent of the brutality that a crowd is capable of. Human blood was shed without inquiry, without question, without remorse, irrespective of age or sex.

"One hundred and seventy-eight tribunals," writes M. Taine, "of which forty were perambulant, pronounced death sentence in all parts of the country, which were carried out instantly on the spot. Between the 16th of April, 1793, and the 9th of Thermidor in the year 11, that of Paris guillotined 2,625 persons, and the provincial judges worked as hard as those of Paris. In the little town of Orange about 331 persons were guillotined. In the city of Arras 299 men and 93 women were guillotined. . . . The total number of these murders has been put at 17,000, among whom were 1,200 women, of whom a number were octogenarians."

"The Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris . . . surrounded itself at first with a few legal forms which did not long survive. Interrogatory, defence witnesses, were all finally suppressed. Moral proof—that is, mere suspicion—sufficed to procure condemnation. The executions during the Terror did not affect the members of the aristocracy only, since 4,000 peasants and 3,000 working men were guillotined."

To these atrocities of the tribunals are to be added those committed by the revolutionary army. Le Bon has culled from various sources the appalling results of the

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unfettered liberty of the people, which we reproduce below :

"At Bedouin, a town of 2,000 inhabitants where unknown forces had cut down the tree of liberty, 433 houses were demolished or fired, 16 persons were guillotined, and 47 shot down, all the other inhabitants were expelled and reduced to living as vagabonds in the mountains and to taking shelter in caverns which they hollowed out of the earth. The fate of the wretches sent before revolutionary tribunals was no better. The first mockery of trial was quickly suppressed. At Nantes, Carrier drowned and shot down according to his fancy near 5,000 persons—men, women and children."*

An eye-witness gives the following account :

"I saw, after the taking of Nairmontier, men, women and old people buried alive . . . women violated, girls of 14 or 15, and massacred afterwards, and tender babies thrown from bayonet to bayonet, children who were taken from beside their mothers stretched out on the ground."

The following details appeared in the French weekly *The Moniteur* :

"In the same number we read a deposition by one Julian, relating how Carrier forced his victims to dig their graves and to allow themselves to be buried alive. The issue of 15th October, 1794, contained a report by Mertin de Thionville proving that the captain of the

* Le Bon's "Psychology of Revolution," p. 218.

vessel *Le Distin* had received orders to embark 41 victims to be drowned—among them a blind man of 78, twelve women, twelve girls and fourteen children, of whom there were from 10 to 6, and five at the breast.”

These details refer to Nantes. But we must bear in mind that “the massacres of Nantes were repeated in many other towns. Foucha slew more than 2,000 persons at Lyons, and so many were killed at Toulon that the population was reduced from 29,000 to 7,000 in a few months.”

Further particulars of the atrocities that are still more shocking, are at hand; but our point is already established, and it is hardly necessary to multiply instances. Nor should it be supposed that the outburst of popular fury respects erudition or genius. It spares neither. That immortal scientist Lavoisier had to perish not by the hands of a Monarch, nor yet of an Aristocracy, but by a Council of Democrats, an assembly of the standard-bearers of “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité,” and who, when praying that his execution might be deferred till he had completed his last great experiment, was told in all seriousness by the public prosecutor that “La Republique n’a pas besoin de

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savants" (the republic had no need of *savants*). Indeed, the tyranny of the worst tyrant can hardly surpass that of the masses.

The culminating point of the brutality of crowds seems to have been reached, at the time that these pages were in print, by the Prussian Army. That the countrymen of Kant should have been the destroyers of Louvain, or that the most detestable crimes against humanity should be committed by an army that counts Hæckel and, perhaps, Wundt as its active members, and Münsterberg as its greatest moral supporter, looks like the strangest irony of history. Yet to the student of the popular mind, even this is not wholly incredible. Whenever two sets of emotions come into conflict with each other, those that are historically older and those that have on this account their seats in the deep profound strata of subconsciousness, are bound to be victorious over those that are of comparatively recent date, and have not accordingly penetrated lower than the regions of consciousness.

Such is this unalterable law of human nature, that even a Wundt or a Münsterberg has to bow before it submissively. And it

is hardly needful to add that the patriotic bias is decidedly of far greater antiquity than the love of mankind or the disinterested love of truth.

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A LEADER

IN the opening paragraphs of Chapter II we have dwelt at some length on one aspect of social heredity, namely, imitation. Yet it is manifest, *ex hypothesi*, that imitation cannot be strictly universal. Supposing all men without exception were to imitate, the question at once arises—whom are they to imitate? Who is to serve as the model?

Imitation, then, like all relative terms, necessarily implies its correlative—invention—which is indeed only another, and an equally essential aspect of social heredity.

Leading and subordination, originality and conformity, imitation and acquiescence go hand in hand, and in the existence of one is implied the existence of the other. They that follow, comply, and are influenced by others are the multitude; they that originate, dictate, and exercise their initiative are the leaders.

It is this latter class of men, the “great

ones " who are the creatures of whatsoever the general mass of men have ever contrived to do or to attain, and who are the real authors of the " Universal History," since, as Carlyle has put it, the history of what has ever been accomplished in this world is at bottom nothing but the history of the great men who have worked here.

Apart from logical implications there is also a psychological necessity why masses should always be held under the sway of some master. We have already seen that masses never attain to intellectual manhood ; that possessing as they do all the characteristics of children—imitation, fantasticality, suggestibility, predominance of feeling, impulsiveness and sheer incapacity for intellectual application they are perpetually in an age of intellectual minority ; and that, by their nature incapable of governing themselves, they must inevitably place themselves under the control and dictatorship of some one mentally their superior. We have further seen that whenever masses have temporarily succeeded in arrogating to themselves the rôle of dictators, and have endeavoured to be at once the leaders and the led—as in the

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days of the French Revolution—a state of chaos has replaced that of order ; murders, massacres and most palpable iniquities have ensued ; and consequences have, on the whole, been frightfully disastrous.

The necessity, the indispensableness, of leaders being thus apparent, we proceed to set forth the characteristics of a leader—the requisites that anybody who aspires to be a leader must satisfy in order to achieve success—the sacrifices which he must offer before he can obtain admission into the sanctuary of leadership.

A general remark presents itself at the outset for consideration. This is that the characteristics of the leader must be complementary to the characteristics of the led—the former, that is, must supply what the latter demand. If, for instance, the multitude, as has been shown above, is essentially of emotional temperament, a successful popular leader must be one who could successfully sway its feelings. The guiding-thread, then, of the following observations has been to deduce the psychology of leaders from the previously established psychological characteristics of the masses. But these deductions

are not merely *a priori*, since they have been confirmed and verified in every individual instance by means of independent *a posteriori* evidence derived either from history, or from the study of contemporary events.

That ancient master of oratory Demosthenes, when questioned as to what constituted the essential talent of an orator, is said to have exclaimed "action." What next, "action." What next, again? "action." With respect to the essence of leadership and gaining influence upon one's fellow-beings we may likewise assert with equal truth: what first? "will." What next, and next again? "will." It is not intellect, much less feeling, that imparts force and strength to human character. It is will that prevails. It is will that rules the world and governs the destinies of individuals as well as of nations. A man may be of the most refined taste, and the most vigorous intellect, and may yet be a weakling withal, carrying little weight with those around him. He feels intuitively that a certain course of action suggested to him is wrong; he has reasons to be convinced of its unwholesomeness; and yet he cannot resist the suggestion—

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he must yield—he must give way to a stronger will. Instances of this phenomenon abound in the daily life of every one of us.

The power of will, it is highly important to note, though amenable to improvement by dint of exercise, is essentially congenital. Leaders are born not made. And those who possess the requisite strength of will extort an implicit obedience from their adherents, and wield an almost incredibly despotic authority over them. This despotism of leaders is the exact counterpart of the servility of masses, who, notwithstanding their clamour for liberty, instinctively cling to the dictatorship of their superior. As noted by that distinguished psychologist, M. Le Bon, it is a primary condition of their mental life that

“as soon as a certain number of living beings are gathered together, whether they may be animals or men, they place themselves instinctively under the authorities of a chief. *It is the need not of liberty but of servitude that is always predominant in the soul of crowds.* They are so bent on obedience that they instinctively submit to whoever declares himself their master.”*

Difficult as it is to define with strictness the said force of the will, or to give an accurate

* Le Bon's "The Crowd," pp. 133, 134. The italics are ours.

psychological analysis of its working, we may nevertheless specify certain expedients which every successful leader has to resort to, whether guided by intuition or by deliberation, and which are the indispensable articles for his calling.

The object that a popular leader aims at being neither the discovery of truth nor the perception of beauty, but simply impressiveness, this aim can best be secured by working on the imitative instinct of the multitude, which expedient is known as the force of *Example*.

Example has the supreme merit of combining in itself the force of physiological as well as of psychological suggestion. It produces both central and peripheral excitement in the nervous system and directs it towards the desired movement, or the arrest of it. This explains its twofold strength. Observe the effect of example on children. An inexperienced teacher wishes to stop the noise by shouting to his pupils ; but the louder his shouts the more noisy his class grows, for the simple reason that his precept is being simultaneously contradicted by his practice. An experienced teacher, on the other hand, who knows the inner workings of mind asks his students politely to observe silence and

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becomes quiet himself, and thus succeeds immediately in restoring silence in the class.

That the adults comprising a crowd are psychically no better than children, and that they should be treated in the same way, is needless to repeat. The first expedient, then, of a leader for getting a crowd to do something—to pillage a House of Lords, for instance—is to set before it his own example of the act, and to impress upon it that he himself is whole-heartedly keen about it.

Genuine steadfastness of purpose is also thus one of the requisites of a leader for a lasting success ; simulated steadfastness being triumphant only temporarily. All great leaders of mankind—Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed—have been full of enthusiasm for their teachings ; they have been, so to speak, the embodiments of their own doctrines. Second-class leaders—Rousseau, for instance—not half so great as the former ones, had, on the other hand, no such deep-rooted convictions, no such steadfastness of purpose ; yet they simulated it, and thus managed to infuse, for the time being, into their disciples a counterfeit enthusiasm which could not outlast the immediate exciting causes.

Another method so universally employed by successful leaders is the *dogmatism* of their tone and language. Arguments and reasoned statements can appeal to the minds of highly cultured individuals and to them alone. When addressed to a crowd they defeat their purpose. Very frequently they lead to doubt and scepticism, and even when they produce a conviction they do so only in an indirect way ; whereas the peculiar mental structure of masses demands that opinions and beliefs must be imbued in them as directly as the occasion permits, by means of bare assertions or suggestions.

Absence of reasons and arguments, moreover, puts on statements an appearance of self-evident truth, and banishes from the minds of the audience all thought of disputing them.

The following may serve as a typical illustration. Its writer, one Mr. Leadbeater, is eulogising the services of Mrs. Besant, the President of the Theosophical Society, before his theosophist brethren :

“ What can I say to you of your President that you do not know already ? Her colossal intellect, her unflinching wisdom, her unrivalled eloquence, her splendid forgetfulness of self, her untiring devotion to work for

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others—all these are familiar to you. Yet these qualities, these powers, are but a small part of her greatness; they are on the surface; they may be seen by all; they leap to the eyes. But there are other qualities, other powers, of which you cannot know, because they pertain to the secrets of Initiation. She is a pupil of our Masters; from the fount of their archaic wisdom she derives her own. The plans which she is carrying out are Their plans for the welfare of the world. Think, therefore, how great a honour it is for you to work under her, for in doing so you are virtually working under Them. Think, how watchful you should be to miss no hints which fall from her lips, to carry out exactly whatever instructions she may give you. Remember, because of her position as an Initiate she knows far more than you do; and precisely because her knowledge is occult, given under the seal of Initiation, she cannot share it with you. Therefore her action must certainly be governed by considerations of which you have no conception. There will be times when you cannot understand her motives, for she is taking into account many things which you cannot see, and of which she must not tell you. But whether you understand or not, you will be wise to follow her implicitly just because she knows. This is no mere supposition on my part, no mere flight of imagination. I have stood beside your President in the presence of the Supreme Director of Evolution in this globe, and I know whereof I speak. Let the wise hear my words and act accordingly."—(*Adyar Album*, p. 45.)

Aspirants for leadership cannot too often be reminded that psychologically masses are

hopelessly incapable of doubting any statement, however preposterous, unless they themselves, through their inexperience, suggest scepticism to them by adducing reasons for their statements, and subjecting them to logical scrutiny. Above all, they must be concise and pithy in their deliverance. The importance of this principle has long since been recognised by the "Revealed Books" of all religions; hence their epigrammatic character and their effectiveness. Nor has it been lost sight of by the successful commercial advertisers of our day.

Yet even assertions, however dogmatic or epigrammatic, are of little avail unless they are repeated very frequently, with, of course, certain variations in the language. *Repetition* is one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the rhetorician. Repeat any statement for a sufficient number of times, and the hardest rocks of scepticism and unbelief are sure to melt away before it. M. Le Bon's account of the psychology of repetition is so pregnant with meaning that I need no apology for giving a rather large extract from him :

"The influence of repetition," says the acute observer of human nature, "on crowds is comprehensible when

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the power is seen which it exercises on the most enlightened minds. This power is due to the fact that the repeated statement is embedded in the long run in those profound regions of our unconscious selves in which the motives of our action are forged. At the end of a certain time we have forgotten who is the author of the repeated assertion, and we finish by believing it. To this circumstance is due the astonishing power of advertisements. When we have read a hundred, a thousand, times that X's chocolate is the best, we imagine we have heard it said in many quarters, and we end by acquiring the certitude that such is the fact. When we have read a thousand times that Y's flour has cured the most illustrious persons of the obstinate maladies, we are tempted at least to try it when suffering from illness of a similar kind. . . . Affirmation and repetition are alone powerful enough to combat each other."*

Writers on composition and style, who, ignoring the immense aid the repetition affords to the receptibility of an idea, have proscribed it as a literary sin, have singularly failed to notice the obvious fact that those very books which have been the greatest sinners in this respect have exercised the most profound and far-reaching influence on the masses—the Revealed Books of all religions.

It would be interesting in this connection to have before one's eyes a catalogue of

* Le Bon, pp. 142, 143.

the repetitions occurring in the "Revealed Books." I do not know if any community, other than the Moslems, have prepared such a schedule. But, fortunately, we can lay our hands on a list of the important repetitions of the Koran. The following table may enable the reader to comprehend in some degree the secret of success of a most impressive book on earth :

Heinousness of Idolatry and Unity of

God asserted	-	-	-	-	350 times.
Faith and Trust in God ordained	-	-	-	-	300 times.
Pleasures of Paradise described	-	-	-	-	195 times.
Torments of Hell described	-	-	-	-	200 times.
Daily Prayers commanded to the Faithful	-	-	-	-	100 times.

That the frequent repetition of any words fills one's mind with their meaning and instils it deep into their heart, is often recognised even by ordinary haranguers and demagogues. I remember to have seen in a newspaper that some years ago a Nationalist orator came to Madras and spoke fervently of the latent strength of India and the weakness of its British rulers. In the course of his speech, he made his audience, chiefly comprising schoolboys and young men, repeat in unison these words : " We are three hundred millions ; they are three hundred thousands." " We

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are three hundred millions ; they are three hundred thousands," over and over again. He further implored them to continue to repeat this formula to themselves every day till it rang in their heads day and night and its significance was revealed to them.

An important question in this connection is—how far is it advisable to vary the language of a proposition ? M. Le Bon's exhortation is " to use so far as possible the same term." But I must express my strong dissent from the wisdom of this course. Sameness of language, if carried very far, is sure to beget monotony and to lose all effect upon the audience. Variation is one of the most fruitful devices of rhetoric, and in addressing an assembly can hardly be dispensed with. To bring out the same idea from different points of view is in itself an important aid to its favourable reception, and its impressiveness is enhanced rather than abated when a multitude is to be addressed instead of an individual. True, there are some classical instances that give plausibility to M. Le Bon's view. Such is, for example, the repetition for thirty-one times of the following verse in a small chapter of Koran :

"Which, therefore, of Your Lord's bounties will ye ungratefully deny?"

Or the recurrence for twenty-six times of this verse in the Psalm cxxxvi. of David :

"For his mercy endureth for ever."

But these are the exceptions that simply prove the rule. Besides, they are more in the nature of a poetical burden than as figures of rhetoric.

From these main expedients which all successful leaders make use of—example, dogmatism, and repetition—the intelligent reader would have deduced for himself numerous other characteristics of the leader, such as self-confidence, a certain tenacity, a vast store of energy, steadfastness of purpose, depth of conviction, resoluteness of manner, loyalty to the ideal, tactfulness, composure of temperament, a ready wit, insight that comprehends at one glance the complexities of a new situation, and last but not least, a knack to turn off to one's advantage any adverse incident that may befall. We have already hinted at some of these in the preceding paragraphs ; but the considerations of space do not allow us to expound any of

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them, and we must rest content with a mere mention of them in passing

The greater the man, the more of these qualities are embodied in him. Mohammed, Alexander, Cæsar, Columbus and Napoleon have been among the greatest characters that history can boast of: in them combined most of the above-mentioned traits, and this accounts for their greatness. Choosing Napoleon as a specimen we give below a *résumé* of his chief characteristics, mental as well as moral, as recorded by his biographers. This may perhaps throw some light on the nature of the stuff that a leader is made of.

Chief mental traits: "An imagination of wonderful force, a power of calculation that embraced every thing, and yet grasped the smallest details; the master faculty of always perceiving the dominant fact in what was before him, of separating it from what was subordinate, and of seeing how it could be turned to account; and admirable celerity and keenness of thought."

Remarkable moral faculties: "Ambition that nothing seemed to satisfy, self-confidence that received no check from experience, indefatigable energy that never tired; a devouring passion to achieve greatness, to do mighty deeds, to acquire renown; decision; firmness and strength of character; dexterity and adroitness in difficult crises; extraordinary craft; and the power of concealing whatever designs or purposes were to be performed, and very distinctly a profound contempt

for the great mass of ordinary men ; a belief that the world is ruled by force ; a conviction that genius can accomplish anything ; a disposition that shrank from cruelty and yet that seemed indifferent to human suffering when ambition was striving to gain its object."*

* Morris's "Napoleon," pp. 404, 405. ("Heroes of the Nations" Series.)

CHAPTER V

PRESTIGE

BUT all the foregoing requisites of a leader, whether as rhetorical devices or as inborn traits of character, powerful and effective so far as they go, are yet as nothing when compared to the power wielded by that almost inexplicable, mystic force known as *Prestige*. Of all the forces operating on human will the power of prestige is the strongest. It is this peculiar gift more than any other or even all others combined, that marks off the leader from the led. The man of prestige is the real master of the world. All those who come in contact with him are fascinated, are hypnotically impressed, by him. Even avowed foes and sworn enemies are often spellbound in his presence. They cannot move; they are overawed; their critical faculty is paralysed.

True, prestige can to a certain extent be enhanced and strengthened by external means

such as, fortune, titles, reputation and official robes ; yet the extent to which it can be acquired is very limited ; it is essentially congenital. The success of all great leaders has been due to this " occult force " rather than to any device consciously employed by them. Very often, however, they are conscious of the immense power of this invaluable gift, and know how to make use of it. The effectiveness of prestige is largely dependent on, and is enhanced by, direct contact. Hence the eagerness of those possessing it for personal interviews.

Cæsar's character presents a very fine illustration of what prestige means. Engaged in war with Pompeius, who had all the forces of success on his side save this mysterious force of prestige, when on the 9th of March Cæsar reached Brundisium, he set to work with two objects ; first, he endeavoured to blockade the port, and secondly, he made an earnest request to Pompeius for personal interview.

" But Pompeius," records the chronicler, " steadily refused the interview, maintaining, according to Cæsar, that in the absence of the counsels he had no authority to treat. Such an answer was, under the circumstances,

absurd, and it is not hard to guess its real motive. *He dreaded Cæsar's personal address and persuasiveness as much as Cæsar himself trusted in it.*"*

Napoleon's career reveals this marvellous source of success in a still more remarkable degree. Biographers are at one in testifying that his personality was so overwhelming that he bowed the most unbending of his generals to meek submission and fashioned them on a type of servitude.† Nor is there the slightest ground to imagine that this irresistible influence exerted by him was the outcome of his reputation or glory, for even when utterly unknown to fame, he possessed a degree of prestige sufficient to overawe

* Fowler's "Julius Cæsar," p. 264. ("Heroes of Nations" Series.) The italics are ours.

† In the work of Mr. Morris, which we have largely drawn upon in connection with Napoleon's character, occurs the following passage :

"Napoleon's generals and marshals were simply his satellites. If we except Massena, Davoust and Soult, not one was fit for a great independent command ; they were so trained to look up to the Emperor, that they wanted self-reliance and true capacity ; they were able soldiers, but not leaders" (p. 415).

And again :

"He really was his own foreign minister ; he controlled the finance, and even the Tribunale in France. He often treated Talleyrand as a high kind of clerk ; he made Champagny and Maret his more docile instruments" (*ibid.*).

the greatest military personages by his mere presence. How he made some of his most formidable adversaries surrender to him, while yet a raw youth, is admirably described by the psychologist-historian Taine, which description we take the liberty of reproducing from the pages of M. Le Bon :

“The generals of division, among others Augereau, a sort of swashbuckler, uncouth and heroic, proud of his height and his bravery, arrive at the staff quarters very badly disposed towards the little upstart dispatched them from Paris. On the strength of the description of him that has been given them, Augereau is inclined to be insolent and insubordinate ; a favourite of Barras, a general who owed his rank to the event of Vendémiaire, who has won his grade by street fighting, who is looked upon as bearish, because he is always thinking in solitude. . . . They are introduced and Bonaparte keeps them waiting. At last he appears girt with his sword ; he puts on his hat, explains the measures he has taken, gives his orders and dismisses them. Augereau has remained silent ; it is only when he is outside that he regains his self-possession and is able to deliver himself of his customary oaths. He admits, with Massena, that this little devil of a general has inspired him with awe ; he cannot understand the ascendancy by which from the very first he has felt himself overwhelmed.”

One of the chief preservatives of prestige is its immunity from criticism. The moment

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it is called in question it has ceased to possess its invulnerability. This explains why those who have won their way in the world by dint of their prestige have been so intolerant of criticism and have used every means at their command to suppress it. They have spared no pains to see that reverence for them is most deeply engrained in the minds of their disciples. Sometimes even in matters of the minutest details they have taken care to demand respect and implicit obedience from their adherents. The recognition of this fact alone would enable the reader to grasp the full import of the following injunctions (and others of the kindred nature) occurring in the Koran :

“ Say, O Prophet ! If you love God follow me ; then shall He love you, and forgive you your sins.”

“ Ye have in the Apostle of God an excellent model.

“ What the Apostle of God shall give you, that accept ; and what he shall forbid you that abstain from ; and fear God, for God is severe in chastising.”

“ He who obeys the Apostle, hath obeyed God.”

To leave the Prophet's assembly without obtaining his permission is stigmatised as a grievous sin :

“ Verily they alone are true believers who believe

in God and his Apostle, and when they are assembled with him on any affair depart not until they have sought his leave. Yes, they who ask leave of thee, are those who believe in God and his Apostle. And when they ask leave of thee on account of any business of their own, grant leave unto such of them as thou shall think fit."

"Address not the Apostle as ye address one another. God knoweth those of you who withdraw privately from his assembly screening themselves behind others. And let those who withstand his (the Apostle's) command beware, lest some calamity befall them in this world, or a grievous punishment be inflicted on them hereafter."

"The Prophet is nigher unto the true believers than their own souls, and his wives are their mothers."

Even an act apparently so harmless as loud talking in the presence of the Prophet is tabooed as exceedingly disrespectful and insolent :

"O true believers! raise not your voice above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him as ye speak to one another, lest your work become vain and ye unaware of it. Verily they who lower their voices in the presence of the Apostle of God, are the persons whose hearts God hath inclined to piety; they shall obtain forgiveness and rich reward."

Few men in the history of the world have had better reason to be so solicitous for maintaining their prestige than the Arabian Prophet.

Prestige is of all mental traits the one

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most difficult to simulate. Nothing more clearly distinguishes a genuine leader from a pretender than the degree of prestige that the former enjoys. People have not been wanting who have feigned to possess prestige by simulating the demeanour of those who actually possessed it ; but their ignominious failure at the hour of trial serves as a warning to all pretenders.

An appeal to history will make plain to readers the difference between prestige that is genuine and effective and one that is feigned and effectless. When Napoleon made his escape from Elba and tried to regain his lost throne, he had to face the opposition of a united Europe as well as of his own men. A strong army was sent to stop his advancing column that was composed of a small number of soldiers that had still remained loyal to him. Napoleon, however, could by no means be disconcerted. He was prestige incarnate. He knew no wavering, no hesitation. With a perfect calm he quitted his own ranks, approached the enemy single-handed, and then laying bare his breast, shouted :

“ Where is the man who will draw a trigger against his father ? ”

The effect was magical. The opposing soldiers instantaneously broke from the ranks and gave their once-loved commander an enthusiastic greeting. This was a master-stroke of sagacity, whereby Napoleon performed by a tactful application of his prestige what no amount of mere military skill or gallantry could ever have achieved.

Another instance exhibiting the futility of simulating prestige, where there is none in reality, is furnished by Robespierre, a man far inferior to Napoleon in every respect. When, denounced by Girondists, he appeared on the tribune to justify himself and perceived the feeling of the assembly running high against him, he endeavoured to give them a negative suggestion—an artifice uniformly successful when employed by a *bona fide* operator, and exclaimed “No one dare accuse me to my face.” The assertion was sufficiently declamatory, the accompanying gestures might have been all that could be desirable, the voice firm, and the tone stern, yet there certainly lacked that inimitable, inexplicable, and mysterious inner power of prestige that no appropriateness of outward demeanour could compensate for. No

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wonder, then, that the declamation proved wholly effectless. "I dare," cried one of his accusers. "Yes, Robespierre," he continued with his eyes fixed upon him, "I accuse thee," and went on with a fiery philippic, prefacing every fresh one of his accusations with the terrible words "Robespierre, I accuse thee."* Surely, prestige is the last thing in the world that can successfully be aped.

Of not less importance than any of the aforesaid requisites of a leader is his capability to penetrate the minds of those around him and to read their feelings and sentiments aright. Not infrequently is extreme surprise expressed by recluse students and unobservant speculators at successful results achieved by a capable leader by adopting measures that appear to them far removed from those recommended in their logical text-books. But, as a matter of fact, they need feel no surprise. People in their every-day life are guided and governed by a peculiar logic of instinct which has little in common with those canons of sound reasoning that one finds prescribed in the pages of Aristotle or Mill,

* Mignet, "History of the French Revolution," pp. 175, 176.

only fit to be taught within the four corners of University classes. Dictatorial mandates, ludicrously absurd on rational grounds, but emanating in conformity to the laws of popular mentality, have worked wonders.

An anecdote from the life of one of the greatest military leaders in the East will serve to illustrate our meaning. A merchant while travelling from Kabul was robbed on the way. He carried complaints to his sovereign, the famous Nadir Shah of Persia. The following is the chronicler's report of what passed between them :

"Was there no one near but the robbers?" said Nadir.

"None," was the reply.

"Were there no trees, or stones, or bushes?"

"Yes," said the man, "there was one large solitary tree, under whose shade I was reposing when I was attacked."

Nadir, on hearing this, affected great fury, and ordered two executioners to proceed, and flog the tree every morning till it either restored the lost property or revealed the names of the thieves. The mandate of a King of Persia is always law, that of Nadir was as irrevocable as fate. The executioners went, and the tree had not suffered flagellation above a week, when all the stolen goods were found one morning at its root. The alarmed robbers, who soon heard of the extravagant severity which inflicted such blows on an inanimate

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substance, trembled at the thought of the horrible punishment that awaited them, if they were discovered. *When the result was reported to Nadir, he smiled, and said: "I knew what flogging the tree would produce."**

The extent to which he can understand the feelings of his people is the measure of a leader's success.

Not very rarely does a mob-leader, through some act of inadvertence or any other diplomatic blunder, arouse a feeling of distrust among his followers. Now this is the greatest ordeal that he has to pass through. Distrust soon develops into active revolt and no revolt is more formidable than that of the blind worshippers against their idol. To quell the mutinous spirit of a crowd therefore, taxes to the utmost the skill and resources of those who have professed to be its master. This, in fact, is the crucial moment in the history of many an aspirant of leadership.

Pretenders have never been wanting in any age and country. Their usual lot has been to fall victim to the fury of their own once submissive slaves. The moment

* Malcolm's "History of Persia," Vol. II., p. 49. The italics are ours.

their infallibility is questioned, their death-knell has rung. The memories of Danton and Robespierre in France, of Parnell in Ireland, and of numerous Mahrattas in India—all familiar figures in the history of counterfeit leadership—would, it is hoped, spontaneously revive in the minds of the reader.

A study of the circumstances that led to the rise and fall of Parnell would be of great interest to the reader in this connection. After wielding an almost incredible influence on the Irish people for a little over a decade—an influence that survived the vehement attacks of various political factions and a powerful press—he could not stand the blow that fell to his prestige by his appearance as a co-respondent in the Divorce Court. Vicious morals, so ran the train of thought in the minds of his submissive disciples, pre-suppose vicious politics; and thus his leadership was promptly repudiated by forty-five to twenty-six. The “uncrowned King of Ireland” raged and raved with all the energy and ferocity of a desperate man; yet this was of no avail. Prestige of second-rate leaders, once shaken, is never seen to be restored.

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A genuine leader, on the other hand, comes out successful of this ordeal. Endowed with an instinctive capacity for leading and commanding, he is never at a loss to find out some expedients to re-conquer his mutinous slaves. The best method at his command on such occasions is to distract the attention of the rebels from the immediate cause of their present grievance or disaffection, and then abruptly to suggest to them, in a most impressive manner, their dutiful return to the ideals they have so long been accustomed to adore. Restoration of loyalty in this way is generally complete. This is well illustrated by several incidents in the life of that great "Master" the Arabian Prophet. I take one the best attested of them.

After the famous victory of Honein, when Mohammed secured a booty so rich as he had never gained before, he divided it amongst his followers. But, solicitous as he was to gain over the hearts of the Makka and Bedoui chiefs, he, contrary to his usual practice, gave them a share considerably far larger than to the Madina citizens, who had stood by him so loyally at the time of his great distress. The latter naturally took

offence, and began to grumble. What followed is graphically described by Muir in his "Life of Mohammed" :—

The discontent became so serious that Sad Ibn Obada (the Madina chief) thought right to represent it to the Prophet who bade him call murmurers together. He then addressed them thus: "Ye men of Madina, it hath been reported to me that Ye are discontented, because I have given unto these chiefs largesses, and have given nothing unto you. Now speak unto me. Did I not come unto you whilst Ye were wandering, and the Lord gave you the right direction? needy, and He enriched you? at enmity amongst yourselves, and He hath filled your hearts with love and unity?"

He paused for a reply.

"Indeed, it is even as thou sayest," they answered. "To the Lord and to his Prophet belong benevolence and grace."

"Nay, by the Lord," continued Mohammed, "but Ye might have answered, and answered truly, for I would have vouched for it myself—'Thou camest to Madina rejected, and we bore thee witness; a fugitive, and we took thee in; an out-caste, and we gave thee an asylum; destitute and we fed thee.' Why are Ye disturbed in mind because of the things of this life wherewith I have sought to incline these men into the faith in which Ye are already established? Are Ye not satisfied that others should have the flocks and herds, while you carry back with you the Prophet of the Lord! Nay I will never leave you. If all mankind went one way, and the men of Madina another way, verily I would go the way of the men of Madina. The

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Lord be favourable unto them and bless them and their sons and their sons' sons for ever " (pp. 422, 423).

Psychology knows no better—no surer—method of allaying the excited feelings of a mob than that instinctively adopted by the unschooled, untutored Prophet of the desert. It is almost superfluous to add that the grumblers were now completely conquered. They were moved at these words. They wept and wailed till their beards were wet with tears, and then they cried with one voice :—

" We are well satisfied, O Prophet, with our lot."

CHAPTER VI

THE STABILITY OF THE RACIAL MIND : ITS SIGNIFICANCE

SOME of the foregoing chapters have demonstrated the immense power wielded by leaders. We have seen that it is they that cause great revolutions, can bring about catastrophic upheavals in the smooth course of history, and can raise terrible storms in an apparently calm ocean of human affairs. We have now to see that this power of leaders, however tremendous, is not unbounded. It has its own sphere of operation, which exceedingly wide though, has still its limits which it cannot transcend.

Heredity and variation, we are in a position to know at this stage of our inquiry, are the two indispensable factors of the congenital outfit of every individual human being. Further reflection shows us that they are equally essential factors of the equipment of the race.

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It would have been clear to the reader by this time that, but for this dual capacity of the individual organism—that of partly conforming to, and partly varying from, the pattern of its progenitors—the continuance of human species for any considerable length of time would be impossible. But this consideration points, with still greater force, to an analogous duality of the character of social organism. If the possibility of human life so greatly depends on this double aspect of individual disposition, it depends much more on an analogous double aspect of social disposition. Hardly any arguments are required to show that the continuance of human species is impossible unless every race is capable both of assimilating the accumulated experience of past generations, and of adding its own share to the vast store of racial heredity to be inherited and utilised by the future generations.

The implication is obvious. Nations and communities having a disposition essentially similar to that of individuals, and remembering that the disposition of individuals is composed of two different factors—the conservative and the innovative—it naturally

follows that the character of nations and communities is likewise composed of two distinct elements. One part of their nature conforms to, and acquiesces in, what is old and established, and is the groundwork of custom ; the other part runs after novelty and innovation, and is the fountain-head of fashion. The former traits are relatively fixed and permanent elements of character, which it is extremely difficult to create, but once they have come into being they are equally hard of annihilation. The latter ones, on the other hand, are mobile and transient, that is, they are relatively very easy of production, and can be annihilated and generated with equal readiness.

It is these mobile and variable characteristics of a people that alone can be successfully worked upon by leaders in the ordinary course of events. Anatomical observations have taught that while there are certain features in the human body that can readily be modified by the art of the breeder, there are also certain others that require a lapse of geological ages in order to undergo any appreciable change. Closely analogous to this physical organisation of human life is the system

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and arrangement of its psychological organism. The domain of mind, no less than the domain of body, is thus divisible into two distinct compartments. The one group is comprised of the ideas, beliefs, opinions and sentiments that are relatively fixed and stable, and serve as the groundwork or substratum of his entire mental life ; while the other one comprehends those that are by far the most mobile, shifting and ephemeral, and form its superstructure.

Now the touch-stone of a successful leader is his power to discern the former from the latter class of popular beliefs and sentiments, and his ability to work on the latter class exclusively. It is these transient beliefs and sentiments that alone lend themselves to be shaped and moulded by the leaders—that alone are amenable to the influences of conscious reforms—that alone can be subjected to rapid re-adjustments ; whereas the permanent ones constitute the genius of a race and being deeply engrained in the most profound strata of nervous system offer too great a resistance to any power that endeavours to modify them within a short period. To effect any change in them,

the only sufficient force is that of a non-human agency—Time—the most potent of all agencies that the human mind is capable of conceiving.

The one common sin, in all ages and countries, of the Utopian souls that in their zeal to manipulate the guidance of public opinion would hazard anything, has been their endeavour to force their peoples to adopt certain radical reforms, no matter how violently they may clash with the fixed network of the racial genius—no matter how deep-seated be their antagonism to the essentials of the soul of that people. Rebellions, revolutions, insurrections and massacres have been the usual consequences. They could hardly be averted. Adjustment, to be of any use, must always be gradual. An abrupt and violent adjustment in the domain of collective psychology is as certain to beget a revolution as it is to cause a catastrophe in the domain of geology. A people can with no greater rapidity change its fixed characteristics than a leopard its spots.

To disregard the past of a community, to ignore the accumulation of ancestral experiences of a nation, to treat a people

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as if they were absolutely without any heredity at their back, and to be unmindful of their historical associations and traditions is the besetting sin of the demagogue. If a certain form of Government is suited to the French people, he can see no reason why it should not be equally wholesome for the Turks. If the adoption of a certain measure was attended with beneficial results in America, why should it not (in his queer logic) be productive of equally good results in China? Few conceptions of human nature could be more ill-founded.

There is another fatal error which the inexperienced apostles of reform are so often in the danger of falling into. This is their inability to distinguish between the rational and affective aspects of any opinion, custom, doctrine or institution. Truth and utility are entirely different things. A social ideal, a political dogma, an article of faith, a general belief, while wholly unable to stand the test of reason, may yet be of incalculable value in maintaining the integrity or even the existence of any particular people. As a logical inference it may be worthless; as a scientific opinion it may be contemptible; yet

as a factor in the evolution and progress of a particular community it may be invaluable.

And this is exactly what comes out to be the actual state of things. The sources of inspiration, the fountains of communal solidarity, lie not in what is logically conclusive, but in what is persuasive, what excites the fancy, and fills the mind with enthusiasm. How few of the fundamental dogmas of the great religions can stand the searchlight of logical scrutiny, yet how immense, how terrible, how irresistible is their influence on the genesis, growth and decay of nations and communities. It is not merely futile, but positively dangerous to divest a people abruptly of its great social assets—religion in particular, for it is faith, and faith alone, that kindles the fire of heart.

These peculiarities of the popular mind, hitherto left unnoticed save by a few professional students of psychology, are now, however, beginning to force their recognition on those to whom, on practical grounds, their acquaintance would have been of immense advantage, and who even with a rudimentary knowledge of the laws of the popular

psychology could have averted most calamitous consequences.

The events of the Turko-Balkan war of 1912 have been a mystery to that vast majority of hallucinated politicians and military correspondents who always indulged in the fond delusion that success in war was purely a question of military skill wholly apart from the respective mentalities of the contending armies—that guns and armaments alone were worth looking after; while the moral qualities of the belligerents were a negligible quantity altogether. It was, therefore, a rude surprise to them to find the gallant Turkish soldiery, that had fought so heroically only thirty-five years ago against the overwhelming Russian forces, suffering at the hands of petty Balkan states a horrid series of serious reverses with hardly a single victory to counterbalance them. Numerous explanations, emanating from different quarters, were offered of the amazing absolute failure of the Turkish arms, some of which explanations were of so preposterous a nature that, but for the consideration of space, we would have certainly reproduced them for the amusement of the intelligent reader.

But the real causes did not long remain obscure to all eyes. A certain military correspondent, writing on the subject, has indulged in observations so marked by a most judicious psychological insight that I would have needed no apology in reproducing his words. Unfortunately, however, I cannot lay my hand at the present moment on the letter of the said correspondent. I therefore content myself with giving extracts from the abstract of his letter as it appeared in an Anglo-Indian daily in Upper India. After expressing his surprise at the rather unexpected defeat of the Turks, the leader-writer goes on to observe :

“ Nations do not change their characteristics or a body of men lose the virtues they formerly owned unless grave and potent influences have been steadily at work. After making every allowance for the opportunities seized by the Allies for declaring war on the Porte, and for the weakened finances, internal political strife, and divided counsels at Constantinople, the true reason for the *débacle* of the armies of Turkey is left unexplained. A most interesting letter from a Cavalry Officer on the Turkish side has thrown great light on the puzzle caused to students of military history. . . . Briefly stated, he attributes the defeat of the Turks to two chief causes : Blind adherence to German advisers and German ways of training ; and, secondly,

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to a disappearance among the officers of the firm belief in the religion of which Mohammed was the Prophet, and which has always inspired true believers in Islam with those dauntless powers of endurance and scorn for death which so often gained victory or overcame disaster in former campaigns.

"To deal with the first of these subjects. While none will deny the extreme efficiency of the German war machine, albeit it runs the risk of growing a trifle rusty through long disuse, Teutonic discipline and the instructions of a German drill sergeant are clearly not suited to soldiers of a different race and absolutely opposite temperament. French Zouaves and Chasseurs d'Afrique would forfeit many of the military virtues they possess if trained in accordance with the rule whereby the Uhlan and Prussian Grenadiers are developed into magnificent fighting units. When applied to an Oriental people, the result was still more likely to fail in its avowed object, namely, converting the Turkish soldier into a poor imitation of the battalions serving beneath the banners of Germany. . . .

"So much for the first reason given by our Cavalry Officer for the defeat of his countrymen. The second arose from the weakening of the old Turkish religious spirit. It might be denounced as savouring of fanaticism and foreign to modern ideas, but it had proved a mainstay to Turkish armies in the past. The few successful commanders were officers of the old school, beloved by those under them and who were able to impart a portion of their firm belief in the teachings of the Prophet, and the necessity for strict observance of the teachings of Islam to the mass of their subordinates. The Ironsides of Cromwell were not superior to their Cavalier opponents in personal valour or military skill, but by exciting their

gloomy religious feelings, the Huntingdon brewer managed to drive a monarch to the scaffold and routed his gallant enemies by wielding the 'Sword of the Lord and of Gideon.' In a materialistic age, people are prone to overlook those sentiments and incentives to good work which will always remain inherent in masculine nature. The Allies, however much their excess and bestial outrages contradicted their faith, were bigots in their own way. . . .

"The Turk in his conduct of the campaign put those professing Christians to shame, and clearly proved that in the matter of atrocities the Cross was every whit as guilty as the Crescent. . . .

"The Young Turk has, we fear, lost much sense of discipline and respect for his seniors, also for what he regards as exploded notions of religion and conduct, without obtaining the virtues of the nations he is proud of copying from. The sturdy Redif could not give a whole-hearted devotion to officers whom he saw quaffing the forbidden juice of the grape, and who omitted the daily round of prayers enjoined on all true Moslems by the Koran. Nor had the Young Turk acquired compensating qualities for those he had abandoned as obsolete and useless. His acquaintance with continental capitals and modern literature did not render him braver in action or more skilled amid difficult surroundings."

Enough has been said to show that, although a crowd is extremely mobile in its ideas and sentiments, yet all its mental oscillations are limited and conditioned by the stability of the racial mind.

It is the influence of a leader plus the

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characteristics of the racial mind that determines its adoption or rejection of any belief suggested to it. This is why the crowds of different countries present very considerable differences of beliefs and conduct and are not to be influenced in precisely the same manner.

Whatever the makers of history in any age or country have been able to achieve is merely that they have contrived to set before a particular people some invigorating ideal and have succeeded in changing their devitalising activities into re-animating energies. They have always taken into account, unconsciously though, the elementary biological truth that germ-cells are as much endowed with memories as individual human beings, and have therefore taken every care to see that their reforms should only be the continuance, in a more refined form, of the essentials of the racial mind. Greatest upheavals in the life of nations are nothing more than this. None of the great reformers, the Prophets and the founders of religion included, could ever accomplish anything greater. And whenever they have attempted to press their reforms deeper and to effect a change in the underground regions of the

fixed mentality of their people, their endeavours have been singularly futile.

The conversion of the heathen Arabia to Islamism, so rapid in its duration, and so thorough in its essentials, is deservedly held to be one of the greatest upheavals known to history. Yet a close scrutiny of facts would reveal that, contrary to what at first might be expected, even this has not been sufficiently powerful to effect any marked change in the long-standing faith and practices—the conservative elements—of the people of the Desert. The following extract from the pages of one who is familiar with the ways of life of the Bedouins would disillusion many a mind :

“ In fact, the fear of Jinni (Genii) and skill of certain magicians in keeping them friendly are the only tangible forms of religion that we could discover among them (*i.e.*, the Bedouins of Gara Mountains). When at the coast villages, they outwardly conform to the Mohammedan customs, but when away in their mountains they abandon them altogether. During the time we were with them they never performed either the prayers or the ablutions required by the Moslem creed. . . . Amongst the Bedouins of the Hadramaut we noticed the same absence of religious observances, and the same superstitious dread of the Jinni, but at the same time I fully believe they have their own sacred places and

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festivals, which they conceal as much as possible from the fanatical Moslems who dwell amongst them. A Bedouin never fasts during Ramzan and does not object to do his work during the month of Abstinence, but he goes to mosque and says his prayers when occasion brings him to the coast. It seems to me a curious coincidence that in many other Mohammedan countries we have visited, we have come across the same story of concealed religion as practised by the nomad races. We have the Ali-Bin-Allahis in the Persian Mountains, about whose secret rites horrible stories are told; we have the Ausairi and the Druses in the Lebanon, and the nomad Yoronks of Asia Minor, and the Dunmat of Salonica, about all of whom the strict Mohammedans of the town tell you exactly the same story that we have heard about the Bedouins of Southern Arabia.*

To these survivals of the more ancient cults existing within the fold of Islam and which it has never been able to eradicate, the Indian reader can readily add one more instance of his own Moslem countrymen, the majority of whom on the ground of their Hinduised rites, ceremonies, manners and general mode of living can hardly be differentiated from the adherents of Hinduism—the religion of their ancestors. Such is the unshakeable durability of the racial mind!

By way of inference from what has pre-

* Bent's "Southern Arabia," pp. 260, 261.

ceded, we might here fittingly insist on the extreme inadvisability for any leader, of starting any movement that is likely to come in disharmony, or even is not directly in consonance, with the fixed general beliefs of the race. Such movements, despite the most powerful impetus given them by the personality of their originators are doomed to early death.

The Aligarh movement was started in Moslem India, by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, with the avowed object of infusing in his co-religionists the spirit of Western culture by means of university instruction. That great personage worked harder and harder with his band of enthusiastic adherents—all men of great social position and reputed for their rhetorical powers. The external agencies (the encouragement and help offered by the Government, for example) were again on the side of the reform. This succeeded for time being in the erection of palatial buildings and in the agglomeration of a fairly large number of students at Aligarh. Yet the real object of the mission never went home to the heart of the people. And barely four decades have elapsed when the very

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foundations of the Aligarh movement are beginning to shatter, and symptoms of a speedy collapse are visible enough to all but the blind votaries. Nothing could avert the premature doom of a movement not in consonance with the soul of a race. No human efforts, however strenuous and well-meant, could induce a people, who for over thirteen hundred years have been enwrapped in religious ecstasy even in their most profane moments, to enter into the spirit of a foreign civilisation, specially when it is presented in a form apparently divorced from religion.

The tenacity of the racial characteristics is often so enormous that even a deep sense of religion is not strong enough to overpower it. A people who have for innumerable days been at daggers drawn amongst themselves cannot by any possible means be transformed in a day into peaceful and law-abiding citizens, even though the binding force may have the strongest support at its back, that is a Supernatural sanction, or religion. History of early Moslem Caliphs brings out this truth in a very clear light. No precept in the Moslem code of conduct is more emphatically laid down than the brotherhood of all the faithful.

“ Brothers of faith are nearer to each other than the brother of kin,” is the express Commandment of God. Yet all these emphatic injunctions proved to be of no avail before the intense tribal dissensions that the Arab mind had been nourished upon for ages past. Barely had twelve years elapsed after the death of the Apostle when, at the accession of the third Caliph to the rulership of Islam, the ancient enmity between the Modharite and Himyarite tribes that had lain dormant for a brief space of twelve years, broke forth with an awful intensity and struck so deep at the root of Islamic civilisation that with all its later pomp and grandeur it could never free itself from its effect.

It is but fair, at this stage, to remark that modern statesmen are not always blind to the defects and imperfections of an over-zealous reform. Sometimes they do realise its limitations, but most often when it is too late—that is, usually at a time when the forces of disintegration have done their work. Rarely, very rarely indeed, they wake up in time to be able to check the most rapidly rising tide of dissolution. Generally they try to lock the stable after the horse is gone.

In 1911, at the instigation of a handful of the Chinese, superficially educated in the schools of the West, a serious revolution demanding a Republican Government broke out and was successful in its aim. The usual barbarities of a revolution were, of course, perpetrated. Two years later, a man well known in his early years for his uncompromising spirit of reform and his inflexible advocacy of Utopian ideals was formally elected President of the Chinese Republic. But by this time sobriety had taken the place of boyish optimism—the actual experience of facts had made him wiser and saner. His faith in the magic power of the reform formula was now shaken, and he no longer hoped to see the beneficial results of radical and abrupt changes in the beliefs and practices of his people. His speech, therefore, at the inauguration of the Consultation Committee of seventy-one members appointed by him, caused no little sensation of painful surprise to those who had fondly hoped to find in him the inaugurator of the millennium. These words falling from the lips of the President of a newly-formed Republic are too remarkable and too full of significance to be lightly passed over.

The following are some extracts from his speech as it appeared in the *London Times* :

"The Republic has now existed for two years, and during this period principles and laws have been dragged in the dust, while morality, self-restraint, and righteousness have been swept into oblivion. Some nations in this world owe their greatness to military efficiency, others to trade or industry; when we turn to China her state differs scarcely from the brute creation. How can we expect a nation reduced to this condition to escape the fate of dismemberment at the hands of others? Thus it behoves us to desist from running after high-sounding titles, and to start from the very beginning in the task of practical construction.

"Nowadays the word 'equality' is in all men's mouths, but equality only means that all men are equal in the sight of the law. It does not imply that distinctions of rank are to be obliterated and that each man may be a rule unto himself in negation of law. . . . 'Liberty' is another beautiful modern expression, but it is limited to the bounds of the law, within which all men are free. Such a thing as unrestricted liberty does not exist.

"Nowadays men talk glibly of patriotism, but this word has a significance of its own. It does not follow that a patriot is endowed with qualities to govern a nation, nor that he possesses the requisite measure of ability. If we entrust the Government to a man simply on the score of his patriotic zeal, without inquiring into his capacity, the almost inevitable consequence will be national ruin."

Then, turning to the *ideologues* who had

plundered the Chinese nation in the name of the Republican virtues, he is reported to have said :

“ Who would ever shape his course after the dictates of a few turbulent demagogues who indulge in vociferation and opprobrious epithets? Such fellows make use of catch-words like ‘ democracy ’ or a ‘ second and third revolution ’ in the base endeavour to possess themselves of others’ wealth, while they repair overseas with their gains, and seek shelter under the ægis of the foreigner. Such men are nothing but a scourge, and differ in no degree from brigands and house-breakers. In their mouths Government by the people implies Government by evil-doers, and how should a nation governed by evil-doers find a foothold in the world of to-day ? ”

Referring to the Utopian souls he delivered himself as follows :

“ Nowadays scholars make too much of empty theories, and are apt to expect too immediate results. Until you have won the public confidence you will never make people see eye to eye with you. No nation is so deeply imbued with constitutional tendencies as Great Britain, yet in governing India she has not caused the discarding of the time-honoured turban. Again, Japan is second to none in reforming zeal, yet the majority of her people continue to wear the derided wooden clogs. They know as well as we do that they are inappropriate, but are firm in their refusal to abandon them, owing to being alive to the fact that changes must not run suddenly counter to immemorial custom.”

And again :

" Finally, theories of the schools are not a sufficient foundation for national prosperity ; men and women are required in conjunction before the results can be achieved. It depends on you, gentlemen, to display your patriotism, and in your zeal for the salvation of the country to sacrifice everything in furthering the cause of progress. The future of China rests with you."

This voluntary confession of the futility of all attempt to transform at one stroke any people's character and of mischiefs that any such attempt is bound to give rise to, is all the more valuable since it comes from one than whom no one has had better opportunities of testing the merits of a premature democracy.

CONCLUSION

THE apparent implication of what has preceded seems to be that to be a member of a group is necessarily to suffer degradation of one's mentality, to sink back to an exceedingly low level of intellectual life, and that the rôle of a leader, therefore, simply consists in taking advantage of the imbecility of groups, societies, or crowds, guiding (or rather misguiding) them in their infra-intellectual life, and dictating to them some form or other of animal behaviour.

Such a conclusion, though so apparent, is, however, absolutely unwarranted. Contrary to what may at the first sight be supposed, observation has proved that those who can utter the most vituperative language, those who can use the most expletives, and those who most unblushingly prostitute their inborn gifts of rhetoric to the service of fraud and imposture, are by no means calculated to secure a lasting influence. Their rhetoric

may be dazzling, but its effect can hardly be lasting. They are demagogues, and as little does a demagogue deserve the appellation of a leader as a quack that of a physician.*

The immense destructive powers of masses being given, the efficiency of a leader consists

* A leader is the master, while a demagogue is the slave of his people. The former improves and reforms public taste, while the latter simply flatters to it. The private life of the latter is, as a rule, dissolute and degraded, although that of the former, too, is not necessarily above moral censure. Of all the "Leaders" of the Revolution the character of Danton very nearly approximates that of a typical demagogue.

"Danton," writes M. Mignet, "was a gigantic revolutionist. He deemed no means censurable if they were useful. According to him, men could do whatever they dared attempt. . . . Danton, who has been termed 'the Mirabeau of the populace,' bore a physical resemblance to that tribune of the higher classes; he had irregular features, a powerful voice, impetuous gesticulation, a daring eloquence, a lordly brow. . . .

"Ardent, overwhelmed with debts and wants, of dissolute habits, given up now to his passions, now to his party, he was formidable while in the pursuit of an object, but became indifferent as soon as he had obtained it. This powerful demagogue presented a mixture of the most opposite vices and qualities. Though he had sold himself to the Court, he did not seem sordid; he was one of those who, so to speak, give an air of freedom even to baseness. . . . The welfare of his party was, in his eyes, superior to law and even to humanity." (Mignet's "History of the French Revolution," p. 158.)

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in persuading them to turn off their energies from destruction to construction. The transference of the behaviour of crowds from the side of demolition towards that of conformation, so that the operation of the principles governing the mass-mind may be turned wholly to good, is the measure of a leader's success. To found great religions, to build great kingdoms, to propound great metaphysical systems—these and the like activities are the proper fields for the exercise of a leader's vocation.

The fame of Buddha, Christ and Mohammed ; of Cæsar, Alexander and Napoleon ; and of Pythagoras, Plato and Kant rests not on what they helped to annihilate, but directly on what they managed to create. Destruction, in any sense, has never been an end that they sought to pursue. Whenever they had recourse to it, it was solely as a preliminary to constructive work. A leader must leave behind him a large legacy which, whether of beliefs and doctrines, or of laws and institutions, or else of land and territories, must manifestly be in the shape of something positive. A legacy of mere negations is almost inconceivable.

But a body of men that can be made to accomplish some constructive work must, above all, be well-organised. It may sound a little paradoxical, yet it is a truth demonstrated to the student of collective psychology at every step of his study that, while the behaviour of an unorganised or imperfectly organised mob implies a much lower mentality than that of its average units, the conduct of a well-organised group attains to a level far higher than that could be attained to by individuals composing it.

The solution of the paradox lies in the fact that in well-organised groups, societies and committees, the organisation is such that it gives predominant influence and responsibility to those select members that are best qualified to arrive at sound conclusions in their spheres. The movements of a well-disciplined army, for instance, exhibit a degree of skill and intelligence that far surpasses that of the individual soldiers, for it is the skill and intelligence of a Commander-in-Chief, who by virtue of his training and experience, is most fitted to command, aided by a highly-selected staff, deliberating in the light of the knowledge of the principles of war, scientifically culled

from accumulated military experience of past generations. Just the reverse is the case with the undisciplined army where every raw recruit arrogantly thinks himself competent enough to take command of the whole army.

Morally, too, a well-organised group attains to a much higher level than its component units. The superiority of collective volition, in this respect, is explained by the existence in each soldier's mind of a clear knowledge of his place in the army, "and of his part in its life, accompanied by a sentiment of devotion to it, which sentiment alone renders each individual capable of enduring all sorts of hardship, discomfort and fatigue."

But what is of even greater importance is, in the fine language of Professor McDougall, that "in the wisely organised army, the group-spirit is not single, but multiple; each man entertains not only a sentiment of devotion to the army as a whole, which leads him to desire its success and glory, but also similar sentiments for his corps, his regiment, his company which lead him to desire, and to do his utmost to achieve, the success and glory of each of these groups with which he identifies himself,

in friendly rivalry with the similar groups. For it is a most beneficent characteristic of the group sentiment, that devotion to any group is perfectly compatible with, and even favourable to the strength of, a similar sentiment for any larger group, that comprises the lesser. . . . Yet another condition of the high morality is secured for any army, if it is so organised that the men with the firmest courage and finest enthusiasm occupy the positions of greatest prestige ; for then their temper will inspire those who stand next to them, and will be transmitted by these downwards through the whole system."

It would be an insult to the reader's intelligence to add that the conditions referred to are equally applicable to all well-organised groups, whether military or otherwise.

The conduct of a well-organised group being thus outlined, the sole task of a leader consists in directing the masses to some wholesome work, in turning off their energies wholly to good, and in directing the stream of their activities to some constructive outlet. And in this respect he stands out in sharp contrast with another folk with whom he is so frequently yet so erroneously confounded,

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namely, the demagogue, who is an emblem of destruction, and is invariably the forerunner either of the socialist with all his anti-social propensities, or of the anarchist with his terrible arguments—the revolver, the dagger, and the bomb.

