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LIVING INDIA

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*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

DANCING GIRLS



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FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

# LIVING INDIA

BY

SAVEL ZIMAND

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By AE.

[George W. Russell]



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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LIVING INDIA

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*To*  
G. F. Z.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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India for two generations; Mr. G. A. Wathen, formerly Principal of the Khalsa College of Amritsar; Mr. K. T. Paul, National Secretary of the Y. M. C. A. of India; Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, well-known journalist and for seven years editor of an English newspaper of Calcutta; Mr. E. C. Carter, who lived and worked in India for twelve years, and through whom I made my first contacts with the country; and innumerable others—have all been liberal with their aid.

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SAVEL ZIMAND

*New York, August 24, 1928*

## INTRODUCTION

I HAVE never been in India, but I know Savel Zimand. He was in Ireland when political passions were most intense and I remember what integrity of mind he brought to his study of our affairs, how he listened to all sides and allowed all a voice. So I am willing to take his hand when he brings me to India and to see India through his eyes, for I am certain that with him there is no religion higher than truth.

My own interest in India began forty years ago when I read the Upanishads, the Bagavadgita, the Buddhist Suttas and other sacred books. But my reverence for the noble imagination in the Upanishads or the wisdom of the Bagavadgita has never led me to assume that India could be divined from its sacred literature, or that its life could possibly be as idealistic or mystic as the thoughts of its greatest sages.

I was prepared rather to find that the nation which had the loftiest spiritual imagination must have states of spiritual degradation balancing its highest vision, and this I think might be inferred from that Brahmanical psychology which opposes The Lokas to the Talas, the spiritual states of our being to the sensual states, and from which I infer that with every ascent to spirit a





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new abyss opens which is the dark opposite of the heaven into which the soul has climbed.

So when Savel Zimand tells about the pariahs, the sensuality, the religious taboos, the jungle of popular superstitions which choke life I am not surprised. There may be nothing like it in Europe or America. But we must not be too proud comparing West with East, for if we have not this dark sorcery of superstition neither has Europe or America ever gone with such exultation into the divine world. The depths are the hells of their heaven. Almost all the evils spoken of by this latest writer on India have a religious root. Their devilry is the dark inversion of their spirituality.

I do not know of any country which has such heights and such depths in its history. Even to-day in what some observers have called "a degenerate India" its great teachers Gandhi and Tagore exhibit a spirituality not paralleled by any leaders of thought in the Occident. Men like these I have mentioned in Europe or America would be the heroes of little groups, but with us there is not any widespread spirituality which would have made them great national figures adored by the multitude as these are in India. I am not sure that that foreign domination which Indian nationalism deplors may not prove to be the very cause of an Indian renaissance. All cultures, however high, tend to decay, and I doubt if there could be any resurrection unless the culture was crossed by another.

In Sir Hendon Petrie's "Revolutions in Civilisation"





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he notes nine waves of civilisation in Egypt. Every wave had its period of initial energy, a culmination of power and a descent into decadence. After every period of decadence there was an invasion. This crossing of the culture of one race by the culture of another seems to be the necessary precedent to a new resurrection. China as well as India seems to be stirred at present by the crossing of their own culture with the thought and science of Europe. Their own culture probably is the Mendelian dominant and they will absorb into themselves the culture of Europe and renew with vigour their own spiritual and cultural life.

It is possible the Indian historians writing a century or two from to-day will be more philosophical about the alien domination of India than Indian nationalists are to-day. My own country, Ireland, has had a renaissance in my own time, and I think it was due to the crossing of the original Gael with the Saxon, the Dane and the Norman. We came to a new intellectual life and at last could declare intellectual as well as political independence.

I have no doubt out of the ferment in India will come a new renaissance. It is not natural to expect that those fighting for that independence to-day should be philosophical as I looking at the struggle from a distance. I feel certain that in spite of the fact that India is in the trough of one of its waves of civilisation, there are in it the spiritual elements which will lead to a great resurrection. It may be the labour of a century or



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more, but I am inspired to believe that a people who had so marvellous a spiritual life in the past must have it quickened again once more under cyclic law.

AE.

*Dublin, 10th August, 1928*

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# LIVING INDIA

PART I

BACKGROUND

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# LIVING INDIA

## CHAPTER I

### THE MYRIAD VOICES

**D**ELHI, ancient capital of the Moghul Emperors of India, echoes to the voices of distant guns. It is a state occasion. A procession passes through streets lined with thousands of people, eager-eyed, garbed in a bewildering variety of color. First a mounted escort, imposing with banners and bugles, with soldiers in uniform, and heralds in regalia of barbaric oriental magnificence, goes its glittering way. Horsemen in court costumes, officers in military scarlet follow; then a coach drawn by eight horses ridden by postillions, the vehicle bearing a personage in a blue velvet robe bordered with ermine, a robe which parts to reveal a breast blazing with medals and orders. He sits beneath an imposing umbrella held by a servant clad in scarlet and gold. Servants with maces and plumed fans ride erect and immobile beside him. Behind his carriage come the equipages of jewelled native princes. The personage beneath the umbrella gazes with the eyes of an alien upon the thronged streets.

He is the British Viceroy of India. With the assistance of a few thousand English officials, he governs one-fifth of the human race. When he descends from





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4. his carriage the train of his robe will be born by jewelled princes. Yet by birth and blood and a life lived chiefly in far lands he is a stranger in his empire.



SOME miles from the crowded lanes and gullies of the native city, rises the New Delhi with the young national parliament of India. There, young and middle aged men from all parts of the vast land, swathed in homespun or superbly attired in native costume or even in European dress, with sad, grave faces and a certain determination in their eyes, gesticulate and protest in calm voices against foreign rule. The British members of this assemblage, in morning dress or dark lounge suits, listen with faint amusement.



IN another part of town the crowds of Islamites surge through the gullies and streets towards the Juma Masjid, the greatest mosque of India. Women covered in all-enveloping cloaks of all patterns gaze through very narrow slits cut in the cloth in front of their eyes as they walk along. Costly cars carrying devout Mohammedans wearing fezes as headgear rush by unending lines of bicycles, and the bullock carts plod their slow way to the great cathedral. From the inside come frenzied shouts of "Alla-ho-Akbar, Great is God, there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet." For here are gathered a few of the 70,000,000 sons of the Prophet who live and worship in India.







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FARTHER down in a narrow lane stands a Hindu temple. White-robed figures beat heavy drums and sing in praise of one or more of the 330,000,000 gods which constitute the Hindu pantheon. Through twisting, crowded roads and gullies winds a marriage procession. In it walk men of noble figure and scanty attire; there are strange looking faces gleaming from rich robes and brilliant turbans; there are young girls perfect in contour, draped about their head and body in the colorful *sari* and bedecked with gold and silver ornaments in their ears, nose, upper lip, ankles, or arms. All have painted on their foreheads a fantastic variety of monograms, which reveal the particular god they worship. The young bridegroom in a golden robe is seated on horseback. And the prodigious noise of the drums and cymbals and the loud voices accompanying the procession blend with the temple bells. These are some of the innumerable tribes and castes to which belong the 230,000,000 Hindus of the vast land.



In the crowded streets of the colorful city one meets with gentle races of noble lineage, worshipping powerful deities and idols. Beside them are certain fierce tribes of small stature whose superstitions bear witness to their former wild life. Here, in an old house, lives a Hindu scholar and in the yard sits his outcaste sweeper. At the edge of the pavement of a narrow lane one perceives the Mohammedan letter-writer with his old typewriter and farther down in modest dwell-



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ings live Parsi bank clerks, Jain retail sellers, Maharashtra or Gujarati jewellers and other brown and black skinned men and women—all subjects of the British Empire.

Small groups of these "natives" stand in front of their houses discussing the latest Hindu-Moslem riots. One group maintains that the Moslems drove cattle through the Hindu quarter of the city and that this act provoked open warfare. Another group has it that the trouble began with Hindus playing music in front of the mosque. For we must remember that music is an essential part of Hindu worship, but it is banned from the Moslem mosque. On the other hand, the cow is sacred to the Hindu, and the Mohammedan sacrifices his cattle as Abraham did. These facts may explain why Moslems drive cattle through Hindu lanes on their way to their religious sacrifice and why Hindus play music before the Mohammedan mosque. Up on the hill of New Delhi voices from the whole land shout *Bande Mataram* or Hail to the Motherland, and seem to be united in their demands for self-government, but here they appear ready to leap at each other.



WE approach the railroad station, where both communities meet on western ground. The platform is thronged with human beings. Some are slumbering on the ground or smoking—all waiting for a train not scheduled to leave for many hours. It is much like a Russian depot, save for color of skin and character of





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attire. For here almost everyone is dressed, as one writer has put it, "in a turban and a pocket-handkerchief." In the scorching sun and dust, in the third-class compartments, fifteen or more in each, they are travelling on some pilgrimage.

At last the majestic express for Agra and points east pulls in. There is a pushing, yelling and rushing as if a revolution had arrived. Everyone is after seats. In a few minutes everybody is crowded in somewhere. We are borne off in one of the cars. In a narrow compartment sits a Hindu family on their way to attend the marriage ceremony of a relative. The head of the family is a railway employee, and they are all dressed in half western clothes—European jacket and Indian trousers. One of the sons explains that the bride is sixteen years old and the bridegroom thirty. He is very glad to go to the wedding where they will be feasted for two weeks. There is talk about the high price of bridegrooms and a son mentions that his father is much in debt, "because of my two married sisters."

They wear across their breasts a little cord. It is the sign of their superior rank as Brahman—once a Brahman always a Brahman! All castes may be equal in the sight of God, but the sweepers and those born to similar vocations have to perform this work all their lives. And yet, in the holy temple of Jugger-nath, at Puri, on the south coast of India, all Hindus worship before the shrine of equality.

There is discussion about the thousands and thous-

ands of castes, but the father sits in a corner gazing out of the windows. He looks as much detached from the outward world as a Hindu god. He is feeding his spirit. To him the trip is a pilgrimage to a spiritual ceremony. More Indians are surging into the car, pushing their way into the narrow compartment. But he pays no attention to what is happening around him. Sad and gentle, he is dreaming as India has dreamed for centuries.

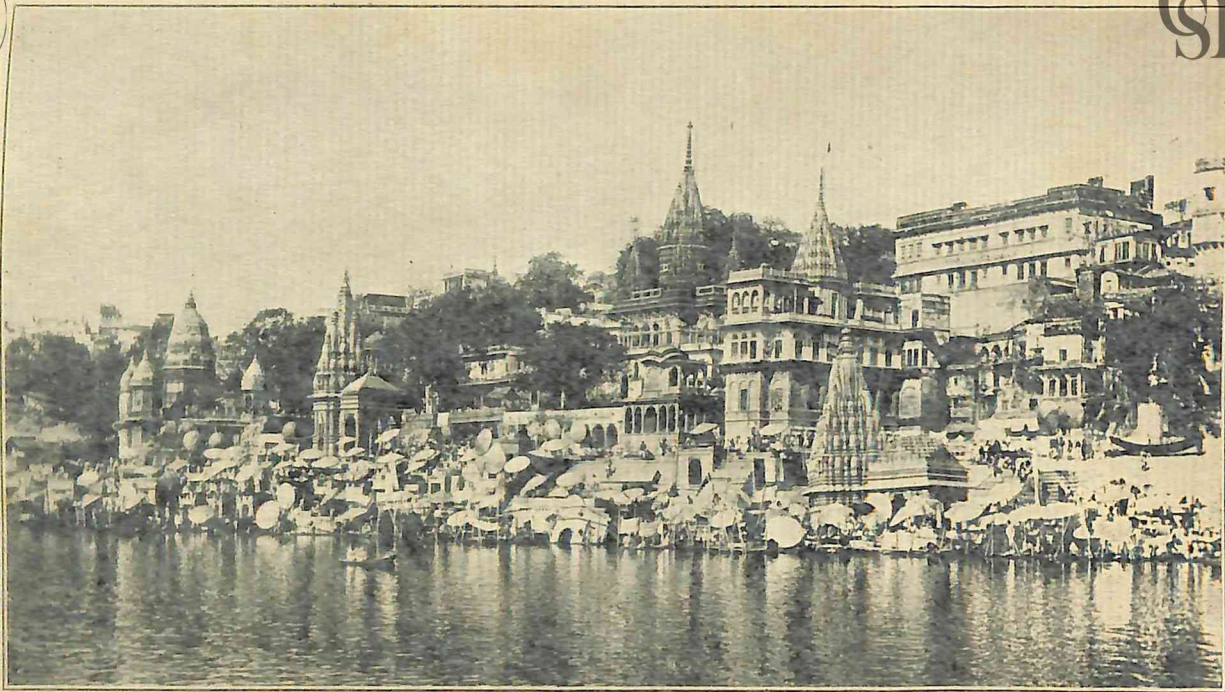


WE have flown many miles along the steel rails; we are now in the most ancient town of Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, where Buddha came twenty-five hundred years ago to begin his mission of mercy and uttered his message, "Open ye your ears, O monks, the deliverance from death is found!" The air is filled with prayers at this shrine of shrines.

A long line of palaces and temples and monasteries overhang the holy Ganges. Barefooted worshippers hasten to the river to purify their souls. Men, women, children, *yogis*, and holy beggars are all swarming down the stairways which lead to the water's edge. They step into the holy water, splash their foreheads and mouths and pray silently. On the shore, others, robed in yellow loin-cloth or scanty rags, seek salvation by reciting scriptures or renderings of the epic stories of their forefathers.

In the centre of the river front, at the vast burning-ghat, the dead are soaked in the water and put on wooden pyres. Many are the dead burned here. For





*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

PALACES, TEMPLES, AND MONASTERIES OVERHANGING THE HOLY GANGES AT BENARES



the saints have said: "He who dies in Benares attains Nirvana." Not far from the burning grounds, the washermen or *Dhobis* splash the linen on rocks and clean it in the holy Ganges water. Everywhere a constant stream of Brahman priests and holy men of various monastic orders pray and chant with the pilgrims, invoking the aid of the universe for the immortality of the soul.

"The pilgrims are longing," muses a learned Hindu friend as we pass behind temples and shrines and monasteries back to the city, "to attain deliverance from the evil powers by which life on earth is made miserable; they try to free themselves from the illusions of this world."

New devotees are still arriving from all over the land, treading the pathway of their forefathers, and the great bell of the main Temple of Vishweswar is striking deep into the hearts of a people whose secular education has been slight, but who for centuries have been immersed in the life of religion.



BOMBAY . . . we stand at the north of the city, watching pillars of black smoke rise from the chimneys of innumerable cotton factories. Inside these mills, in a fluff-laden air, men and women and children, suffering from intense heat, keep running the noisy machinery for long hours. They work and work until they accumulate a subsistence wage or until their health breaks down.

Near the mills, in the closely packed lanes and



bazaars, stand the tenement houses or *chawls*, where the laborer must find a place of rest. Some of the dwellings contain animals such as goats, fowl, monkeys, or rats. In one room, fifteen by twelve, live thirty adults and children. There are six separate ovens on the floor; one for each family. Outside there is a water pipe to supply many separate households. The narrow alleyways are full of banana skins, rice, old rags, cattle, dogs, and children. The windows of the dwellings above are covered by matting and old clothes; many of them have no windows at all. Some of the newly washed clothes are stretched out on the ground. The smoke and heat and odor are suffocating. But ancient India is treading the industrial road.



Now we are sitting in a Ford; we pass through village on village of the Bombay province. The plains, as everywhere in India, are dotted with them. It is here that the vast majority of the country's population live and toil. Our car passes flat-roofed mud plaster dwellings, here and there a two-storied red brick house, a few old trees, a Hindu temple, a Jain shrine or a holy symbol, surrounded by arable pasture and waste land—such is the Indian village. There are some seven hundred and fifty thousand of them in the country. The same plastered huts, the same dust, the same hot wind roaring everywhere.

Women covered with draperies of many hues walk from the well with tall earthenware jars or brass pots on their heads and a little child in their arms. Men





and women and children in colorful clothes and many of them in no clothes at all are working in the fields. The tiller of the rich Indian soil is trying to eke out a bare living. "His plow is a wooden stick with an iron point to it," to use the words of Mr. J. A. Spender, which, even when drawn by a yoke of oxen it does little more than scratch the soil. He draws his water from a well by a bullock-raised bucket. He is generally in debt. For the amount of rainfall decides merely the degree of poverty for the coming year.

What is he thinking about? Is it the money lender who charges often 60 per cent interest? Or does he wonder whether the next season will be a famine by flood or a famine by bad harvest? Does this patient, oppressed, inarticulate peasant really understand the struggle carried on by the intellectuals at New Delhi? Does he take any interest in the political life of Mother India? Test him. Mention to one of these toilers the name of Mahatma Gandhi. His face will light up, he will lift his arms to the sun.

"Gandhi! Mahatma Gandhi! He is like God himself!"



A DAY'S ride from Bombay finds us in the heart of the Indian jungle, not far from the battlefield where Wellington defeated the last of the Hindu rulers. We are near the little village of Ajanta, in the western hills of the country, in the native state of Hyderabad. Our destination is a remote and lonely glen where in ancient times Indian artists created the famous caves



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of the Abbey of Ajanta. We descend a road which leads to a river, we cross on huge black boulders with monkeys all around us, until we reach the caves. A panther leaps ahead and disappears.

We face the crescent-shaped glen among its hills. A great half-moon gallery connects the twenty-nine temples, which date from the second century B. C. to the seventh A. D. The walls of the caves are crowded with figures of gods and kings and courtiers and peasants—a most magnificent pageant of life as it was lived fifteen hundred years ago, telling of the time when India won distinction in government as in art.

The sun visits in turn the individual monastic halls and chapels and the glow reanimates the beautifully designed frescoes on the walls. There are princes and peasants, hunters and monks; hundreds of painted scenes in every part of the Abbey. They tell the story of Buddha, the founder of the religion that bears his name, his previous existence, his last life, his trials, his miracles, and his death. As we return to the curator's bungalow the myriads of creatures in the jungle depths keep up the noise that has been heard since the beginning of creation.



WE are still in the premier native state of Hyderabad, which stretches, upon the plains of the Deccan, almost midway between the south and north of India, over an area about the size of Kansas. Near the old fort of Golconda, once the world's diamond mart, in a palace named "King Kothi," sits his Highness the





**Nizam.** His eyes are said to be fixed on a world of gems and tons and tons of silver and golden coins piled up in his treasuries. Thirteen million subjects owe him allegiance, and, by virtue of the size and population of his state, he is the most powerful of the five hundred and sixty-two ruling **Maharajahs**.

On this particular day his people are celebrating. The wealthiest nobleman like the humblest peasant is sending *nazars*, offerings of gold or silver, to the Nizam. For it is their ruler's birthday. Within the palace a strange and beautiful pageant passes the marble halls—noblemen and magistrates and merchants and philosophers commanded for the occasion are dressed in colorful silks.

The courtiers take their stand in order of precedence. The Nizam enters accompanied by his sons and daughters; all pay homage to the sovereign. He takes his seat upon the throne. The ceremony of *nazars* begins.

As each offering is made, the giver bows low. One after the other ascends the marble steps and repeats this act of devotion. The last of those present has made his bow. The court musicians play and the ruler converses briefly with his guests. . . . An interval passes. The herald announces the time for departure of the ruler, and the Nizam returns to state duties, and to his poetry, and finds time for his four wives. Thus a distinguished Indian pictures for us this birthday celebration.







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THE scene is in the train, between Delhi and Lahore, capital of the Punjab province. We speed through hundreds of villages. The monotony of the landscape and the personal discomfort are relieved only by the Indians one meets in the train. In our carriage we face a museum of races. One is a *Vakil*, a country lawyer, from the Punjab; another a Bengali and now in Lahore; here are two Mohammedans, one a driver from Delhi and the other a reporter on a vernacular paper; there are a Pathan from the northwest frontier, a few Sikhs, and others. The Mohammedans talk Urdu, the others talk Bengali, Gujarati, or one of the 222 languages and dialects spoken in this vast land. But all know sufficient Hindustani to understand each other. At least two speak English fluently.

The Mohammedans are eating *chapati*, a cake of unleavened bread, and watching my face closely with their shiny black eyes. The lawyer is nearby and making grimaces; he is chewing pan-leaves concealing betel-nut. He explains to the others that the stranger comes from America, and then he wants to know why America discriminates against Indians. "Why," said he, "should an Indian who belongs to the same white race as you not be able to become an American citizen?" It is explained that this is because of an act of Congress.

"All your countrymen claim," says he, "that they are sorry about the exclusion law and that they don't dislike the people of India, but that the laws are made by Congress," and he adds, "It may be so, but any-

how Congress represents the majority, and the underlying thought of your countrymen is some secret fear of people from Asia."

One of the group asks via the *Vakil*, "Will the *Sarkar* (the Government) ever give us *Swaraj* (self-government)? What do you say?"

"I am sure I don't know. But what do you think?"

"The *Sarkar*," says he, "is afraid of Gandhi and if we pray for Gandhi the *Sarkar* will give us anything we want."

The Sikhs (followers of a prophet of the fifteenth century who challenged the polytheism of Hinduism and formulated a monotheism free from all idolatry and caste) mutter quietly to themselves, "Sat Nam, Sat Nam, Sat Nam Jee; Wahiguru, Wahiguru, Wahiguru Jee"; (words of praise to God and the prophet). One of the Sikhs has fought in the World War. I ask him if he wants *Swaraj*. "We (meaning the Sikhs) want only freedom in religious worship. After that is settled satisfactorily we will have nothing against the *Sarkar*."

The Bengali now eagerly breaks in: "What we all want," says he, "is *Swaraj*." Then he starts to give a very detailed history of nationalism, Gandhi, Hinduism and Indian civilization.

"But," it is asked, "how do you expect self-government when you spend so much of your time in fighting each other?"

"It is true," he replies, "that in Delhi and in other parts we are quarrelling with some Moslems. You



see it is like this, some of the greedy Moslems want too much and the fanatics among them work to convert our people to Islam. But they cannot succeed. Our Hindu societies are fighting them back. It is too bad that there are Mohammedans in the country who are more interested in Moslem *Raj* (Moslem rule) than in *Swaraj* for the whole nation."

"And there are many Hindus who are interested only in Hindu *Raj*," interrupt the Mohammedans.

Then the row breaks loose. They are all talking excitedly. The Mohammedans maintain that certain prominent Hindus are office seekers, and the Hindus accuse the sons of the Prophet of kidnapping their girls and converting them to Islam—a first class quarrel.

Another of the Hindus goes on with his speech. He goes so fast that no one can make out much of what he is saying. He suffers from asthma, and the only way he can finish a thought is by talking without stopping. He makes a recital of India's woes without periods or commas. Finally, however, he starts coughing, goes more slowly, and finishes by saying, "We distrust each other and we are not united, but we are all united in disliking our rulers." Then the coughing takes him with a spasm. The Mohammedans pity him, they crawl down from their upper seats and give him a whole seat to himself. He stretches out and takes no further part in the discussion.





WE are now in Lahore, where the gun Zam-Zammeh of Kim fame stands at her old platform. Not far from it, on the main street of the city, rises the statue of John Lawrence, first Commissioner of the Punjab after the British conquered the province, with a defiant look in the face, a pen in the right hand and a sword in the left. Underneath the figure is engraved the following inscription: "Will you have the pen or the sword?"

As we stand there meditating upon the inscription an Indian merchant in European dress with a dark, thin face, intent eyes and great gravity approaches the statue and greeting us, says: "We want neither the pen nor the sword imposed on us. We need schools, for thus far only six per cent of the population of the entire country has discovered the alphabet."



WE have journeyed up and down the great Indian peninsula, east and west, north and south. Finally we return to a little fishermen's village near Bombay. In a cottage facing the seashore and surrounded with whispering palm-trees rests the apostle of the Indian people—Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

He is fifty-nine years old, a mere slip of a man. Only a loin-cloth covers his extremely thin body. The head is close cropped, the large brown eyes are soft, the nose is flat, the mouth is broad and firm, the moustache is straggly; all illuminated by a radiant heart. This is the man who comes not with a sword but who, from the Himalayas to the Cape, is known

to shepherds and peasants and princes and wise men as the Mahatma, which means "great soul." And of all the different and mutually antagonistic people one meets, everyone has something beautiful to say about "Mahatmaji." Now before leaving India we come to see again this man who to many is as God, and to talk with him.

As he talks there sound once more the voices of India. We see the stormy background of his country, we feel the innumerable sorrows of his people, scan the lofty passages of Indian scriptures, experience the exalted deeds of his countrymen. We see again the varying robes, the brilliant coloring of the turbans in Bombay and Delhi, the peculiar head-dress of the Sikhs and the ornamental shirts of the Moham-medans in Lahore and Amritsar. We hear the wonderful Indian singers of the Maharajah of Mysore. We listen to the profound ceremonial music and religious dances of Benares and Calcutta. We wander again through the sacred cities and down the sacred rivers. We hear the triumphant music of the reborn Indian nation. We hear the sacred tidings of peace on earth and good will which Asia sends, once more, to the children of men.

And then the Mahatma sums up his message: "I am fighting for nothing less than world peace. For," says he, "if the Indian movement is carried to success on a non-violent basis, it will give a new meaning to patriotism, and if I may say so, in all humility, to life itself."



## CHAPTER II

### CLIVE WINS AN EMPIRE

**B**EFORE the staircase of Great Britain's India Office, overlooking St. James' Park of London, stands a bronze statue of a man with heavy brow, keen, quick eye, and a countenance suggesting tenacity of purpose, inflexible will, and great intuitive powers. It is the monument of a man who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, as an unknown youth, without means, without influence, without military education or experience, contended with the gods and conquered an empire.

At twenty he was a clerk for a commercial company, at twenty-six he was a soldier who had fought and won great battles, and at thirty-two he founded the British Empire in the East. When he completed his forty-ninth year he cut his throat and was buried within the walls of the small parish church in the hamlet of Moreton Say in Shropshire and "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

This singular person was Robert Clive.

On a burning day—June 23, 1757—the thirty-two year old Clive, coming from Calcutta with a small



force of about 3,000 men, with eight six-pounder guns and one or two howitzers, encamped at the village of Plassey, near an orchard of a hundred thousand trees. There he waited for the beginning of hostilities with the powerful army of the native ruler of Bengal. The success of the battle depended on whether the Indian in the service of the satrap of Bengal, with whom Clive had closed a secret treaty, would play his part and betray the prince. Clive was full of doubts and anxiety. The future of an empire lay in the balance. Now, or perhaps never.

As he looked across the enemy's battalions, so we are told in "The Life of Lord Clive," by Sir George Forrest, he could descry the Nawab army, with their great number of elephants "covered with scarlet cloth and embroidery, with their horses, with their drawn swords glittering in the sun, their heavy cannon drawn by vast trains of oxen, and their standards flying." Against this most pompous and formidable army, with inborn military genius and the help of bribery and effective trickery, he set out to battle. At eight o'clock in the morning the Nawab's army opened fire. About noon the Indian army was in retreat and their camps were stormed by Clive's forces. When the sky began to glow with the deep colors of the Indian sunset one of the richest provinces of Asia lay defenseless at the feet of Clive.

A trivial little battle, perhaps, yet, as Vincent Smith, in his authoritative "The Oxford History of India," remarked, "sufficient to decide the fate of Ben-



gal, and in a sense of all India." The Empire of England in India had begun.

But the story of India does not exactly begin with the battle of Plassey. It is true that the country is often thought of as having consisted, till the advent of British rule, of a multitude of men of an abject and barbarous population dominated by cruel tyrants, great plunderers, and a priestly caste who were the foundation of all iniquity. Yet Edmund Burke talked of them as "a people for ages civilized and cultivated; cultured in all the arts of polished life while we were yet dwelling in the woods." And it stands recorded on undeniable authority that, with the exception of China, no region of the world can boast an ancient civilization so continuous as that of this Asiatic Empire. It is well then to halt on the road to the sea-adventures of Clive to narrate a few pregnant episodes of the country's past.

To begin with, a glance at the map shows that far to the east of us, in the middle-south of Asia, lies under a tropical sun the roughly diamond-shaped sub-continent called India. The country, excluding Burma, stretches 2,000 miles from north to south and 1,800 miles from west to east with an area equal in size to all of Europe, exclusive only of Russia. From the stupendous Himalayas in the North, with peaks varying from 25,000 to 29,000 feet in height, it tapers down to Cape Comorin, its southern-most extremity, eight degrees north of the equator.

Rugged mountain ranges on all sides shut it off



from the neighboring countries. But on the western side of this great barrier there are here and there some narrow mountain roads by which, from the days before history, men thrust their way southwards into India. One of these main inlets is the historic highway known as the Khyber Pass.

Some four thousand years ago, waves of certain conquering tribes struggled across this western gateway with their families and possessions and gods, trusting to find a new home in the land behind the high peaks. Whether, before occupying the Iranian Plateau and ultimately passing into northern India, they had tramped all the way from what we now call Hungary, Austria, Bohemia, or as some learned scholars assume, from the southern steppes of Russia, is still a matter of conjecture. But we do know that these living waves were white-skinned people, who called themselves Aryans, which means of good, noble family, and of that Indo-European race whose brethren had become masters of the plains of Europe. Only the exploration of the sea route to India by the famous Portuguese mariner, Vasco da Gama, in 1498, after a separation of three thousand years, brought these tall fair conquerors in contact with the most westerly branch of the same civilization.

When the first swarm of Aryans—for "it was a prolonged movement of a considerable number of tribes," and doubtless continued for several centuries—emerged at length on Indian ground, the majesty of the mountains, the might of the jungle, the intensity





of the sun's power by day and the splendor of the stars by night made them feel that here in this land of mystery and romance they would like to make their permanent abode.

But in the new home the Aryans found already established dark-skinned tribes, called Dravidians. With these aboriginal inhabitants they dealt as conquerors inevitably deal with the conquered. The Aryans retained for themselves all the privileges belonging to the victors, and the vanquished were assigned occupations for which the superior race had only scorn. One of the distinctions between the Aryans and the Dravidians was that of color, and in this distinction untouchability had its origin. Although in other countries the barriers set up between conquerors and conquered are often swept aside, in India such distinctions have received the sanction of religion and have remained until this day. We shall meet with these outcastes in a later chapter.

Once established, the Aryans worked their way slowly across the mountains and down the valleys, spreading out through the Punjab and the courses of the Indus and Ganges. At first their chief occupation was warfare, and cattle-breeding their chief source of livelihood. But, as they settled down in the interior of the country, some of them became agriculturists and others devoted their time to weaving, tanning and metallurgy. Their food was mainly vegetarian. They ate meat only on the rare festive occasions when domestic animals were sacrificed.



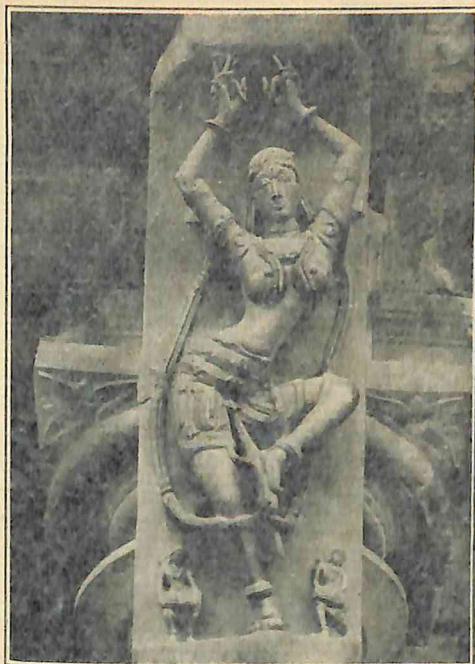
Trade was by barter, and though precious stones were used in exchange, the standard unit of value was the cow.

Each tribe, composed of a group of families, was governed by a Rajah, "protector of the people," whose power was often checked by a tribal council. The various tribes fought each other now and again, the motive was often cattle-lifting, but they all united in hostility to the aborigines, whom they called unbelievers and black-skins, and on whom they imposed their Sanskrit language—"the grandmother of our western tongues"—and their civilization. They drank their intoxicating beverages, they gambled with dice, they were fond of sport, especially of chariot-racing, they sang their songs and danced, they had exciting contests, and paused sufficiently to pray to some household god.

In the course of centuries they assimilated the new country in their blood, and out of their bards and builders, their scientists, craftsmen, and merchants, their priests and wise men grew sacred hymns and great epics, magic spells and manuals of worship, holy scriptures and speculative treatises on the nature of the soul, dramas, romances, and fairy tales, monuments and temples showing old time magnificence, important scientific discoveries and articles of luxury. And "Indian shipping carried Indian art and culture together with her material products to distant lands."

The amazing literature embraced within the ancient





### FEMALE FIGURE

Supporting the cornice of a temple in Palampet  
(Warangal) in the Native State of Hyderabad.  
Date tenth century A.D.



*Both pictures by courtesy of Archeological Dept. of H.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad*

### PAINTED CEILING OF CAVE I

Of the famous Abbey of Ajanta. Panel represents a Persian King  
and his consort.





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Vedas—the word means knowledge, but virtually signifies religious knowledge—may be studied in English and other translations. It records the earliest period of this people and its ways, its civilization, and religion. The hymns of the *Rigveda*, called by oriental scholars their book of Psalms, stand quite by themselves, “high up an isolated peak of remote antiquity,” and form a chain connecting the immemorial past with the present. The monuments ascribed to remote days, the tombs erected in the iron age and the temples with elaborate detail are still to be seen in their old glory.

The adherence to the caste system, the belief in the transmigration of the soul, and the practice of child marriage, all date back to ancient days, and yet, as we shall show in another chapter, form an essential part of Hindu life even to-day. Multitudes of other invasions came later, the first being that of Alexander the Great in 326 B. C., but none with such profound and lasting effects as these early conquests.

Ancient India is also famous for administrations which culminated in great empires. The realms of Chandragupta and his grandson Asoka (305–232 B. C.), of Samudragupta and his successors (A. D. 330–490), embraced practically the whole peninsula, except the South. And Asoka, disciple of Buddhism, the religion of enlightenment, was that most illustrious monarch of history who in the hour of victory turned from conquest to pursuits of peace. Anyone who visits India can see in various parts of the land the mono-

lithic columns whereon the great Emperor chiseled in enduring form "magnificently moral teachings" and the measures adopted for the welfare of his people. One edict concerning religious toleration informs the adherents of all sects that "His Sacred Majesty cares not so much for gifts or external religious observance as that there should be a growth of the true spirit of religion and respect for all."

The Greek ambassador Megasthenes, who came to India about three centuries before the Christian era, says Sir William Hunter, "observed with admiration the absence of slavery in India, the chastity of the women, and the courage of the men. In valour they excelled all other Asiatics. . . . Sober and industrious, good farmers, and skillful artisans, they . . . lived peaceably under their native chiefs."

Bringing the whole of India under the "umbrellā" of one central authority was the objective of kingly activity. But with the exception of a few intervals this unity was merely a dream pursued by the swaying and falling victors. For centuries the masses offered prayers for one united land, and for just as long, kingdoms and dynasties appeared and disappeared, and bands of nomads swooped down from the north shaking the peninsula from centre to circumference. Then the Mohammedans came, in the closing years of the twelfth century, and, with the advent of the Moghul dynasty, in 1526, the country enjoyed again two centuries of comparative unity.

To this period belongs that great Emperor Akbar,





whose work of consolidation and organization survives to this day. At an early age Akbar perceived that the king should be the impartial sovereign of all his subjects and laid down the principle that men of all faiths were to be treated alike by the law. Says H. G. Wells, in his "Outline of History," "Some of the British viceroys have aped his magnificence, . . . but none have gone far enough beyond the political outlook of this mediæval Turkoman to attempt that popular education which is an absolute necessity to India before she can play her fitting part in the commonwealth of mankind."

But the vast and magnificent works which remain, bespeak more than an age of mighty conquests. The great architectural triumphs of Moghul rule are reflected in the famous monuments of red sandstone and white marble still standing, weather-beaten though they be, in north and central India. There stands old Agra associated with the incomparable Taj Mahal, that most celebrated of buildings erected by the Emperor Shah Jahan, as the mausoleum of his favorite wife, Muntaz Mahal. This Moghul chief also created the city of Delhi with its wonderful mosques and palaces. And within a few miles of Agra there is the empty city of Fattipur Sikri, with its fairylike palaces, which was built in a few months at Akbar's royal command.

For two centuries the Moghul Empire continued undiminished. Then came the Emperor Aurangzeb, who succeeded by persecutions and cruelties against his

non-Mohammedan subjects in hastening the Empire to its end. After his death in 1707, his successors exerted only a nominal authority. The men who next occupied the throne had no great capacity for government; the support of the Hindus, won by Akbar, was lost by the fanaticism of Aurangzeb; lack of honest administration undermined the state machinery, and the defence of the country was neglected. All these causes, coupled with the intrigues carried on by the western powers, contributed to the disintegration of the Empire.

In the midst of the discord native Hindu rulers tried to succeed the Moghuls. In the southwest a shrewd Hindu people, the Mahrattas, under the leadership of a national hero known as Sivaji, had risen against the degraded Moghul rulers. Sivaji's realm extended for a time over the whole southern triangle of India. In the states known as Rajputana the representatives of the Moghuls were banished. In the northern province of Punjab a religious sect known as the Sikhs conquered the province from the Mohammedans. But there was no man powerful enough to assume national leadership.

While the various kingdoms were struggling to shake off the grip of the unscrupulous and cruel Turkoman princes, a ruler of Persia in 1738 invaded India through the Khyber Pass and plundered the country as far south as Delhi. To make the strife more confused, there came new foreign invasions, struggles between the Mahrattas and Afghans, wars among the





Mahratta princes, and the breaking up of the Mahratta realm. Thus the time was ripe for the advent of a strong power capable of uniting the scattered kingdoms and establishing order. The British had prepared themselves for this unusual opportunity.

But it was the lure of the fabled markets, and not empire, that brought the English to India. At the opening of the seventeenth century, the wealth of the country had increased rapidly, and the capital amassed from various operations was poured into industry. The traders and manufacturers were animated with a frantic desire to expand their commerce, especially beyond the seas. The merchants had learned to unite in great corporations and started out to seize a share in the lucrative commerce of the golden East. So when Akbar was lord paramount of India, adventurous English sea-merchants plowed the waters of the Indian Ocean in search for riches.

But the English were not the first path-breakers of the seas. Before they had ventured from their Island to sail the new water routes, the merchants of other western seafaring nations had organized expedition after expedition into Asia, the Americas, and Africa in search of profits and spoils. When England came on the scene her access to world trade was limited. In large sections of the world her products were merely tolerated, from others they were excluded entirely. They were much in need of spices, but the spice-bearing lands were in control of other western powers.

These economic factors, together with the defeat of



the Spanish Armada in 1588, and the capture of a Portuguese galleon in 1592, which revealed the secret of the easier route to the Far East, stimulated British maritime activities and started the prolonged contest with the Continental powers for eastern commerce.

In the reign of Elizabeth the mercantile classes formed powerful concerns chartered by the Crown to trade beyond the seas. Outstanding among these was the East India Company, which received its royal charter on the last day of 1600 and soon afterward pushed forward over the route opened by the Portuguese Vasco da Gama a hundred years before. This corporation was to write a momentous chapter in the history of the world. And in passing it may be recalled that the "intolerable acts" aiming to curb unrest in the American colonies were caused by the destruction of the tea belonging to this powerful corporation.

The century that saw the founding of the American colonies saw also the development of trade with India. For some years after the East India Company was organized, it did not trade exclusively with India. The early voyages were directed chiefly to the Spice Islands. About a decade later the English ships reached India, but Portuguese opposition was strong. There were a number of fierce sea clashes and subsequently there was little opposition from the Portuguese. There were exciting contests with the Dutch and others, but the French were to become their chief rivals.



Meanwhile the British set up industries, where Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta now stand, and they flourished as merchants. The trade was rather profitable. "In a single year (1622) a consignment of goods bought in India for £386,000 sold in England for £1,915,000." Some of the early voyages netted as much as twelve hundred per cent. The main concern of the English merchants was barter and gain. Empire had as yet not occurred to them. One or two directors of the Company may have had dreams of territorial conquest, and even of empire, but their dominant ambition was merely to become the privileged trader of the peninsula.

From the local rulers they bought or rented a few strips of land so that they might carry on commerce without hindrance. From these few localities they began to extend their economic grip over the vast country. Competition was great and they were not particular as to methods in seeking profits. And underground they did not hesitate to meddle in Indian politics; they were not ashamed to bribe some of the native rulers and plot against others, and they were not slow to carry on a lively political intrigue against the agents of the French East India Company who appeared on the scene in 1664.

The struggle between the two rival companies was long drawn out and permeated every European quarrel. The French adventurers were equipped with only limited resources; they were inferior to the British in enterprise and administrative ability, and they did not



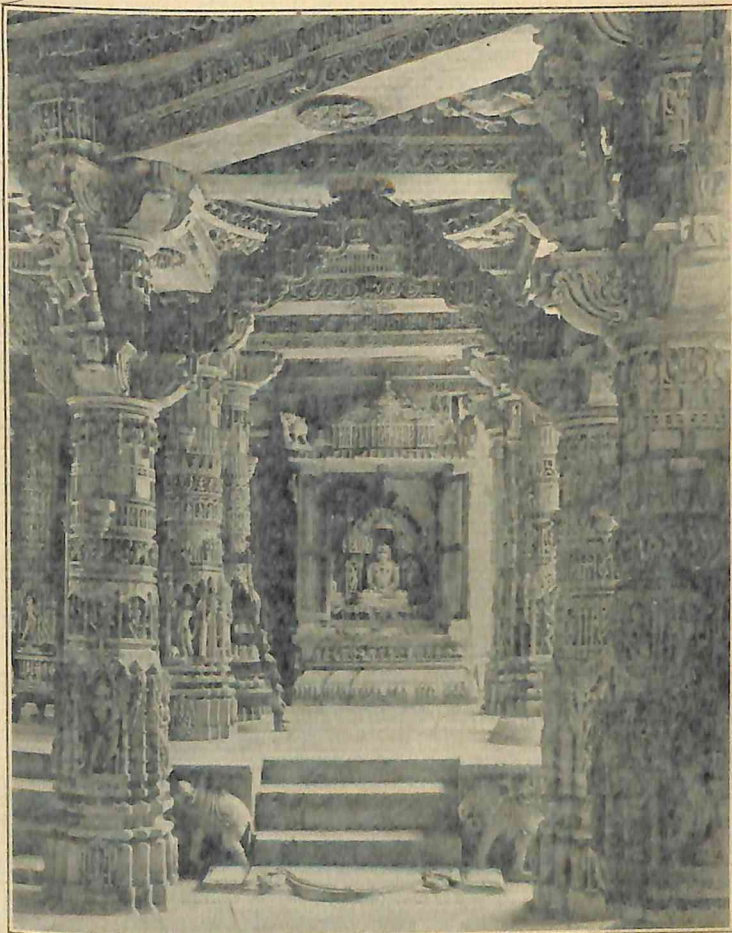
receive steady support from home. But they were brilliant diplomatists and excellent strategists, and they put up a good fight in the attempt to extirpate British trade.

In the course of time, political conditions in India changed the policy of the British Company. They were faced not only with a rival who tried to undermine their power, but also with a shattered Indian sovereignty which, as they saw it, was not in a position to safeguard their investments. It did not take long for these self-assertive, bold, acquisitive British merchants to forget that they had come to the golden East merely to conduct trade; they soon came to the conclusion that, under the particular circumstances, economic penetration could be made secure only after they had acquired territorial sovereignty.

By 1686 the Company declared its intention to "establish such a polity of civil and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue . . . as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come." But this pronouncement was a little premature. Not until the eighteenth century did the conquest materialize. In the meantime they acquired economic resources and political experience.

Then came, in 1746, one of those ever-recurring contests among the European powers. The war spread to India and the brilliant French diplomats used all their prestige with Indian princes to extirpate their rivals. The British, as the "Lost Dominion"





*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

THE MOST FAMOUS JAIN TEMPLE AT MT. ABU



states, were now ready to lay aside "the ledger and yardstick and to take to the drill manual and musket." Among these soldiers of the Company was Clive, then a young clerk for the corporation.

In time the British built up a large army and used every ounce of energy to make themselves masters over the whole of the peninsula. The Mohammedan Empire was falling into fragments, and the English enlisted Indians to conquer India. In the South Clive severely defeated the French and news of the victory spread to the people of the land. The English, strongly supported by London, gained further successes, and the French strategists, who received less help from home than their rivals, became conscious of the failure of their plan to establish supremacy. The French East India Company was slowly being defeated by the wealthier and better administered rival corporation. Meantime occurred the conquest of rich Bengal by Clive, and the foundation of the British Empire in the East was laid.

The extension of the Company's territories went forward. In a few years the commercial body of sea merchants owned the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Company made treaties, and often broke them, sometimes even forging them. It cheated and robbed, murdered and oppressed, and the people groaned under its domination. Macaulay, writing of the despotism of the Company in Bengal at this time, describes how "Thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the extremity of wretchedness. They had





been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never under tyranny like this. . . . That Government, oppressive as the most oppressive form of barbarian despotism, was strong with all the strength of civilization."

A Committee of the House of Commons reported that between the beginning of 1757 and the end of 1766 the princes and other magnates of Bengal had distributed nearly thirty million dollars amongst the servants of the Company. And Clive stated before the House of Lords, "When I think of the marvellous riches of that country and the comparatively small part which I took away, I am astonished at my own moderation."

In 1770, a drought brought famine, the resources of the people failed and "the Hooghly [the great waterway which carries to sea the immense volume of exports brought down to Calcutta] every day rolled down thousands of corpses close to the porticoes and gardens of the English conquerors. The very streets of Calcutta were blocked up by the dying and the dead."

Untold wealth flowed into England through private hands, but in India the affairs of the Company went from bad to worse. The share owners clamored for high dividends, the graft practiced on a large scale by the officials swallowed up much of the profit, famine decimated its business, and in 1773 according to Charles and Mary Beard, the historians, the Company was marching fast in the direction of bankruptcy, driving a horde of politicians to the brink of ruin.





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The Company was forced to beg the ministry of the day for a large loan at a low rate of interest. Parliament came to its aid, but at the same time decided to extend a certain amount of control over its affairs. The result was not only the measure commonly known as the Regulating Act of 1773, but also the Tea Act, intended to help the Company sell directly to the American market so that it might increase its revenues,—an act that was finally responsible for that little row in Boston Harbor.

The Regulating Act was passed "for the better management of the said united Company's affairs in India." It provided for the appointment of a Governor General with a Council of four in Bengal; it empowered Parliament to establish and appoint a Supreme Court; it specified that the rules and ordinances of the chief officer and the members of his Council were to be sent to a cabinet minister in London, and it forbade the taking of bribes or presents by the high officials.

It cannot be said that this legislation made any real difference. Eleven years later Parliament made an attempt to establish more direct control over the Company. Pitt's India Bill of 1784 created a special Board of Control, the president of which was ultimately to develop into the Secretary of State for India. The commercial enterprise remained the owner of the possessions, and the Board was to supervise the officials of the corporation. But the corporation was very powerful, its members very influential, and the presi-



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dent of the Board, as the author of "The Lost Dominion" points out, although he had legally and theoretically great powers, did not often override the wishes of the Company.

Each renewal of the charter, which occurred once in twenty years, was preceded by an inquiry. And each new Act generally reduced the powers of the Company. Its trading privileges were gradually diminished and, in 1833, entirely abolished. But no pious prescriptions of Parliament could prevent the empire builders from entering into the operations which led to further expansion. The conquerors did not rest until the whole of India was brought under the supremacy of British power.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CÆSARS

NOW our story turns to those who extended and administered the Company's and later the King's territorial possessions in India. In the last century and a half thirty British potentates, surrounded by glittering *aides-de-camp* and vigilant bodyguards in gorgeous uniforms, and amid the reverberations of thundering salutes, have ascended that seat of glory. As a rule each five years a new pro-consul is appointed to govern the teeming millions of the vast land.

Robert Clive, who captured the immense legacy of the Moghuls, never ascended the Viceregal throne. He sealed the fate of India. His victories made it possible for future Viceroys to govern the great peninsula. But he served for two terms merely as Governor of the province of Bengal: the most exalted office had not yet been created.

Nearly two decades after Plassey, Warren Hastings became the first Governor General of the Company's dynasty. And since April, 1926, Lord Irwin, from his august peak at Delhi, has carried the responsibility of ruling India, personified the King, and been the rep-





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representative of the Imperial Government. But in the five generations which lie between Warren Hastings and Lord Irwin the British *Raj* has passed through epoch-making changes.

We can distinguish three epochs in the reign of these thirty British pro-consuls. First, we have the period which begins with Warren Hastings and ends with Dalhousie, an era of organization and aggressive annexation of new territories. This is followed by the Canning-Curzon regime. In this second period occurred the Mutiny, the final decapitation of the East India Company and the transfer of the Government to the Crown, the extension of British authority over what we call India today and the birth of the nationalist movement. The era closed with the rule of Lord Curzon, who introduced a degree of efficiency hitherto unknown in the Oriental land, and in his zeal for reorganization refused to consider the aspirations of the educated Indians. The third period is that of Minto II to Reading I, which is distinguished by revolutionary activities, plots, and assassinations, introduction of new reforms and the Gandhi non-cooperation movement.

Finally we come to Lord Irwin, who inaugurates the fourth period. At the end of 1927 the British Parliament appointed the Simon Commission to report on the extent to which it is desirable to alter the Constitution now in force. Indians of all parties have expressed keen disappointment and surprise at their exclusion from its personnel, and boycotts and non-



co-operation are again in the air. With the present unrest we deal later. First let us follow the procession of the Cæsars of the East as they climb the stairs of the Viceregal Palace amid the fanfare of trumpets and the thunder of guns.

Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, was educated in an era when the political leaders of England quoted to each other from Virgil and Lucian as they talked of liberty and justice. But Hastings turned from the classics to Machiavelli as his guide in administering the Company's territories.

When appointed to the high office he had to his credit twenty-three years of Indian experience. Almost insurmountable difficulties confronted him. Three months after assuming power he wrote, "the new government of the Company consists of a confused heap of undigested materials, as wild as chaos itself." Everything seemed to be wrong, and out of this wild chaos he set himself to bring order, and to create a workable administration.

His unscrupulous trickeries in ruling the Company's dominions have been often and bitterly debated. The foul means he used to obtain money from Indian princes, the pledges he violated in his dealings with native rulers, the burning of villages and the blood spilt by his orders have been eloquently described by Macaulay, Burke, Fox and Sheridan, and will always remain full of meaning for the examiner of an autocratic past. But behind all this was the powerful statesman and administrator, familiar with





40 every detail of the government machinery. For if Clive was the founder of the Empire, Hastings completed the more difficult task of organizing vast territories. In 1785, when he laid down his post and went home after a service of thirty-four years in India, during eleven of which he was in charge of the highest office, he was impeached for "cruel, unjust, and oppressive" conduct, but the trial ended in his acquittal.

He was succeeded by the commander who lost America. Lord Cornwallis was a member of the small aristocratic oligarchy which in those days enjoyed the monopoly of political power in England. But he cared nothing for the trumpery tinsel of the Oriental satrap and lived in comparatively modest style. As chief of state he directed his efforts to reform the abuses and corruption which were then prevalent in the civil service. He applied the only possible remedy by paying officials on a scale that enabled them to live in the new country with extreme comfort and dignity. He also carried through a much debated land policy, which still holds good in about one-fifth of the area of British India.

After Cornwallis came a line of worthy successors to Hastings. Among them may be named Marquis Wellesley (1798-1805) the brilliant scholar and powerful chief of state who added four ancient sovereignties and millions of fresh annual income to the territories of the Company; the genial Scotsman, Lord Minto, one of the managers entrusted with the prosecu-





tion of Warren Hastings, whose reign coincided with the most critical period of the Napoleonic War and at the end of whose term of office, in 1813, the House of Commons took from the Company its monopoly of trade; the brilliant strategist, Marquis of Hastings (1813-1825) who, foreseeing the importance of having a military and commercial base in the Far East, agreed, in 1819, to the occupation of Singapore, and did much to unify and consolidate British authority in India.

Marquis Hastings was followed by the benevolent Lord Bentinck, who stands out as the first reforming pro-consul. During his time the Company lost the last vestige of its commercial character, and from 1833, when the charter was renewed, it became merely an agency performing the duties of a governing authority.

Lord Bentinck has to his credit the abolition of the native custom of voluntary self-immolation of widows. With the help of Ram Mohan Roy, a great Indian social reformer, he was able "to wash out this foul stain." Others before him had discussed its abolition, but feared the reproach of interference with Hindu religion. But it was he who, in 1829, first announced the principle that the Government of India may prohibit inhumane acts which run counter to accepted rules of morality, even though such acts have a traditional religious sanction. The social reformers of present day India are still fighting to apply the same principle to child marriage.

Lord Bentinck's administration is also distinguished



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by the suppression of a second semi-religious atrocity, the organized system of murder called *Thuggee*, which was practised by both Hindus and Mohammedans with the supposed sanction of a certain goddess. The members of the secret society of *Thugs*, or cheats, felt themselves predestined to this mode of gaining a living.

This Viceroy also established English as the official and literary language of the peninsula, and made only three small annexations.

The reform ruler was followed by the austere Lord Auckland (1836-1842) who disliked pomp, who with good tradition behind him broke treaties with native rulers in the most cynical fashion, and because of fears of Russian advance towards India by way of the north, exposed the country to military disaster in the first war with Afghanistan; the theatrical and aggressive Lord Ellenborough, who provoked a war in order to annex the province of Sind, but also prohibited the legal recognition of slavery in India; the soldier-politician Henry Hardinge, warrior present at sixteen battles, who had been assured by his predecessor that India was in a state of "universal peace, the result of two years' victories," and one year later, in 1845, fought against the Sikhs and occupied much of their territory.

He was relieved, in 1848, by the young Scotch nobleman, Lord Dalhousie, to whom his predecessor also expressed the rash assurance that "it would not be necessary to fire a gun in India for seven years to come." Hardly had he arrived than he started out on military expeditions to punish the insolence of na-





five princes and in the end to annex their territories. His policy of "lapse"—namely, that whenever a native ruler died without direct heir his kingdom should be annexed—added eight native states to the Company's possessions. Telegraph and railway communications were both introduced during his reign and his administration led up to the challenge of the Mutiny.

This period, from Warren Hastings to Lord Dalhousie, accomplished the gradual transformation of the private corporation into an imperial power. Before the nineteenth century only a few provinces were actually governed by the Company. The greater part of India was ruled by native princes. Some were merely figure heads of the conquerors and knew that they might be deposed by the Company's Indian soldiers if they dared interfere with its activities, but the native states were not yet under the direct control of the British.

The Company, having conquered part of the land, found itself impelled to extend the blessings of its rule to as many Indians as possible. Its agents broke the power of the principal native potentates. They overthrew some and coerced others. Principality after principality was escheated and annexed. A native prince turned enemy, and his land was conquered. A native King interfered with British ships and he forfeited his kingdom. An Indian sovereign insulted the British flag, and his province was taken. Some Maharajahs or Rajahs left no direct heir, and their realms were added to the corporation's dominions.

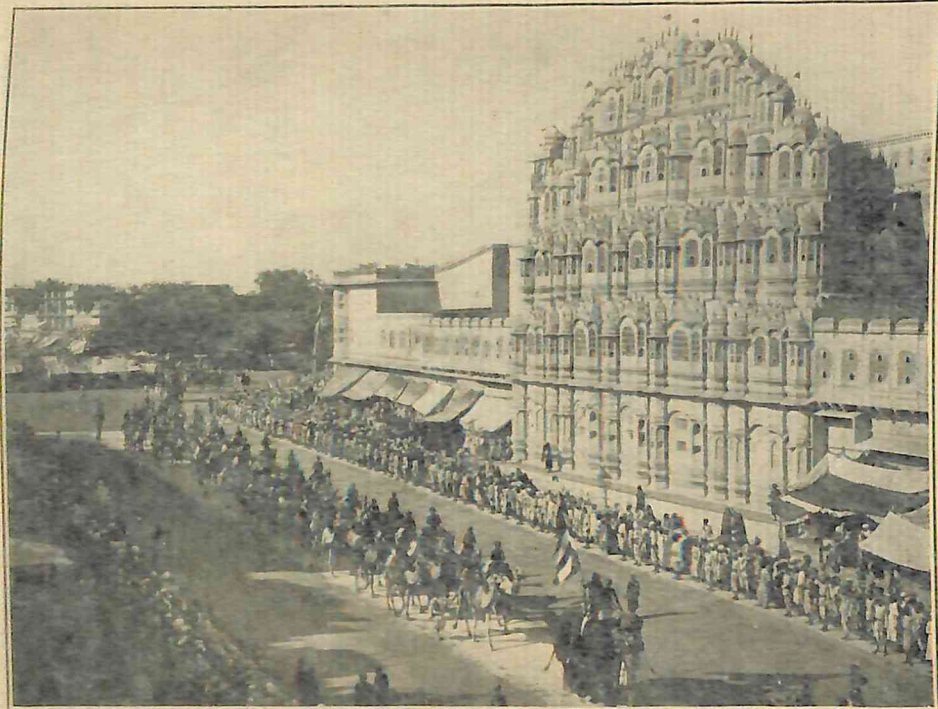


And the steam locomotives and the telegraph made quick action possible. Under the guidance of such empire builders as Wellesley, Hastings, and Dalhousie the tide of conquest rolled on. British despots were gradually being substituted for native despots.

The end of Dalhousie's reign marks the end of an epoch. He was followed by the shy and balanced Lord Canning, under whose term of office the Mutiny occurred—India's one great armed effort to overthrow the domination of the "handful of scattered strangers," to use Dalhousie's description of the British in India of those days.

It was the spring of 1857 that witnessed the first mass defiance of British rule in India. The introduction of a new rifle, requiring greased cartridges, led directly to the rebellion. The regulation pertaining to the rifle directed the soldiers to bite the end of the cartridge which was greased with the fat of cows and swine. The aversion of the men can be well understood when it is recalled that to the Hindu the cow is sacred and to the Mohammedan the pig is unclean.

Political reasons converted the Bengal rebellion, which began as a military mutiny against the greased cartridges, into a general insurrection. In July, 1857, Disraeli said he was "persuaded that the mutineers of the Bengal army were not so much the avengers of professional grievances as the exponents of general discontent. The old principle of our rule had been to respect nationality; but the Government of India of



TROOPS OF JAIPUR  
One of the Indian States



late years had alienated or alarmed almost every influential class."

The civil population was agitated by the introduction of irksome regulations and land laws. The ruling princes of the native states, though loyal during the insurrection, hated and feared the annexation policies of Dalhousie. The people were angered by the attempts to establish an educational system under British auspices. Fears arose that the foreigners intended to Christianize India. There was a general reaction against Europeanization.

The Mutiny exploded in May, 1857, and burned two years before it was entirely put down. While it lasted the mutineers gave Great Britain months of nervous tremor. The tragic event made it clear to the home authorities that the administration of India by the Company must end. In reality, as we have indicated, the tide of expansion had been paralleled by a gradual extension of Government control over the Company. The Mutiny only struck the death blow to private rule. By the Act for the Better Government of India of 1858, the British nation became sovereign over the Asiatic Empire, and Lord Canning was the first to bear the two-fold title of Governor General and Viceroy. Henceforth the Viceroy had perhaps more pomp, but he had to act more or less in accordance with decisions made at Whitehall. A Hastings or a Wellesley who waged war and made treaties without consulting anyone became an impossibility.

The Company in making its final bow said, "Let





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Her Majesty appreciate the gift—let her take the vast country and the teeming millions of India under her direct control; but let her not forget the great corporation from which she has received them, nor the lessons to be learned from its successes.”

The Crown took to heart these lessons and in time the possessions inherited from the Company were doubled. From 1861 to 1901, as Parker T. Moon points out in his “Imperialism and World Politics,” Britain added 242,000 square miles to its Indian areas and since 1901 it has so tightened its rule that five hundred and sixty-two states which still have native sovereigns are under its control.

In the Royal Proclamation announcing the transfer to the Government, Queen Victoria gave certain pledges to the Indian people. One ran as follows: “It is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our services, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity to discharge.”

There was nothing new in this promise. Similar assurances had been given India by the Company in 1784 and again in 1833. We shall soon tell how twenty years later a new nationalist movement was started because Indians felt that these promises were not faithfully carried out. And one of the Viceroys—Lord Lytton—writing confidentially regarding these pledges, confessed “that both the Government of Eng-



land and of India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of the promise they had uttered to the ear."

The Mutiny was crushed, but the agonies of that period left a deep impression on the country. The policy subsequently inaugurated somewhat calmed the people. Educated Indians continued to imitate British manners and customs. They studied western thought and western culture. [They absorbed English literature and used the English language with assurance and success. This story and the future development of the nationalist movement is told by Lajpat Rai in his "Young India."

English-speaking Indians were indispensable to the administration, and those who were in the least familiar with the language were given positions. True, the strategical positions were only in British hands. But the Indians believed this was due to their shortcomings. Young men started off across the water to equip themselves at British universities for the higher offices. Some of them passed the examinations with great honors. But when they returned home, they found that only subaltern places were open to them. They discovered that, no matter how marked their intellectual attainments, they could not expect to be treated on the same basis with the white race. The lucrative positions were for the rulers.



It was then that reaction against the denationalization process set in. A few intellectuals began to question the blessings of a foreign culture. They viewed with mixed emotions of indignation and horror the Anglicization of their countrymen. A small band of Indian social and religious reformers awakened new interest in the thought and religion of their forefathers. Though still taking a great interest in British culture they began to reevaluate their own ancient institutions and ancient scriptures.

When all this, and more, has been said about the early patriots who devoted their lives to awakening a national spirit, the fact remains that there was as yet no indication of a national political organization. The immediate stimulus for such a movement came, as we shall show, only in 1883, during Lord Ripon's Government, when the so-called Ilbert Bill brought to the fore the issue of color discrimination. Racial feeling rose to the highest pitch, and India was then ripe for an organized political movement.

It was the retired Indian Civil Servant, Allan Octavian Hume, who undertook to sponsor the establishment of an Indian national organization. Addressing the graduates of Calcutta University, he asked them to scorn personal ease and selfish ends and to make a resolute struggle to secure freedom for themselves and their country. But Mr. Lajpat Rai, in his "Young India," suggests that the idea of the Congress was a product of Lord Dufferin's brain, and "was started more with the object of saving the British





Empire from danger than with that of winning political liberty for India."

In December, 1885, the leading nationalists met in conference, and the outcome was the starting of the "Indian National Congress" which has met annually ever since during Christmas week.

For twenty years the Congress, composed mainly of Hindus, merely passed pious resolutions and aired its grievances. The bulk of the Mohammedans kept aloof. Their leader, the late Sir Syed Ahmed, held the belief that his community, which had fallen behind in education, could secure measures of protection and advancement more readily through private influence than by adopting a policy of opposition to the Government. Sir Syed's attitude had for some time, as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald suggests in his "The Government of India," an "unfortunate influence on the Government, and not only encouraged it to harden its attitude to the Congress, but to take opportunities to pacify Mohammedan leaders and use them against the Hindu leaders." Only much later, in 1916, did the leaders of both communities, Hindu and Mohammedan, decide to act in unison.

Meanwhile one Viceroy replaced the other, and under the influence of native leaders and western ideas India was increasingly stirred. Lord Canning, the first titular Viceroy, was followed among others by the eminent and cold civil servant, John Lawrence, whose administration only strengthened the arguments against the elevation of a member of the Indian Civil Service

to the high rank of chief of state. So as a rule the man who is sent out, unlike John Lawrence, knows next to nothing of the people whom he is to govern.

Lawrence was succeeded, in 1869, by the charming Irish nobleman, Lord Mayo, who introduced the system of state railways, and after three years' reign, was killed by a frontier tribesman while visiting the convict settlement of the Andaman Islands. Then came the wealthy Lord Northbrook, whose rule was not distinguished; the visionary and yet professional diplomat, Lord Lytton, son of the well-known novelist, during whose term Disraeli persuaded Parliament, in 1877, to confer on the Queen the title of Empress of India, and who is remembered as the author of the Vernacular Press Act, intended to curb seditious utterances in the native press; the daring Marquis of Ripon, the most popular of all Anglo-Indian rulers; the brilliant and tactful Lord Dufferin, during whose period of office was established, in 1885, the "Indian National Congress," and who was relieved by Lord Lansdowne, another Irish nobleman, who strengthened the defenses of the northern frontiers, initiated currency legislation, and also an elective element in the legislatures; Lord Elgin, whose later years of office (1896 and 1897) were marked by the first great modern plague and most serious famine. He was followed by Lord Curzon.

Among the rulers of this second period two figures are outstanding. One is Ripon, who was the most popular of the Viceroys. The other is Curzon, the





least popular. Marquis Ripon is especially remembered for the Ilbert Bill intended to remove from the code of criminal procedure "at once and completely every judicial disqualification based merely on race distinctions," and, therefore, to confer on the Indian-born magistrates authority to deal with Europeans as with anybody else. Though Indians loved the Viceroy, he commanded no respect among his own people. Some of the latter went so far as to hatch a plot for kidnapping him and sending him off to the Cape. The Marquis apparently took too seriously the royal proclamation of Queen Victoria from which extracts were quoted above. At any rate, the British community thought that his actions were premature and his palace was boycotted by his own countrymen.

On the other hand we have Lord Curzon, who knew India from without perhaps better than any other Viceroy before or since his reign, and who in various ways bitterly offended Indian feeling. Lord Curzon's gospel was efficiency. His administration was marked by a greater perfection of the state machinery. "If I were asked," he declared on September 30, 1905, in his farewell speech at Guildhall, "to sum up my work in a single word, I would say 'efficiency.' That has been our gospel, the keynote of our administration."

The fact that India's ancient monuments are so well preserved is in large measure due to his interest. But he also offended Indians by the partition of the Bengal Presidency, which the Indians considered a device to enfeeble and destroy the nationalistic tenden-



cies there, to divide the Mohammedan and Hindu communities and thus to strengthen the British rule. In justification of the partition it was said that Bengal, with a population of nearly eighty millions, was too large for one administration.

Sir Henry Cotton, a man who served for thirty-five years as a member of the Indian Civil Service, calls attention in his "New India" to the fact that "the scheme of partition naturally commended itself to the members of government services, who saw before them the attractive vista of additional offices and emoluments. . . . It was part and parcel of Lord Curzon's policy to enfeeble the growing power and destroy the political tendencies of a patriotic spirit. Bengalees are the leaders of political agitation in modern India." In passing he mentioned that the partition was adjusted in 1911 in a way to meet nationalist sentiments.

In a speech addressed to the convocation of Calcutta University, "Lord Curzon announced the doctrine that truth was rather a western than an oriental virtue, and that craftiness and diplomatic wiles have in the East always been held in much repute." This stirred the country to its depths and roused a tremendous storm of opposition. True, he improved the departments of education, irrigation, commerce, land assessment, the control of plague and famine. But he refused to offer political concessions to the educated classes because he did not regard it "as wisdom or statemanship in the interests of India to do so." Lord Curzon de-



parted, leaving behind him a discontented people whose political aspirations he refused to consider.

The Russo-Japanese War and the partition of Bengal gave birth to the revolt of young India. The victories of Japan intoxicated the Indian people. They saw in them the return of the old-time glory of Asia. And the partition of the Bengal Presidency had roused the younger generation to a frenzy. A boycott against British goods was declared and for some time successfully carried through. Home industry was encouraged. A national education movement was initiated. Young India became articulate.

This new generation wanted no more of the "mendicant policy" of their elders as advocated in the Indian Congress. They wanted men who had convictions and faith as distinguished from opinions and opportunistic theories. They wanted a message that would stir the soul of the people, rather than a few more government posts. They had not perhaps the wisdom or reasonableness of the older type. But they had youth, endurance, and fortitude. They studied Mazzini and were inspired by his fight for his country. They read Stepniak's "Underground Russia" and prepared themselves to inaugurate a period of plots and assassinations.

Such were the political conditions of India when Lord Curzon's successor assumed office. Storm clouds were gathering thick and fast and ever since the political atmosphere has remained charged with electricity. When Lord Minto II came on the scene he was faced



with a population seething with dangerous ferment. Native newspapers had sprung up all over the land and were vigorously criticizing the Government. Popular demonstrations grew more tumultuous, the nationalist leaders more vitriolic and the agitation increased in volume and in intensity. Measures introduced for the repression of crime and revolutionary conspiracies were successful in scotching the agitation, but Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, knew from his Irish experience that mere repression does not represent a permanent remedy.

Thus a scheme granting enlarged legislative councils was embodied in the Indian Councils Act of 1909. The Act, commonly known as the Morley-Minto reforms, provided that the provincial legislative councils, which up to that time were largely small bodies of officials and nominated persons, were now to include a number of British officials, but a majority of non-officials. But in the national assembly the officials still remained in the majority. The new members were empowered to debate matters of general interest and to put supplementary questions. As a sequel to the Act one Indian was appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council and previously to this Lord Morley had placed two Indians upon the Secretary of State's Council in Whitehall.

But the reforms were not intended, as Lord Morley stated, to lead, "directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India." They had the effect of checking temporarily the growth of the





militant nationalist forces. Yet the attempt, in 1912, to kill Lord Minto's successor was proof enough that political crime had not entirely disappeared.

It was during Lord Hardinge's first state entry into the new capital at Delhi (before this time the Viceroy's residence was at Calcutta and the transfer to Delhi was intended to please Mohammedan sentiment) that a bomb was thrown into the *howdah* of the state elephant which carried the Viceroy and Lady Hardinge of Penshurst. One year before this attempt had occurred the visit of King George and Queen Mary, who came out in person to Delhi to be crowned with great pomp and oriental splendor, as Emperor and Empress.

But Lord Hardinge's administration is especially memorable by reason of the outbreak of the Great War. His formidable task was to make India respond to the call of the Empire. In this he succeeded to a greater degree than was expected. The country raised an army of 800,000 soldiers, supplied a large number of war workers, 400,000 laborers for overseas service and contributed £150,000,000. The nationalists supported Britain, but they hoped that self-government would be the reward.

For even in 1914 all India, irrespective of their estimate of the value of British rule, had come to agree, as Lajpat Rai has stated in "The Political Future of India," "that (1) the constitution was viciously autocratic, bureaucratic, antiquated and unsatisfying, (2) that India has in the past been governed more in the interest of, and by, the British merchant and the Brit-



ish aristocrat than in the interests of her own people, (3) that the neglect of India's education and industries has been culpably tragic and (4) that the only real and effective remedy is to introduce an element of responsibility in the Government of India."

In recognition of the great loyalty and support in men and money, given during these difficult times, they did receive promises of political concessions. But at the close of the war they were disappointed.

Under Lord Chelmsford, who succeeded Lord Hardinge in 1916, we witness the rising tide of political unrest. It was during his time that the Amritsar "massacre" occurred; and it was during his reign that the Gandhi non-co-operation movement was born. His term of office also saw the new reforms of 1919.

Soon after he assumed power, the militant nationalists under the leadership of B. B. Tilak, a compelling personality and a man of great intellectual talents who until his death in 1920 was their idol, and Mrs. Annie Besant, the famous Englishwoman and theosophist leader now living in India, captured the national Indian Congress, came to a temporary agreement with the Mohammedan leaders and presented a common front in pressing forward a new scheme of reforms.

Across their frontiers the people of India saw the blazing fires of revolution. Russia sent out a message of red skies. The Wilsonian propaganda of self-determination and freedom agitated the country. Sweeping changes were demanded, and in August, 1917, the Secretary of State for India, the late E. S. Montagu,





stated that the goal of British policy in India was responsible government. "The policy of His Majesty's Government," he said, "is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." A few months later, Lord Chelmsford made public the new policy, and in December, 1919, it was adopted by Parliament in the form of a bill, the Government of India Act of 1919.

By this new enactment was established a central legislature of two houses; the Council of State with 60 members, and the Legislative Assembly with 140. In neither house was there to be a majority of British officials. The provincial legislatures were to include more elected members. But it is important to notice that this constitution, which is still in force, enfranchised less than seven and a half million of the two hundred and forty million inhabitants of British India.<sup>1</sup>

Another feature of the scheme was the division of the electorate into general and special constituencies so as to effect representation for minorities. The

<sup>1</sup> The "superintendence and direction and control of the civil and military government of India," rests with the Governor-General and his cabinet of seven members, three at least of whom must be Indians.

Under the present charter British India is divided into fifteen provinces, nine of which are each under a Governor with an Executive Council and ministers and a legislature with an elected majority. The remaining six administrative units are directly administered by the Central Government through Chief Commissioners.





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special constituencies were to include representation of landholders, universities, chambers of commerce, millowners' associations, rural and urban non-Mohammedan representation, rural and urban seats for the Mohammedan population, and Europeans. This system, as it works out, gives Europeans and other minorities a representation out of all proportion to their numbers. In Bengal Council, for instance, 18 of the 113 seats are occupied by Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

The outstanding characteristic of the reforms was the system known as "Dyarchy." This applied to the government of the provinces and divided the administration into two distinct spheres, the "transferred" and "reserved" halves of the government. In other words the provincial councils were of a dual character, the part controlling the "reserved" subjects—namely police, justice, land revenue, forests (except in Bombay), and water supply, including drainage and irrigation—consisting of the Governor and the Executive Council, half Indian and half British, and independent of the legislature. The "transferred" subjects—namely, local self-government and the departments of education, local industries, industrial research, public works, agriculture, forests (Bombay), medicine, and excise—were administered by the Governor and the Ministers, if possible with the consent of the legislature. Under the new scheme, the control of the Secretary of State over Indian fiscal matters was relaxed. But the cen-



tral legislature remained merely a glorified debating society.

The "Dyarchy" system of government could not, like its forebears, be described as a despotism. But it had little in common with what we call constitutionalism. The reforms provided India with all the paraphernalia which are the outside appearance of a limited democracy. The substance was not yet present. The Indian minister had to carry out the orders of the Governor whether the parliament agreed with his policy or not. The governmental departments were divided between Indian and English officials.

The nationalists were not enthusiastic over these reforms, but they decided to co-operate. Then came the Amritsar shooting and martial law in the Punjab. The Indians began to cry out that the reforms were not given in good faith and the great majority of the nationalists refused to aid in carrying them out. When Lord Chelmsford left the country the tide of conflict and unrest was still rising.

Then came to Delhi the courteous and diplomatic Lord Reading, who served under five different English premiers. Hardly any other of the British potentates had lived so varied and romantic a life. About half a century ago, as a boy, he ran away to sea and served before the mast in a sailing vessel voyaging to Calcutta. On his next visit he received the artillery salute reserved for Viceroy.

Reading inherited from his predecessor a great and



difficult burden. He assumed office in April, 1921, during times of grave danger and anxiety. Gandhi's protest movement had just reached greater heights than ever before, and penetrated to virtually every province. The temporary unity of Moslems and Hindus against the Treaty of Sèvres and for self-government was an alliance that spelled danger to British rule. The grievances of the powerful Indian community known as the Akali-Sikhs menaced the friendly relations that had so long existed between the Sikhs and the British authorities. State finances, shaken by the post-war developments, by frontier fighting and by successive monsoons, had to be reconstructed and restored. The Indian Civil Service had lost prestige and was weakened by many resignations. General pessimism prevailed.

Such were the problems that confronted Lord Reading when he took office. When he left, the situation was different. His good fortune during five years of rule had been almost miraculous. The Swarajist party (the outstanding nationalist party in the legislatures), it is true, used Parnell tactics of obstruction, but the death of their leader, C. R. Das, in the summer of 1925, was an irreparable loss to the party and undoubtedly an asset to the Viceroy.

A number of other important events had contributed to lighten the task of Lord Reading, and so to change Indian political conditions that, for the Empire, the general situation was not without its bright aspects. The frontier had been quiet. The expulsion from Turkey of the Turkish Caliph by Mustapha Kemal





Pasha had blocked the program of the Indian Caliphate Committee in India. Hindu-Moslem hostilities had assumed greater proportions than ever before, and made almost impossible a united crusade for self-government. Finally, in 1925, came Mr. Gandhi's temporary retirement from the political field. With the departure from Bombay of Lord Reading in March, 1926, and his arrival in England in April, 1926, when the title of Marquis was conferred on him, a remarkable chapter in the history of India's Viceroy was brought to a close.

The long procession of Anglo-Indian rulers is now continued by a man of forty and four years, unusually tall—some inches above six feet—with a strong forehead, large eyes, and flexible mouth, a long, well-shaped, rather pallid face, and a countenance suggesting a certain shyness and melancholy, friendship and deep religious feeling—Lord Irwin.

In April, 1926, this tall, shy, religious gentleman, who is able to claim a hereditary connection with the Asiatic Empire as the grandson of Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India from 1859–1866, whose famous Educational Dispatch of 1854 formulated a national system of education for India, ascended the throne.

Lord Irwin is his own Foreign Secretary and has exclusive responsibility for foreign and frontier affairs. He conducts the relations with the Indian princes and the native states and has the prerogative of offering advice to the British Administration on

practically the entire foreign policy of Asia which in any way concerns Great Britain and its relations to India. And while he is required to pay due obedience to orders received from Whitehall, "a sparrow can scarcely twitter its tail at Peshawar," as the late Lord Curzon said, "without a response being detected to masterful orders" from the Viceregal headquarters.

The new ruler inherited from his predecessor a charge far less difficult than the one Lord Reading took over from Lord Chelmsford. But after a temporary lull in the activities of the nationalists, trouble arose again. And now, in 1928, it can be said without exaggeration that in a few years we shall probably witness an epoch-making change in the relationship between Great Britain and India.

The demand for home rule, questions of national education and agricultural improvement, the relation with the Indian princes, problems of sanitation and of social reform, the economic status of the "silent masses" and other important problems affecting India are recorded in the next chapters. Here be it merely mentioned in passing that the spirit of political unrest has reached a stage when real reforms can no longer be denied. It is quite probable that in the not far distant future Viceroys will be only the representatives of the King and the varied functions connected at present with this high office will be held by other officials. The last hour of the old Viceroy has almost struck.



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PART II

THE SOCIAL FABRIC

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE MIGHT OF HINDUISM

**I**N the foregoing chapters we have traced in broad outline the many changes that India endured before an English garrison, led by a private company, conquered an immense, strange empire. We have seen how the English fastened upon the great peninsula a government that functioned. We have followed in succession the British chiefs of state in control of this Asiatic subcontinent.

But one must know the essentials of the religious and social system of Hinduism, which is the life of 230 out of the 320 millions of people, to have even a glimpse of inner India. Here, then, one approaches the beliefs and customs manifest in the daily life of the vast majority of the people.

In wandering through country and town you come across myriads of colossal, grotesque gods and goddesses. You encounter numerous religious heroes, saints, and seers that are now deities. You find the One Absolute Being represented in such supreme gods as Shiva the Destroyer, and Vishnu the Preserver, and in their consorts and incarnations, the great goddess

Kali, and Rama and Krishna, the two most famous incarnations of Vishnu. You meet with popular gods like the huge, elephant-headed Ganesh, the god of material success, and Hanuman, connected with agriculture, endowed with the face of a monkey. And you observe, too, that rivers, trees, and animals are worshipped. But you learn also that these divine personages are considered merely manifestations of the one God.

Nevertheless, as C. F. Andrews writes, peasants prostrate themselves before some hideous paint-smeared idol, fearful of its supernatural power to curse or bless them. Others bow down to sticks and stones and offer sacrifices to departed souls or to numerous demons and objects. And yet many of the most illiterate among them know lofty passages from the sacred books.

Visit a Hindu home and you find that throughout the day members of the family follow numerous formulas of devotion. At rising the cleansing of the teeth and the important purification of the bath are accompanied by proper prayers and invocations. A family performs its worship each morning in a special room, and sometimes cooked food is offered to the deities.

With the household gods is associated the family priest, who explains that every good or bad deed is atoned for in a subsequent rebirth, and that the soul is liable to pass through more than eight million species of animals. He may go on to say that the Hindu religion seeks freedom from this series of perpetual





transmigrations so that man may enter upon his reward as an emancipated soul.

Approach a Hindu temple and you face a mass of deities, many hideous in their symbolism. Halt before the vendors of flowers and sacred cakes made for the gods. Push through the worshipping throng. Here is a repulsive idol anointed with *ghee* (clarified butter), there rice in front of a deity garlanded with flowers. Cultured Hindus are absorbed in profound meditation and the highest form of devotion stands side by side with the lowest fetichism. Hymns, music, and dancing work the soul of the worshipper into an ecstasy. Although those who know the country and its people best assure one that it is genuine religion, the air of the sacred place is heavy with filth and blatant with noise.

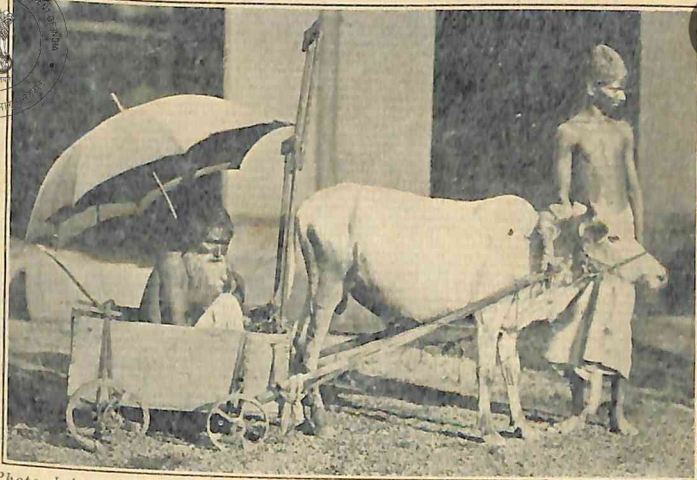
Or pass to the shrine of shrines of Benares, where the modern sons worship the ancient mysteries. Let us hear what Mahatma Gandhi saw there. "The approach," writes the Mahatma, "was through a narrow and slippery lane. Quiet there was none. The swarming flies and the noise made by the shopkeepers and the pilgrims were simply insufferable. Where one expected an atmosphere of meditation and prayer, it was conspicuous by its absence. If one wanted to meditate one had to fall back on oneself. I did observe devout sisters, who were absorbed in meditation, entirely unconscious of the environment. But for this the authorities of the temple could scarcely claim any credit. . . . When I had reached the temple, I was



greeted at the entrance by a stinking mass of rotten flowers. The floor was paved with fine marble, which was however broken by some devotee innocent of æsthetic taste who had set rupees [Indian currency] in it. And the rupees served as an excellent receptacle for dirt. . . . The surroundings of the Jnana-vapi (The Well of Knowledge), too, I found to be filthy. . . . If anyone doubts the mercy of God, let him have a look at these sacred places. How much hypocrisy and irreligion does the Prince of Yogis suffer to be perpetrated in His holy name?"

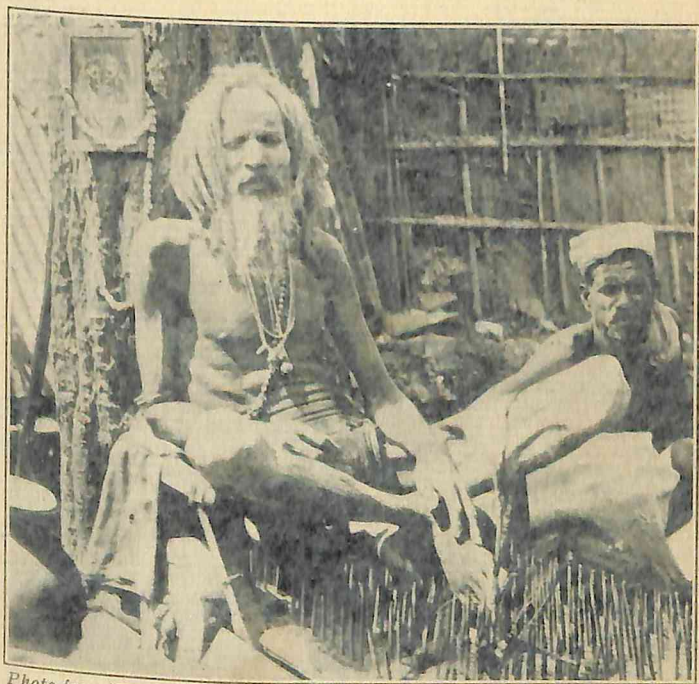
To the banks of the Ganges millions of pilgrims come to purify their souls. Here, from all corners of the land, they kneel in prayer. It is a marvellous sight. They make the perennial pilgrimage presumably to feed the life of the spirit. But is this spirituality? Says the poet, Tagore, "What could be more material than thinking that bathing in a river could wash away one's sins?" Even so, the Hindus regard Benares—as well as the myriads of other sacred spots—with the same feeling that we have for our ancient cathedral cities.

Proceed to the holy place of the goddess Kali, from whom Calcutta takes its name. She is black of face, the Bengal Mother, with scarlet eyes, and a hideous golden tongue lolling from her mouth. In her four arms she holds the symbols of destruction, creation, and bloodthirstiness, and her neck is adorned with human skulls. The uneducated masses bring her kids. Every day goats are flung at her feet. The temple floor is



*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

### A CALCUTTA BEGGAR



*Photo from Wide World Photos*

### INDIAN FAKIR

Outside the Great Temple of Kalighat, Calcutta. For over 20 years he has been sitting on spikes, praying and begging.





reeking with blood as the sacrifice continues, even as in the days of old at the temple of Jerusalem.

But this is not comparable to the worship of certain other Hindus, who see no need to go to a temple. Instead, they go every morning to the sea-side to worship the sunrise which they term "the Daily Miracle." They never bow before idols and they consider image worship borrowed from the aborigines.

At the summit of Mount Abu, in the native state of Rajputana, are the splendid structures of the Dilwara temples, the holy shrines of the Jains. Here you see monks who sweep the ground in front of them as they walk, lest their frail bodies should crush any tiny creature, priests ministrant who wear a strip of cloth over the mouth lest they should breathe any insect's life. For the orthodox followers of this sect obey to apparently absurd extremes the command not to kill any animate beings.

In southern India are titanic edifices with huge towers. Within some of these temples nautch girls in brilliant dress dance to the gods. Originally these *devadasis*, dedicated to the holy shrines, are said to have been virgins and devotees, like the Catholic nuns of our times. But now the girls in the temples are virtual prostitutes, and the enlightened Hindus are fighting to prohibit their employment.

At innumerable religious fairs and holy places ascetics dress in a coating of ash and sit in perpetual contemplation, their legs crossed under them, their eyes fixed vacantly upon nothing at all. Some are



mere skeletons, others lift up withered arms, or show the hideous deformities brought on by squatting everlastingly in the same position. It is supposed to kill desire. You are told that they are seeking the way of absorption into the universal consciousness. But you will find that many of them, under the cover of holiness, prey upon a hospitable people. There are actually millions of such mendicants, some of them no doubt genuine, who, with long staffs and bowls in hand, make of life a long pilgrimage, and as one Indian states, persuade the people that next to becoming a *Saddhu* or a begging ascetic, the best way a man can "avoid damnation is to feed and maintain *Saddhus*."

These and many other beliefs and observances, incomprehensible to the West, are all included in what we call Hinduism. Unlike Christianity or Moham-  
medanism, it has never claimed one single founder. Its teachings are not confined to one doctrine of salvation or to one conception of blessedness. Vague and comprehensive, it has remained remarkably elastic, assimilating each new successful religious movement that has sprung up on Indian soil. Tolerating other modes of worship, it contains the lowest forms of idolatry mingled with a faith in the Godhead. Though it has never been to any great extent a proselytising religion, it has yet withstood successfully all hostile attacks. Nor is Hinduism restricted to religion in the narrower sense; as told in Lord Ronaldshay's "India—A Bird's-Eye View" and Sir Valentine Chirol's "India," it embraces all the important social customs.



And so it is an almost impossible task to fit the essential creed of Hinduism within a precise formula. In certain forms it is atheistic or theistic, but the pantheistic conception predominates. Yet, even in its region of lofty metaphysics, are a few fundamental principles that are the heart of the Hindu faith.

These characteristics are a belief in the transmigration of souls together with the doctrine of *Karma* (deeds), which means that a man's character and his lot in life are determined by his present and previous existences; that life hinders spiritual progress, and that the only escape from this endless chain of existence is by reabsorption into the Absolute, the cosmic principle pervading the universe; that this supreme blessedness can be achieved through an ascetic life and a complete devotion to the Absolute or World Soul. And to these essential doctrines must also be added the caste system and the reverence of the cow, the two most prominent outward marks of Hinduism.

To understand these, and to comprehend the Hindus, one must go back to their early scriptures and their religious past. One may suspect justifiably that most Hindus know little of their ancient records. The subtle philosophical speculations of the sacred books may be quite beyond them, only a few may have acquired even hints of the higher knowledge, but their present customs are a product of that knowledge.

The Vedic literature has already been mentioned here, and it has further been noted that the most ancient of the Vedas is the *Rigveda* or the Veda of verses.



The hymns of the *Rigveda*, which have been for over three thousand years on the lips of countless Hindus, are a collection of poems in ten parts mostly composed in honor and praise of various gods. The most revered of the thirty-three deities was Indra, the warrior god of storm, who constantly appears as vanquishing the demons of darkness, and Agni, god of fire, the great priest who wards off evil spirits and hostile magic.

In the remote period there were no professional priests, no permanent temples. The father of the family presided over the ceremonies. Sacrifices were offered to the deities, hymns were sung in their honor and the outlook of the people was joyous. As time went on, the simple idea of family worship vanished before the appearance of the professional priests. But for long there was no trace of the pessimistic doctrine of *Karma*, which later pervaded the structure of Hindu society, nor was the cow as yet worshipped.

The earliest beliefs were developed while the Aryan population was still confined to the valley of the Indus. As the people began to move eastward and southward and when they eventually settled in the valley of the Ganges, the old nature worship was subordinated to a new religion. At first, in the new geographical horizon, the sacrificial ceremonies grew more elaborate and complex, the dominance of the priesthood began, and a most elaborate ritual literature sprang up.

This was gathered into a body of theological treatises, called *Brahmanas* or the "Priestlies." These works





explained with extreme care the origin and value of the religious ceremonies on which depended man's welfare here and hereafter. A wrong emphasis in a sacred hymn might annul its efficacy. And only one class held the magic formula of the all-powerful sacrifices. Now a separate order of the priestly class—the Brahmins—ascended to supremacy in Hindu society. The servants of the gods, they became dispensers of sacrifice and ritual, the sole guardians and expounders of the scriptures.

The priesthood grew rich and powerful and dominated the people. But in time even the over-ritualized religion ceased to satisfy. The Himalayan scenery which gave birth to poetry, grand myths and colossal imagery was left behind. As the Aryans settled down in the interior of India, they became Hindus, created deeply philosophical essays, and firmly established what was later to become known as Hinduism.

In the old northern home where they had struggled fiercely with the forces of nature, there had been little time for leisure. In the new environment there was more opportunity for speculation. Life in the tropical surroundings of the Ganges valley filled them with deep earnestness and a yearning to fathom the mystery of being and not-being. Eternal questions of the ultimate meaning of the universe and of life stirred in their minds. They drank deep from the ancient Vedas and from them, and "the might of earth and over-earth about them," they fashioned a new civilization.



Through one reflection after another they passed from the divination of the powers of nature to the ideal of the Godhead. Caste and concrete symbolism were developed to the utmost, and abstract speculation was carried to an extreme. They soared, as Patrick Geddes says, "to high and serene philosophies, each a peak-cluster of snows, piercing the heavy atmosphere of man's common life—beckoning him, at boldest, to the ether; pointing him, even at simplest, to the stars." Hardly ever, indeed, have men's minds reached more astonishing heights of thought.

These speculations of the ebb and flow of life, of the nature of reality and of the Absolute, crystallized into those books of secret knowledge known as the Upanishads, of which a great western philosopher has said that as they "have been the solace of my life, let them be the solace of my death." In them we meet with the epoch-making doctrines which developed the Hinduism of today. Here, as A. A. Macdonell states in his authoritative "India's Past," for the first time "in the history of human thought is the Absolute grasped and definitely expressed."

In these Upanishads, the Hindu seers embodied the leading ideas which, for more than twenty-five centuries, have been the great spiritual tradition of the Hindus. They rejected the rationality of the world on the ground that such a doctrine denied the overwhelming reality of pain and evil, and developed a grandiose conception of nature in which every spiritual experience is provided for.





## THE MIGHT OF HINDUISM 75

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They discarded the sacrificial ceremonials as unreal; they sowed broadcast the idea that only one thing was real: it was the Brahma (quite distinct from the same word denoting the priestly world) or the "Self," the One Absolute, Infinite, Impersonal, Self-Existent, Inexpressible "That" or "It." They asserted that all life was its manifestation and product. They told of the eternity of the spirit and the identity of the individual Self with this Universal Self. As one of the books of secret knowledge (the *Chandogya* Upanishad) explicitly declares, "This whole world consists of it; that is the real, that is the soul, that art thou."

And then these wise men of the East pointed the way to El Dorado. They carried this conception to its logical conclusion, declaring that man can achieve salvation only by losing himself in the Brahma, in the absorption of the individual Self in the eternal and divine power which causes all worlds, supports and maintains them, and again reabsorbs them into itself.

All of which means that there has been an eternity of being, that the world is but an illusion, and that with reabsorption into the Universal Soul the higher spheres are open to all of us. Great teachers of other religions have gazed upon the august vision and reported the divinity of the spirit. But only the Hindu seers heard whispered the secret that salvation is to be reached in life, not death. Yet the path to Brahma is a thorny one, and a release from the repeated births and deaths is not easily achieved. For, as we men-



tioned before, the law of *Karma* or deeds regulates everything.

We arrive now at the theory of transmigration. At the same time that the conception of *Brahma* was reached, the ancient Hindus concluded that from eternity there has existed a round of rebirths. Death, they argued, is no end, but only the beginning of another life, and birth is in no sense a blessing, but the supreme misfortune. For the individual must pass through a never-ending succession of births and deaths, to be born again as a person, an animal, or even a plant, until salvation—called *Moksha* or *Nirvana*—comes at last.

To the question of what causes this intolerable wheel of fate the answer was: the deeds of men. In the words of one of the Upanishads, "as a man acts and behaves so he is born; he who does good is born as a good man, he who does evil is born as a bad man; by holy works he becomes holy, wicked by wicked." If his preceding life had been extraordinarily good, he might return even as a god; but if he had done evil, he might come back as the lowest type of animal or perhaps as a plant. From this belief that an animal may be the dwelling place of a human soul comes the idea of the sacredness of all animal life which has colored Hinduism ever since.

This doctrine of deeds known as the iron law of *Karma* is all important in the Hindu religion. It is the Hindu's conception for our old maxim, "Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap." As a



learned Indian states, it is "the every-day working belief of every Hindu."

*Karma* irrevocably determines the caste into which one will be reborn. It settles whether a woman shall be a sonless wife or—an infinitely more terrible fate—a sonless widow. The inequalities in life are explained on the basis of previous *Karma*. No matter what precaution one may take, he cannot avoid his *Karma*.

Sister Nivedita in "The Web of Indian Life" tells the story of a great mathematician, Bhashkaracharya, who had but one child, the maiden Lilavati. "Casting her horoscope carefully, he discovered that there was only a single moment in her life when she could be married without fear of widowhood. Preparations were made for the wedding accordingly, and the father himself constructed an instrument by which to regulate the time of the ceremonies. Water would be admitted drop by drop through a certain hole, from one pot to another, and upon reaching a given height was the signal for the sacramental act.

"The marriage-rites began, but the child Lilavati grew tired, and went wandering from room to room in search of amusement. In some obscure corner she came upon an unaccustomed-looking pot, and leaned over its edge to watch how the inner section was gradually sinking in the water which it contained. As she did so a tiny pearl fell all unnoticed from her wedding-crown, and stopped the hole through which the water passed! Time went on, but the vessel sank no



further. 'Ah!' exclaimed Bhashkaracharya sorrowfully, when, the hour already past, he found the jewel that had frustrated all his caution, 'it is useless for a man to fight against his destiny!' "

The power of this pessimistic belief in *Karma* can be recognized by all who come in close contact with the people. Travelling third class in India I met in the trains many an Indian who ought to have been in bed. "If I have to die, it is of no use to take care of myself, and if it is ordained that I live I may as well do my business as usual," was the frequent reply of such persons. Or, as an intellectual Hindu put it to me once, "There is nothing mightier than Destiny."

If applied to other worldly problems, this doctrine might lead to amazing conclusions. For comparing India's health and her material prosperity with those of other nations of the world, we find that she is almost at the bottom of the list. Though no educated Hindu would like to infer that India's reward for building up an enduring civilization is her appalling poverty and disease the might of *Karma* holds India in its grip.

And desire is the stuff of *Karma*. Thus states the "Bhagavad-Gita," or the Lord's Song, the chief scripture of educated Hindus: "Man verily is desire formed: as is his desire, so is his thought; as his thought, so he does action; as he does action, so he attains."

Man cannot achieve salvation merely by good deeds or even by desiring moral perfection. Far from it, since, as the late Prof. Paul Deussen wrote in his





"The System of Vedanta," "Deeds of special goodness or badness demand for their retribution several successive existences." It is exactly out of wishing and desiring that the ever-reborn self is made. It is true that man must devote himself strictly to observing ritual propriety and the Absolute. Yet only after he has finished with this world, leaves his home, severs all social ties, lives as a hermit and meditates solely upon the Absolute Being can he win the supreme blessedness.

Says the "Bhagavad-Gita," "Whose works are all free from the moulding of desire, whose actions are burned up by fire of wisdom, him the wise have called a Sage."

And so the real escape lies not only in ceasing to desire, but also in acquiring perfect knowledge of the divine essence. Or, put in a different way, final emancipation, or *Nirvana*, depends on the renunciation of all common business, on the extinction of desire and therefore the annihilation of the individual "it"; and, also, on absolute contemplation, so that the little soul may realize its own identity with the Supreme Soul. It calls for complete renunciation of the personal or egoistic mode of existence and in this lies the explanation of Indian asceticism. But many of the beggars one meets at the festivals know only how to lead a useless life.

These are the fundamental doctrines of the Hindu religion, which claims today two hundred and thirty million souls, as it was developed by the ancients



## LIVING INDIA

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some two thousand five hundred years ago. Civilizations have risen and fallen, but Hinduism lives on. And today, even as in that remote period of the Upanishads, myriads of Hindus raise their daily prayer:

*From the Unreal, lead us to the Real!*

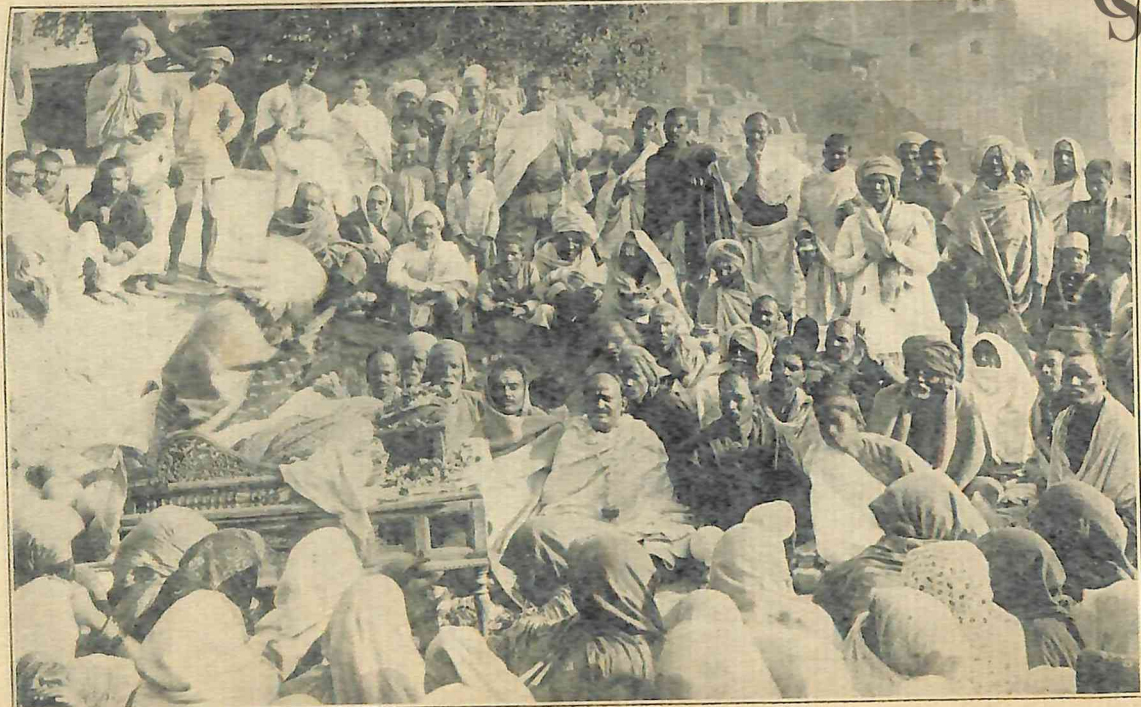
*From darkness, lead us unto light!*

*From death, lead us to immortality!*

The torch of the ancient sages was handed on to such prophets as Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, and Mahavira, the sage of the Jain sect. Both of them entrenched still deeper the Hindu belief in the transmigration theory, and exalted in particular the principle of *Ahimsa* or the spirit of reverence to all animate beings. From this Buddhistic period (Buddhism and Jainism were established in the sixth century B. C.) dates the sanctity of the cow, which has become almost universal in its application. In fact Mahatma Gandhi maintains that cow protection is the central fact of Hinduism.

Both Buddha and Mahavira rejected the efficacy of rituals and discarded the caste system. Buddhism, enthroned as a state church by Emperor Asoka, ruled for some centuries, but later was gradually reabsorbed into Hinduism and disappeared into the Far East, though still professed by the Burmese. Jainism now claims comparatively few adherents (at the last census their number was a little over a million), and in its social customs and practices is almost undistinguishable from Hinduism.





*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

PUNDIT READING SACRED BOOK, BENARES





The two great seers left the stage free for Brahman sacerdotal supremacy and the rigid caste system. Throughout the centuries new gods came into being, strange rites were adopted, but the essence of Hinduism remained as enunciated in those secret books of knowledge, the Upanishads.

But while an abstract and colorless idea like Brahma might satisfy the philosophers, it could awaken little sympathy in the hearts of a people accustomed to visible gods. The pundits quickly recognized man's need to visualize what he is to worship. So the lower Brahma sprang up, a deity whose attributes could be seen.

Yet even the lower Brahma was not concrete enough and never became very popular with the plain folks, who, though believing in the supremacy of one great God, felt the need of the living presence of gods in the temples. The names of Vishnu and Shiva gradually appeared as titles for the one supreme personal God. Of secondary importance in the days of the Vedas, they now became the leading deities of the pantheon. Associated with that dim figure of the lower Brahma, they were to represent the threefold aspect of the one divinity, "as manifesting itself respectively in the creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe."

Nor was this all. In order to satisfy the desire for gods who were completely human, the great god Vishnu, through periodic incarnations or avatars, came as a human being who was at the same time truly god and

truly man. It is the belief, indeed, that whenever people become wayward, he is so solicitous about their welfare that he takes human form and descends on earth to defend the poor and establish justice.

The most popular of these avatars are Rama and Krishna, heroes sent down to earth to save mankind. Their exploits are celebrated in the great epics of India known as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, two marvellous romances of the spirit which have always exercised a tremendous influence in the country. Knowledge and appreciation of the vast epics—the *Mahabharata* is eight times the length of the Homeric poems, and the *Ramayana* twice as long as the Iliad and the Odyssey combined—are not confined to the pundits. Journeying over the country, a visitor can participate in religious festivals where scenes from them are recited, sung, and danced before huge crowds.

Homer was once sung by the people of Greece. But the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*—dating from the fourth and fifth centuries A. D.—are still chanted by the plain folk of India. And the figures depicted in these works, and sculptured in remarkable pictures, stand in various parts of the south and north of the land as a record of the country's delight in spiritual beauty.

Notwithstanding, however, Vishnu's many incarnations, Shiva became the most popular god; Shiva, the passionate; the fierce god of destruction, represented by the *lingam*, the phallic emblem, which however, the cultured Hindus do not even remotely associate with





obscene ideas; Shiva, who dissolves worlds worn out and useless; Shiva, destroyer of evil monsters and of enemies of Hinduism, became and remains to our day the most popular god.

Hindus hold that his function is to destroy ignorance. Yet he is also found where the orgiastic rites of the Left-handed Tantricians are performed; a secret sect which believes that the poison of passion can be killed only by more poison, whose few adherents therefore indulge in riotous living in order to purify their souls. In the name of his consort, Kali, the *Thugs* used to commit horrible crimes, and in her name the Tantricians still practice sex looseness—practices not confined to India.

Yet to the millions of his devotees he is especially the strong, pure and all-merciful, the refuge of animals and of the ugly and queer people who are supposed to do his errands and who are known as Shiva's demons. Awe and dread, mixed with love and tenderness, mark the worship of Shiva and of the gods and goddesses said to be his "forms." And daily millions, as Sister Nivedita tells so vividly, pray:

*Evermore protect us,—O thou terrible!—  
From ignorance, by Thy sweet compassionate Face.*

But here let it be said that there is little enmity between the worshippers of these two supreme deities. The Hindus are not strict sectarians, nor are they intolerant toward any other religion. The great mass of Hindus worship at the nearest shrine, whether it is



dedicated to one god or the other. Those who have painted on their foreheads the three upright lines of white and vermilion which represent the footprint of Vishnu, and the followers of Shiva, who draw three horizontal lines of grey or yellow earth across their brows, are all united by the conceptions of the sacred literature under discussion here.

In the course of time Vishnu and Shiva and their counterparts absorbed local deities. But the idols increased. A succession of brilliant thinkers and saintly men, century after century, tried to win the Hindu religion away from idol worship and to dispel entirely its most glaring abuses. But, until our own days, without much success.

During mediæval times there were the Bhakti saints, noble men who followed the path of devotion to the personal God or gods. In the fifteenth century, under the rude impact of Mohammedanism, distinguished leaders tried to purify the Hindu religion. The revival had its effect for a short period, but the old abuses soon returned. Guru Nanak, a contemporary of Luther and founder of the religious order of the Sikhs (the word means "disciples"), which changed later into a fighting nation, ridiculed the Brahmanical rites and rebelled against the caste system. But today the number of persons professing the Sikh faith is only about three million. Moreover, idolatry has found its way into their shrines.

The Brahma Samaj, founded by Raja Mohan Roy in the early years of the nineteenth century, drawing





its inspiration from the purer origins of Hinduism and also influenced by Christianity and western thought, departed from the standard of Hindu orthodoxy.

The religious principles of the Samaj provide that "No graven image, sculpture, statue, carving, painting, picture, portrait, or the likeness of anything is to be admitted within the Samaj premises; no sacrifice, offering, or oblation of any kind or thing is to be ever permitted therein."

It was the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, who prepared the ground for *Sati* abolition. Early in life he witnessed the self-immolation of his brother's wife. The horrible scene of the girl placed on the pyre by priests, her struggle to escape, and then—amidst the beating of drums and horns—her cremation, made him vow to purge Hinduism of such abuses.

Although the Brahmos number less than seven thousand, and have increased but little in the last twenty years, thousands of the intellectual Hindus, especially of Bengal, have been influenced by their religious ideas. The poet Tagore's father was Mohan Roy's immediate successor in the apostolic line of the Brahmos.

The most vital Hindu revival of the present day is the Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dyananda. Its chief living exponent is Lala Lajpat Rai. It is told about the Swami, who was born in 1824, that when he was fourteen years of age his father took him to the temple to celebrate one of the great festivals of the god Shiva. The festival included a night spent

in prayer to the deity. As the night wore on, the other worshippers fell asleep, but the boy kept vigil and about midnight he saw a mouse creep out and nibble at the offerings of the god and run about over the idol.

This was sufficient to destroy his faith in idol worship. After years of wandering in search of a teacher and of truth, he organized the Arya Samaj, a militant society to reform Hinduism. His message was, "Back to the purity of the Vedas" and his doctrine was that there is but one God who has never been incarnate. He fought against idolatry and taught that caste was a political and not a religious creation.

The influence of the Aryas has been greatest in the north of India where they have over a half million adherents, and their educational activities have had a decisive influence on the youth of the land.

A galaxy of modern reformers followed them. Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and others preached that the identity of the soul with the Supreme Self is to be attained by active service.

Nevertheless the pantheon grew larger. The myriad idols increased and countless millions continue to adore "the unknown through the known, the invisible through the visible." The trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva—and their millions of assistants still rule the Hindu religion. The might of *Karma* has hardly relaxed its grip. The most reprehensible fetichism, as well as the highest form of mysticism, still broods within sacred shrines and holy temples.

But new movements are on foot at present to wean





the people away from crude and repugnant practices. And while idolatry is only mildly repudiated by the majority of Hindu leaders, in certain parts of the land, the "old and traditional gods and goddesses," as Bipin Chandra Pal observes in "The Soul of India," "... have been reinstalled with a new and nationalist interpretation in the mind and soul of the people. Hundreds of thousands of our people have commenced to hail their motherland today as Durga, Kalle, Jagad-dhatri [most popular Hindu goddesses.] These are no longer mere mythological conceptions or legendary persons or even poetic symbols. They are different manifestations of the Mother. This Mother is the Spirit of India."

In spite of this the theory of life as an incurable evil still directs the vast majority of Hindu Indians. Such a doctrine breeds a spirit of resignation, not of challenge; it inspires acquiescence rather than a determined effort to overcome the grim conditions of the country. Growth and progress are further paralysed by the wall of the hardened caste system. This elaborate institution, built around the religious faith, we shall take up now.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WALLS OF CASTE

THE world has always seen India as the land of castes and outcastes. India is still the land of Brahmans and pariahs. Now, as in ancient times, it is a caste-ridden society. Just as Hindu India worships religiously at the shrine of *Karma*, so does she worship socially the idol of caste. And just as she is bound by *Karma* fetters, so *Varna* (meaning in Sanskrit both caste and color) continues to grip her.

The "tyranny of caste" determines with whom a Hindu may eat, from what group of people he may take his wife, what occupations he may enter and with whom he may not work, from whom he can take water and from whom he cannot take water. He is a brave man indeed who defies the rules of his caste, for he faces complete ostracism in this life and a purgatory in his next existence, when he may return as an "untouchable."

These are strange vestiges which the ancient Aryan aristocrats left. First of all, a man is by birth a Brahman or a pariah or of some other caste. There is



no entry into a caste save this.<sup>1</sup> No wealth can change the pariah into a Brahman, no services, however significant, can raise his status. Generally speaking, if a "twice-born" dares to accept food from one of a lower caste, his own people will not touch him or speak to him. He becomes a dead person for his kind. If the food of one from a superior caste is so much as touched by the shadow of a member of an inferior caste it is often considered contaminated. And all this enjoys the highest sanction of religion as it is understood by the vast majority of Hindus.

I remember being invited by a prominent member of the Indian national legislature to accompany him to his home. He was one of the most cultivated men of the country and a leading patriot. Dressed in a cloth of white, across his chest he wore a holy thread—the outward sign of the high rank with which he lives and dies. On his forehead was piously inscribed, fresh each morning, the monogram of his god, and in his hand he carried a pot in which he brought his daily meal. I knew enough not to touch the vessel. For had I done so he would never have used it again. We talked many times, and he was a brilliant conversationalist. He was very courteous, but I could never ask him to dine with me. As an orthodox Brahman he could not eat at the same table with a beef eater.

One need not go to India for examples of social distinctions or social exclusiveness. But nowhere else in

<sup>1</sup> The case of Miss Nancy Ann Miller of Seattle, who in March, 1928, married the former Maharajah of Indore, is supposed to be the first Christian from the West admitted to Hinduism.

the world does there exist a rigid institution—it is both religious and social—based on such permanent and inevitable inequality.

At present the popular notion prevails in India that, when human life began, four great initial classes emanated respectively from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of Brahma, the Creator. As the ancient book says, "His mouth became a priest, his arm was made a soldier, his thigh was transformed into a husbandman, from his feet sprang the servile man."

Thus the origin of the four great divisions of the Brahmans and the Kshatryas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras—priests and warriors, husbandmen and laborers. The first three, known as the "twice-born," were alone entitled to wear the sacred thread, have admission to the reading of the holy scriptures and participate in the accompanying ceremonies. The fourth, or Sudra class, was to serve the "twice-born" and perform all kinds of manual labor regarded as "clean." Lowest of all was a fifth group, composed of aborigines, to perform the so-called disgusting occupations.

Those proud Brahmans knew how to fortify themselves. Says the "Code of Manu," one of the most ancient Hindu law-books: "When a Brahman springs to light he is borne above the world, the chief of all creatures, assigned to guard the treasury of duties, religious and civil. Whatever exists in the universe is all, in effect though not in form, the wealth of the Brahman, since the Brahman is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth." To the present





day the Brahman is regarded with awe by the members of the community. Frequently it is not without reason.

Thus, like every other civilization, ancient India evolved certain distinct classes. The four initial divisions—it is questionable, by the way, whether there were only four such groups—are at the basis of the intricate and separate castes existing today. The system was originally devised not only as a color barrier against the dark-skinned Dravidians, but also to assert the superiority and exclusiveness of the aristocratic Brahmans against the other functional groups of the community.

We have already noted how the Brahmans raised themselves to the highest rank in Hindu society. To maintain their position as Vincent Smith says, they evolved a rigorous code to safeguard their ceremonial purity. They could marry only those belonging to the same order; and the partaking of unholy food (not prepared in accordance with their elaborate standards) was forbidden.

The enforcement of such strict canons by the "appointed servants of the gods" stimulated the other classes to imitate these measures. But as ordinary mortals could not always follow the path of the gods, separate codes of conduct grew up in each section of society. By demanding scrupulous observance in marriage and diet, the Brahmans and their imitators erected caste lines among themselves. And they cast out the Dravidians.

Slowly, as the members of the community assumed

new occupations, built towns and cities, and adopted organized government, these separate orders crystallized into the present day hereditary groups of families known as castes. In the course of time, as they multiplied, they split into numerous sub-castes, and the distinctions among them became more complex and rigid. Each held its members to certain ways of living and to one group of familiar associates.

At present there are supposedly between two and four thousand castes. The exact number, however, is immaterial, for the whole social body is steeped in them and their dividing lines involve the vast majority of the people in the most intricate customs.

The types of caste are various: tribal, sectarian, national, and what not. But the most numerous are the functional or occupational types. The Brahmins—the literati of India—are the cream.

Of course, only Brahmins can be admitted as priests, but today the Brahmins are mostly professional men. The comparatively few who serve the temples are not, as a rule, recognized as the real custodians of learning. It is those functioning in the so-called learned professions who are held as the great teachers and leaders in spiritual and worldly matters. Until recently the nationalist political leadership of the country was largely in their hands, and they still predominate, though Gandhi himself is not a Brahmin.

One may, however, be by caste a Brahmin and a worker by profession. For as the Brahmins increased in numbers they adapted themselves to new vocations



and not a few are found today in lowly employments. While visiting the native state of Hyderabad, a Brahman attendant was put at my disposal. Yet, no matter how rich or learned, a Hindu of a different caste could not have induced him to dine with him or to marry his daughter. That is the rule, and only a comparatively small number of Hindus have emancipated themselves from it. Born a Brahman, always a Brahman.

Next to the Brahmans come the other "twice-born" castes, composed of the business men, industrialists, bankers, shopkeepers, and a small group of the historic military caste which still survives in a few native states. Below these are the Sudras, or laborers, with their distinct castes. Lowest of all are the "unclean" outcastes who likewise have their own divisions. How very numerous are even the sub-castes of the outcastes can be gathered from the fact that the Census of 1891 recorded 1,156 sub-castes among the outcaste leather workers. From one large group of outcastes of southern India, named Paraiyan, observes Lord Ronaldshay, is derived our word, pariah.

While the outsider inevitably is impressed by the diverse inter-dining restrictions and other barriers erected among the various castes, against outsiders, the regulations concerning marriage form the real stronghold of the system. All castes regulate marriage. One rule forbids the members of the caste to marry outside of their own sub-caste. This is known as endogamy or marrying-in. But the caste laws also prohibit a mem-

ber from marrying within a certain division of his sub-caste. This is exogamy or marrying-out.

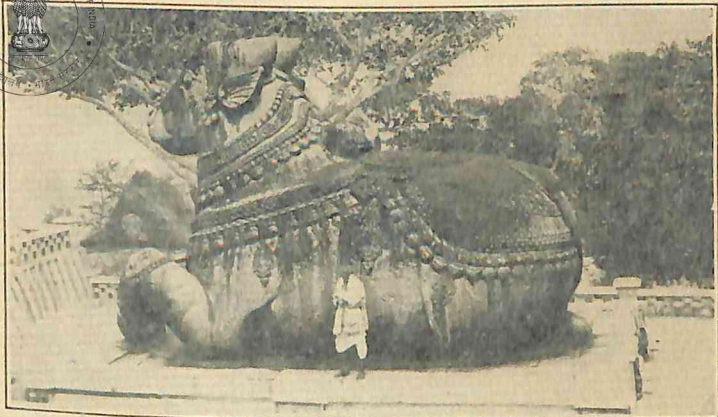
The various castes have also their particular canons defining what special religious rites and ceremonies—apart from the general ones performed by all Hindus—they must observe, how their property shall be disposed of after death, how they shall be buried, what their obligations are to their fellow caste members, and various other matters.

On one hand, the castes perform useful functions, such as helping their members, looking after the poor, distributing charities. Many a poor Hindu has received his college education through the help of a wealthy caste relative.

On the other hand, as the result of these manifold divisions, each claiming distinction and superiority, caste is arrayed against caste, sub-caste against sub-caste, a spirit of exclusiveness is nourished, and national development is hampered.

The enforcement of the regulations is entrusted to the caste *Panchayat*, or council of elders, who maintain discipline. For ceremonial negligence, or other important breaches of caste conduct, the *Panchayat* is ready to mete out penalties. Even Mahatma Gandhi was excommunicated because he crossed the "black water" to Europe. When he returned, he went immediately with his brother to a special place of pilgrimage to undergo the purification ceremony for readmission to the caste circle. He was received back into religious communion, but meanwhile the leaders of his caste





STONE BULL, CHAMUNDI HILL  
The Sacred Animal of the Great God Shiva



A RURAL SCENE IN SOUTHERN INDIA



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in two other cities had regularly excommunicated him, and, until at least a few years ago, they excluded him from religious privileges.

Although Gandhi, more vigorously than anyone else, has championed the cause of the "untouchables," he accepts (notwithstanding reports to the contrary) the main features of the caste system. The Mahatma belongs to the Vaishya, or merchant caste. But no Indian would claim that his chief characteristic is financial skill or commercial enterprise. Everyone knows him to be a man of piety, wisdom, and self-denial. Therefore one would assume that he should rightly belong to the Brahmans.

When I enquired about his attitude towards the caste system, he replied that like every other institution, it has suffered from excrescences, but that he believed the four main divisions to be natural and essential. "Do you not believe," he answered, "in heredity? Do you not believe in eugenics? Do you not have classes in your country?" From this theory we might infer that a man must be treated as a person of wisdom and saintliness merely because he is born a Brahman.

But Gandhi's conception of this institution is quite different from that held by most of his countrymen. He accepts the idea that a person should, for his living, follow the lawful occupation of his forefathers. In December, 1927, he discussed caste with a Brahman in his weekly, *Young India*. At that time he declared that "Hinduism rendered a great service to mankind by the discovery of, and conscious obedience to, this

law [of *Varna*]. Thus Sjt. Nadkarni, born of Brahman parents, and I, born of Vaishya parents, may consistently with the law of *varna* certainly serve as honorary national volunteers or as honorary nurses or honorary scavengers in time of need, though in obedience to that law he, as a Brahman, would depend for his bread on the charity of his neighbors, and I, as a Vaishya, would be earning my bread by selling drugs or groceries. Everyone is free to render any useful service so long as he does not claim reward for it."

The Mahatma believes in hereditary occupational restrictions, but he does not endorse many caste rules and regulations and totally repudiates the doctrine of superiority and inferiority associated with the present caste system.

On the other hand, the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, sees little hope for India until the system is broken. "The regeneration of the Indian people," he states, "to my mind directly and perhaps solely depends upon the removal of this condition of caste. When I realize the hypnotic hold which this gigantic system of cold-blooded repression has taken on the minds of our people, whose social body it has so completely entwined in its endless coils that the free expression of manhood, even under the direst necessity, has become almost an impossibility, the only remedy that suggests itself to me is to educate them out of their trance." [Quoted by C. F. Andrews, in "The Renaissance in India."]

This is not an entirely new cry. One reform movement after another has tried to abolish the caste institu-





tion. As early as the sixth century B. C., Gautama Buddha proclaimed, "As the four streams that flow into the Ganges lose their names as soon as they mingle their waters in the holy river, so all who believe in Buddha cease to be Brahmans, Kshatryas, Vaishyas and Sudras." His religion prevailed in India to a certain extent for some centuries, but was finally discarded, and the Hindu caste institution remained triumphant.

The Lingayat group of Bombay and southern India, formed in the twelfth century to combat caste, had so changed by 1921 that it petitioned the British government against "the most offensive and mischievous order" that all of its members should be returned by the census as belonging to one caste, and requested that they be classified according to the four divisions.

I have stayed in the homes of educated Brahmans and dined with them at the same table. But when I stayed with orthodox Brahmans, just as cultured, the food was served to me separately. Non-Brahmans whom I visited told me that they generally keep a Brahman cook so that if a Brahman stays with them he can partake of their meals without scruples. The railroad stations have special food for Brahmans.

Hindus educated abroad come back with new ideas. Many are skeptical of the whole institution. But intermarrying and inter-dining between castes is still a rare occurrence. The social pressure is so great that few have the courage, even when they have lost their belief in the caste rules, to take such steps. It will probably take a very long time before rapid progress is made in

this direction. Nevertheless, the modern conditions of life are slowly undermining the system.

But if caste domination checks initiative and progress, the practice of "untouchability" crushes the lives and souls of more than fifty million outcastes. (Though some Indians claim that there are only thirty million.) The methods adopted by the caste Hindus against the depressed classes, the descendants of the aboriginal tribes and Dravidians, have rightly been described as a plan of "intellectual lynching."

"The polluting power," said a progressive native ruler, "of a cat is very small, of a dog is greater, but nothing equals the pollution of a pariah. The degrading of a man below beasts is the culminating point of this fabric of sanctity."

The pariahs cannot visit temples, they cannot draw water from public wells, they are prevented from walking in village streets, and often in the streets of larger towns. Their children are at times excluded from the school buildings. They live in separate parts of the village, and when they start out to work from their dwelling places they are supposed to make a distinctive noise that the caste people may know of their approach.

High caste people who come within a distance of sixty-four feet of an "untouchable" must perform a purification ceremony. In some parts of the country the pariahs are not allowed to enter the courts of law, and if witnesses must give their evidence through





orderlies. In certain localities of southern India they cannot walk on public bridges.

During my stay in the city of Lahore, an Indian Civil Servant in charge of the co-operative movement of the district was kind enough to give me the opportunity to visit a meeting of a few such societies, in a village located some twenty miles outside the city. When we arrived we found a group of over a hundred people. A carpet was stretched out on the ground and they were asked to be seated, but I noticed that the people refused.

I was told that some of those present were converted Christians, who had formerly been outcastes, and the others of the Hindu castes refused to sit down on the same carpet near them for fear of pollution. The Indian Civil Servant gentleman, as chief inspector of the organization, said he would not tolerate such practices and made them sit together. I presume that the caste Hindus, as soon as they reached home, underwent the purification ceremony.

But strange as it may seem, social intercourse and marriage relations amongst the outcastes also are wholly caste matters. Even as the higher castes, they have their own immutable laws which govern the life within their groups and determine their relationships with other outcaste castes. Some groups do not eat, drink, or smoke together. Others will accept food or even water only from members of their own sub-castes and those which are of a higher social status.



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At times members of the same sect will smoke together, but if men of different sub-castes are present, each group will have its own *huqqa*. And they all have their own stringent laws regulating marriage. Paradoxical as it sounds, there are outcaste-outcastes.

Such is the power of contagion of this system that the Moslems and Christians and even the Jews have also been influenced by it. In the south of India there is a small sect of Jews who have lived there for countless generations. They are divided into black and white Jews and the two do not intermarry. They even have separate synagogues.

Some Christian churches of the South practice it, and among certain Mohammedan and Christian villages there often exists a reluctance to share the wells with their own "untouchable" classes. We have it on the authority of the "Indian Year Book" of 1924 that "Indian Christian converts, in some parts of the country, insist on maintaining the distinctions of their original castes, and in a recent case, one caste of Indian Christians contested, in a Court of Law, a ruling by their Bishop disallowing the exclusive use of a part of their church to members of that caste."

Yet it is in these depressed castes that the Christians (who number about five millions and are chiefly recruited from the outcastes) and Moslems find good material for mass conversions. Alarmed by this missionary work, outstanding caste Hindus, particularly since the beginning of our century, have started an agitation to remove the stain of "untouchability" from





these many millions who are a part of Hinduism. Eminent Brahmans proved that nothing in their religion permits the existence of outcastes. Brahmans and non-Brahmans united in a struggle, which can only be compared to the Abolitionist agitation in the American fifties, to secure more humane treatment for the outcastes.

The roll call of those associated in this movement is long and illustrious. It includes the Indian Social Conference—which, in December, 1927, celebrated its fortieth birthday,—the Servants of India Society—organized by the noble statesman, G. K. Gokhale, in 1905, to “train national missionaries for the service of India,”—the Arya Samaj sect and the Brahmo Samaj, such national leaders as Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Vice Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, Lala Lajpat Rai, with forty years of social work to his credit, K. Natarajan, engaged in social reform when it was still regarded by his countrymen as a sort of “chartered libertinism,” Mahatma Gandhi and many others who are carrying on a vigorous campaign for the emancipation of the outcastes.

It was Gandhi's childhood experience with a pariah, which decided his future attitude on caste. “I was hardly yet twelve years old,” he says, (*Young India*, April 27, 1921), “when this idea had dawned on me. A scavenger named Uka, an untouchable, used to attend our house for cleaning latrines. Often I would ask my mother why it was wrong to touch him, why I was forbidden to touch him. If I accidentally

touched Uka I was asked to perform the ablutions, and though I naturally obeyed, it was not without smilingly protesting that untouchability was not sanctioned by religion, that it was impossible that it should be so. I was a very dutiful and obedient child, but, so far as was consistent with respect for parents, I often had tussles with them on this matter. I told my mother that she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Uka as sinful.

“While at school I would often happen to touch the untouchables, as I never would conceal the fact from my parents, my mother would tell me that the shortest cut to purification after the unholy touch was to cancel the touch by touching any Mussalman passing by. And simply out of reverence and regard for my mother I often did so, but never did so believing it to be a religious obligation.”

Some years ago he adopted the little orphan, Lakshmi, the daughter of a pariah. And while he believes, as we have seen, in caste according to birth and *Karma*, he refuses “to believe that anyone can be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth,” and he does not consider the outcastes as in any sense a low order. “On the contrary,” he says, “I know many who are worthy of reverence. On the other hand there are Brahmans going about whom it would be difficult to regard with any reverence. Holding these views, therefore, if there is a rebirth in store for me, I wish to be born a pariah in the midst of pariahs, because thereby I would be able to render more effec-





live service to them and also be in a better position to plead with other communities on their behalf."

In the summer of 1924 the depressed classes of Vykomb in the native state of Travencore, under the leadership of liberal Brahmans and nationalists, conducted a struggle to win the right to use all the public roads and enter the Hindu temples. While they did not secure permission to worship in the temple, some of the public roads were opened to them.

On February 23, 1928, Mr. Bajpai, an official spokesman for the Indian Government in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi, declared that figures had been collected showing that the number of depressed class scholars (in primary and high schools) all over India had increased from 195,000 in 1917 to 667,000 in 1926.

Some of this advance is, no doubt, due to the work of the Government, Hindu reform agencies, Indian philanthropists, and missionary bodies. Mr. Lajpat Rai, however, pointed out at the same session of the Assembly, that not even one per cent of these classes went to school. It is especially significant that, small as progress appears, it was all recorded during the decade when Indians were entrusted with a certain amount of ministerial responsibility.

Nevertheless, orthodox opinion even now continues to oppose the emancipation of the pariahs. Says a Hindu, in a letter to Gandhi, reprinted in *Young India* of April 8, 1926, "Some Hindus have religious scruples against having water at the hands of meat-

eaters, some against doing so at the hands of beef-eaters. It therefore happens that some Hindus do not take water from Christians, Mussalmans and untouchables alike." And he adds, "Let them (the pariahs) take the promise to abstain from beef or carrion as a preliminary to their being taken into the Hindu fold."

And so orthodoxy, instead of working to remove poverty and ignorance, continues to keep the pariahs a subject caste. This applies not only to Brahmans, but also to non-Brahmans. Mr. M. C. Rajah, a national leader of the outcastes, told me that the non-Brahmans are in this respect no better than the Brahmans.

"The Brahmans," he said, "are against the removal of 'untouchability' and 'unapproachability' on account of religious scruples, the non-Brahman merchants and landowners for economic reasons."

A characteristic illustration of their status is told by Mr. Geo. W. Briggs in his "The Chamars," an illuminating study on the outcaste-caste of the tanners of leather and makers of shoes. Mr. Briggs tells about a young Chamar who left his section of the country and took up service elsewhere. "He became fairly prosperous and felt that he had risen in the world. He concluded to pay a visit to his native village. There he chanced upon his old master, who said, 'Give me that umbrella. You have no use for it. I will give you eleven annas [a few cents].' So, taking it, the landlord said, 'Go to work with the plough to-morrow.'"





The next morning the landlord's servant appeared and forced the Chamar to go to work. In the evening the young man received three pice [less than a cent] for his day's work. He realized then that he was only a Chamar after all."

To live in continual fear, to be drafted to all kinds of work, to be at the call of others, no matter what his own interest may be, to perform duties often with no pay whatever—that is the lot of many pariahs. To strike for their economic emancipation is more vital than securing equal privileges in temple worship.

Mr. K. Natarajan, a high caste Brahman and a staunch defender of the pariahs, in his presidential address to the "Indian National Social Conference" held in Madras, in December, 1927, said, "God can be worshipped anywhere and at any time . . . I do not see why the leaders of the depressed classes should not set an example of a purer form of worship to their orthodox brethren who are as much victims of an outworn prejudice as themselves. The only final solution of the depressed problem, is the abolition of caste. So long as there are castes there must be outcastes. . . . The growth of the national sentiment is the surest means of getting rid of caste."

A long time will elapse before these wise words will come home to countless Hindus. Meanwhile the age-long helotry continues.

An aggressive national policy on the part of the Central Government might provide more educational facilities, and open the public roads and wells to the



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pariahs. But legislative enactments, while they may soften the lot of the lower classes, are not sufficient to abolish the degradation and ostracism of the "untouchables."

India cannot be free, no matter how much self-government she obtains from Great Britain, until her people divest themselves of the evils of the caste system, and, especially, until the depressed classes have ceased to be slaves.



## CHAPTER VI

### INDIA'S CHILD BRIDES

**A**N Indian writer—P. K. Wattal—has said in his “The Population in India,” “Everybody marries, fit or unfit, and becomes a parent at the earliest possible age permitted by nature. A Hindu male must marry and beget children—sons, if you please,—to perform his funeral rites lest his spirit wander uneasily in the waste places of the earth. The very name of son, *Putra*, means one who saves his father’s soul from the hell called *Putra*. A Hindu maiden, unmarried at puberty, is a source of social obloquy to her family, and of damnation to her ancestors.”

Yet such a statement as this can easily be construed, as it was lately, into a travesty of the actual facts regarding the girl-mothers of present day India.

The custom of child marriage, like that of caste, is an important heritage from other days. In India, as we have seen, nearly everything has a way of being wrapped in sanctified robes, but if we divest the custom of its so-called religious aspects, we find that the growth of this marriage code results chiefly from a caste-ridden society which forces parents to secure for

their daughters husbands belonging to the same watertight compartment. In order to assure themselves of suitable candidates they get their girls betrothed as soon as possible, sometimes even when the latter are in their cradles.

It should be added that the longer the marriage is postponed, the larger is the dowry demanded by the prospective bridegroom or, rather, by his parents acting for him. And if a girl is not married early enough, malicious rumors are spread about her unchastity. So, lacking a strong libel law, even the parents who desire to postpone the marriage of their little one find it is important for her future that she be married before attaining physical puberty.

Child marriage is not exclusively a Hindu custom, and of the Hindus most addicted to the practice it is among the lower rather than the higher castes that it is most rigidly observed. Of the females married below the age of ten years, half are Mohammedan. Of those between ten and fifteen years of age about three-fourths are Hindus.

But before hurling epithets of "horrible" and "disgusting," it is well to recall that child marriage, though practiced in India on a larger scale than anywhere else, is not confined to that country alone. At certain stages of civilization it has been practiced in many parts of the world.

The reader may be shocked to learn that "approximately 343,000 women and girls who are *living in the United States today* began their married lives as





child brides [of 16 or less] within the last 36 years. This estimate does not include a good many still living who married prior to 1890."

These are the estimates reached in the scientific inquiry of the Russell Sage Foundation on "Child Marriages" (1925), made by Miss Mary E. Richmond and Mr. Fred S. Hall. The legal minimum marriageable age in the United States of America with parental consent is 12 years for girls in twelve of our states; in eleven states it is 14 years; in seven states, 15 years; in eighteen states, 16 years; and in only one state, 18 years (District of Columbia included).

But to return to the Indian child-marriage system. The poet Tagore, himself a strong opponent of the system, explains his theory of how it originated: "The 'desire' . . . against which India's solution of the marriage problem declared war, is one of Nature's most powerful fighters; consequently, the question of how to overcome it was not an easy one. There is a particular age, *said India*, at which this attraction between the sexes reaches its height: so if marriage is to be regulated according to the social will, it must be finished with before such age: Hence the Indian custom of early marriage."

Tagore continues: "*These must have been the lines of argument, in regard to married love, pursued in our country.* For the purpose of marriage, spontaneous love is unreliable; its proper cultivation should yield the best results—*such was the conclusion*—and this cultivation should begin before marriage. Therefore,

from their earliest years, the husband as an idea is held up before our girls, in verse and story, through ceremonial and worship. When at length they get this husband, he is to them not a person but a principle, like loyalty, patriotism, or such other abstractions which owe their immense strength to the fact that the best part of them is our own creation and therefore part of our inner being.”<sup>1</sup>

In passing I point out that these quotations from Tagore’s paper were reprinted in a book entitled “Mother India,” (p. 47 and p. 75), but with the slight difference that the words italicized by us were left out and the gaps marked with dots! Thus the impression is gained that Tagore favors a system which he expressly criticises as a prime cause of Indian stagnation. What Tagore did, as these quotations prove, was to give a hypothetical explanation of how the system arose.<sup>2</sup>

Yet whatever be its origin, the fact remains that the last Census (1921) showed that there were sixty million girls in India under the age of fifteen and of these eight and a half million were married. Even

<sup>1</sup> From “The Book of Marriage” edited by Count Hermann Keyserling, Copyright, 1926, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately “Mother India” contains other such inaccuracies. For instance on page 225 we read about the purification rites known as “panchagavia.” This is performed in rare cases for some violation of social convention. In order to give authority to her statement the author quotes from Abbe Dubois’s “Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies” as follows: “I have often seen . . . Hindus following the cows to pasture.” The Dubois quotation (on page 43 of his volume) actually runs: “I have often seen superstitious Hindus . . .” Why was the adjective omitted?





among infants under five, fifteen in a thousand are married or widowed. Equally sinister, there were nearly four hundred thousand girl widows under fifteen years who, respectability demands, do not re-marry.

At an age when a child ought to be going to school and to be care-free, she is bound to a husband whom her father chooses for her,—courtship is considered a danger, even an evil—often with the help of a horoscope. The physical and moral results of such a system are, to say the least, not an asset to the vitality of the race.

This custom is cruel indeed, but at the same time we must understand that marriage does not necessarily imply cohabitation. The Census Report (1921, Vol. I, page 151) specifically states, "It must be borne in mind, however, that the statistics of the married in India cannot be used without close analysis. Owing to the custom of infant and child marriage among Hindus and Jains, the figures contain a large number of unions which are little more than irrevocable betrothals. A Hindu girl-wife, as a rule, returns after the wedding ceremony to her parents' house and lives there until she reaches puberty, when another ceremony is performed and she goes to her husband and enters upon the real duties of wifehood. At the younger ages, therefore, the wives are not wives at all for practical purposes, though their future lives are committed."

All of which means that, although numerous Hindus



bind their little children in holy wedlock, at an age when they are still in the nursery, or ought to be, there is a real difference between marriage and consummation. And while it would be folly to pretend that a system permitting betrothal of infants has much good in it, there is no disputing the fact that without recognizing this difference between the two ceremonies we get a very wrong picture of Indian marriage customs. In the volume "Mother India" this distinction is not made and the result is an assemblage of a great amount of accurate misinformation on the subject.

Hindu orthodox opinion believes that the bridegroom should be selected and betrothed to a bride before her puberty and that the scriptural law enjoining this is inviolable. Again, many leading Hindus argue that a person who mixes up this question with religion is either fit to be locked up in a lunatic asylum or has some vested interest. And Mahatma Gandhi exclaims, "I loathe and detest child marriage." Moreover, he maintains that the Hindu scriptures give no sanction to this custom; and that even if they do so, they are wrong.

One must observe the system in practice. The parents of a child who is aged eight set out to find a husband for their girl. They still have a few years. But every minute that an unmarried girl lives after puberty accumulates sins for her mother and father. The future bridegroom must not only be a member of the same caste, but must also belong to the same endogamous division of the sub-caste. Inquiries will





probably be made through the caste channels. If the families are Sikhs, or belong to those groups which have broken with caste, they may advertise in the papers for a suitable match.

But assume that the family of the girl belongs to one of the sub-castes. From this source they may gather a list of possible candidates. Then they will make a careful search into their material, their moral, and physical status. And no parents look more carefully into such matters than those of India.

This is not all. The astrologer may be consulted on what the stars have predestined for the man. The careful investigation finished, and with the astrologer's verdict in hand, the parents prepare to select that candidate whose prospects are held to be good, and, of course, whose dowry demand is within their reach. After some bargaining between the parents of both parties, the match between the two children, who in many cases have never seen each other, is finally arranged. They are bound for the rest of their lives. And if the future husband, who is now, say, ten years old, should die two years later, the girl will probably never marry again, but be condemned to a life-long widowhood.

The boy's parents are generally at a greater advantage. For while a girl must be married before she attains puberty, the boy's marriage can be postponed indefinitely. The boy can marry more than once. In fact, the custom of polyandry is recognized as a regular institution among some of the tribes of the Him-



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alayas. It is also practiced among some lower castes and aboriginal tribes.

Mr. J. T. Gwynn, a retired civil servant, describes in the *Manchester Guardian* (weekly edition) of October 29, 1926, the case of an intelligent government servant in high position who belonged to one of the innumerable exclusive sub-castes of Brahmans and had a daughter aged eleven. "For the first five months of the year," writes Mr. Gwynn, "he had been occupied with urgent Government business, and so had been unable to do more than make inquiries about possible bridegrooms. June was the last auspicious month in that year, and so no marriages could be celebrated after it was over. He dare not wait till the next year for fear lest his daughter should attain maturity in the interval, and so become unmarriageable. Accordingly on June 1, he took a month's leave, and set out to visit the parents of the three possible bridegrooms whom he had placed at the top of his list.

"He had never seen any of them before and all three lived in different towns a day's journey distant from each other. X had the best degree, but as yet no appointment or income. Y was well placed in government service but there was something fishy about his horoscope. Z had lands as well as education, but the dowry he was asking seemed altogether too high. The girl was duly married before the end of the month to Y, an astrologer having been found capable of explaining away the awkwardness in the horoscope."

In India, girls generally attain the age of puberty





between twelve and thirteen. This question then arises: whether this girl, duly married to a man at least twice her age, in the case mentioned above, looked for motherhood nine months after reaching physical maturity.

The customs of different sections of the country so vary that a definite answer to this question is almost impossible. It can, however, be pointed out that under the Indian Penal Code, as amended in 1926, any person who has sexual intercourse with his wife under thirteen years is guilty of rape, and is punishable by imprisonment which may extend to ten years. He is also subject to a fine.

But, on the other hand, testimony from judges indicates that this section obviously is not easy to enforce. The average number of prosecutions under the 1892 law, which fixed the age at 12, had been eight per year. This may be either because of the steadily decreasing number of marriages of girls under the age of fifteen, or because such cases only rarely come to the attention of the authorities. Both causes are likely.

An Indian lady, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, writing in *The Hindu* (Madras) of September 21, 1927, gives the sad tale of a little girl, whose age she does not specify, whose husband choked her because she would not respond to his advances. The girl appealed to the court, "but the law could not give her redress since she could not prove the case against the husband as there were no visible marks upon the body, nor could she get any witnesses on her side since the

incidents took place in the husband's house and none of his party would, of course, bear testimony against him. These are not isolated cases; only a few of them ever come into publicity. Such atrocities on the part of the husbands are hushed up even by the parents of the girls for fear of public opinion which is bound to be ranged against them."

While according to the data not only of this lady, but of all medical authorities practising in India, child-birth often occurs too early, the 1921 Census investigator in charge of the Punjab province (northern India) reported that "in the majority of cases the first child is born in the third year of effective marriage."

This is certainly a different picture from that portrayed in "Mother India." Says Miss Mayo, "The Indian girl, in common practice, looks for motherhood nine months after reaching puberty—or anywhere between the ages of fourteen and eight. The latter age is extreme, though in some sections not exceptional; the former is well above the average."

The utter absurdity of such a wild generalization becomes apparent when compared to the statement of the Punjab Census investigator. After studying this question thoroughly in that area, he arrived at the conclusion that even in cases of child marriage first motherhood usually comes during the fifteenth year at the earliest.

Apparently, in writing "Mother India," the author assumed that, as William James said, all facts are born





free and equal. A discriminating statement should include the Census figures which show that 60 per cent of the girls cross the age-period, ten to fifteen, in an unmarried state; and that 70 per cent of the Indian males remain unmarried till they are out of the fifteen to twenty age group.

Moreover, a scientific investigation into the condition of Indian childbirth made by Dr. M. J. Balfour, a short summary of which was published in the *Times of India* (Bombay) of October 10, 1927, indicates that of the 5,580 cases of mothers with first babies, in many parts of India, none was under thirteen years old, seven were recorded as thirteen, and only thirty-five as under fifteen.

Miss Balfour herself kept a record of the cases of 304 Indian mothers who were delivered of their first babies in Bombay hospitals, and the average age was 18.7 years. Only three were aged fourteen, and they were the youngest.

The reports for the years 1922 to 1924 of the Madras Maternity Hospital, where 2,312 mothers were delivered of their first babies, show that the average age for motherhood was 19.4. There were seven mothers aged thirteen and twenty-two were aged fourteen. Both in Bombay and Madras, between 85 and 86 per cent were over seventeen years.

Dr. Balfour also collected 3,964 cases from other parts of India, including the North, and of these only ten cases were below fifteen years, and thirteen was the youngest age. Thus, according to the scientific

report of a medical authority, less than one per cent were mothers before they were fifteen and none before they were thirteen. Nevertheless, Dr. Balfour agrees that childbirth sometimes occurs too early and that legislation is badly needed.

By comparing this situation with that of thirty years ago, we can gauge the progress that has been made. According to the Census, in 1891 the number of married girls per thousand in the age category of five to ten years was 126, and in 1921 it had dropped to 3; in the age group ten to fifteen it decreased from 501 to 399.

Says the Census of 1921, commenting on this striking progress, "The figures clearly show an increase in number of those in the early age categories who are still unmarried. The movement is most marked in the Hindu community, but is shared by the other religions. . . . The change is most conspicuous in the age categories of ten to fifteen for women and ten to twenty for men. Some analysis of the regional and communal figures will be of interest. In Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, the rise in the age of marriage is marked. The number of males left unmarried between the ages of ten and fifteen has risen from 826 in 1891 to 868 in 1921, the increase in the age period fifteen to twenty being from 594 to 665. The case of girls is still more striking . . . for both males and females the rise during the last decade has been exceptionally high."

But while "the tendency of public opinion to favor





later marriages has been a very significant one," the proportion "of girls unmarried between fifteen and twenty is still only 55 per mille and only 39 per mille in the case of Hindus." This shows clearly the difficult social task that is still ahead.

The need of legislation is evident. And for years Indian parliamentarians have introduced bills in the provincial councils, and in the national Legislative Assembly, to raise the minimum age of consent within and without marriage.

Miss Katherine Mayo in "Mother India" states, "successive debates expose the facts" that Indian parliamentarians, for various religious and social reasons, and "with one accord," say that it is impossible to prohibit the marriage of girls of immature age, desirable though it may be.

The policy of the Indian parliamentarians on this question can easily be verified by consulting the proceedings of the national Assembly, beginning in the year 1922. There we find that the opposition to various marriage bills to increase the age of consent came from the official (British) side, who had the co-operation of orthodox Hinduism, and not, as Miss Mayo asserts, from the Indian parliamentarians.

It is perhaps because of such misrepresentation of facts that Mr. Gandhi, in his *Young India* of February, 1928, departs from his universally recognized moderation of speech, and condemns the author of "Mother India" in the strongest terms.

Here is what actually occurred: In the 1922 ses-

sion of the Assembly, Sir Hari Singh Gour, an Indian member, introduced a bill to raise the age of consent from twelve to fourteen in the cases of both married women and unmarried girls, and to make it a penal offense to have intercourse with a girl under that age.

Said a Hindu member—Rai Bahadur Bakhshi Sohan Lal—in supporting the bill, “I may be allowed to point out that the orthodox theory that Hindu religion demanded early marriage of the girls was thoroughly thrashed out and totally exploded in 1891, when the limit of the age of consent was raised from ten to twelve years.”

To this Sir William Vincent—the leader of the Viceroy’s Government—retorts: The Government does not “wish to create a false idea that they are opposed to social reform; but on the other hand, they have to be very careful that they do not support the measure if it really is much in advance of public opinion. Now, if any Honourable Member or if this Assembly could stop child marriages, then some real reform might be effected. . . . But child marriage . . . can only be stopped by social reform and education and not by a penal enactment.”

Thus the Government spokesman. But the official Census report of 1921 stated specifically that “the indirect effect on public opinion of a definite attitude of the State towards the practice cannot but be beneficial.”

It need hardly be told that the bill of Dr. Gour was



defeated. It was reintroduced in the next session and again defeated. In 1925, however, the Legislative Assembly, in opposition to the wishes of the Government, was able to muster sufficient votes to raise the age of consent outside the marital relationship to sixteen years; and within that relationship to fourteen years. One more reading and the bill would have become law. But those who considered victory within sight did not reckon with the influence of the Government Whips, who, in common with the orthodox Hindus, considered the legislation premature.

On March 24, 1925, the Government leader—Sir Alexander Muddiman—again explained that he was not opposed to moderate changes, but warned the members that “by raising the age to sixteen in this country, it appears to me that the House has decided on an age the same as that in England without taking into consideration the difference in physical and climatic conditions. . . . The Government would support the raising of the age to thirteen and would not oppose the raising of the age to fourteen outside the marriage tie.”

The Government was not only unprepared to raise the age of consent to fourteen within marital relationship, but was also unwilling to accept any increase in the age outside of marital relationship above fourteen years.

So the measure, which had the support of a majority of the Hindu members, was buried in 1926 “under an avalanche” of Government and orthodox Hindu

disapproval. At a later session that same year the age of consent was raised from twelve to thirteen years.

In the Legislative Assembly of September 14, 1927, the Indian legislators—except the most orthodox Hindus—implored the Government to act on their notions of right and wrong, and, if they had the support of the enlightened community, to go ahead with the reform. A high caste Hindu—Mr. M. R. Jayakar—exclaimed, “As for caution, is it necessary to find out whether a boy or girl should be in the hockey field or the nursery or on the marriage bed?”

Since then new bills have been introduced by Indian members to raise the age of consent within marriage to fourteen years. In the summer of 1928 these were still pending before the Assembly.

An external Government, which does not share the religious ideas of the people which it rules, may be forced to move slowly in matters which infringe upon the social customs of a great section of the population. “But, in such matters as child marriage,” points out the Montagu-Chelmsford report on Indian Constitutional Reforms (1918), “it is possible that through excess of caution proper to the regime under which it works, it may be actually perpetuating and stereotyping customs which the better mind of India might be brought, after the necessary period of struggle, to modify.”

For such reasons the nationalists maintain that rapid progress in social reform “is impossible without a large





Further extension of the rights of self-government to the people of India."

But the prohibition of widow remarriage is surely a practice which no legislation can help. Only the activities of Hindus themselves can change this wretched custom. In 1921, as I have said, there were nearly four hundred thousand girl widows under fifteen. There were also a million and a half widows between fifteen and twenty-five. This is partly due, as the Census report remarks, "to early marriage, partly to the disparity in the ages of the husbands and wives, but chiefly to the prejudice against the remarriage of widows."

Although, in the case of child marriage, the higher the caste the later the age of marriage, among child widows the exact reverse is true. The higher class Hindus regard the prohibition of widow remarriage to be a badge of respectability, and the lower castes follow style in order that they may raise their social status. Even Moslems, who are brought into close touch with Hindus, are apt to share this prejudice.

Indian social reform organizations have established branches throughout the country; there are said to be about five hundred of them, all encouraging widow remarriage. Philanthropists have endowed trust funds to provide dowries for Indian widows. In 1915, one of the main societies registered only 15 widow remarriages, but in 1925 there were 2,663 such cases in India. Infinitesimal as these results appear, they represent a real advance in the face of the centuries that Hindus have adhered to this practice.

To these evils is added a third, the institution known as *purdah*, or the seclusion of women. This custom originated in India with the advent of the Mohammedan invaders, and is more observed in the north of India than in the South, where Moslem rule was not established. Because their supply of women-folk was limited, the Mohammedans seized Hindu women. This led the Hindus to regulate more strictly the movements of their women, and a system was imposed which prevented free intercourse between women and men. The veiling of the face, separate quarters, and other restrictive practices were based on sex domination.

In the northern country the rule has sunk deep into Hindu life, but is less observed in the villages and among the poor than among the fashionable. It is, of course, more strictly followed by Moslems than Hindus. A lady from Calcutta told me that *purdah* is the fashion among the rich, and many middle class families try to follow it. But wherever the poor observe the custom, it is not only ruinous to the mind, but most effectively spreads disease, for the room to which these women are confined is usually located near the latrine.

To this day, where *purdah* is observed, the women are cloistered and show themselves to no men except their husbands. When they do go out they wear the all-enveloping *chadar* and are carried on *dolis* and *gralkis*.

I was told that among some sect of Brahmans even





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the men observe *purdah*. The father-in-law and son-in-law must not see each other's face. It is said that in the United Provinces of India the women of some sub-castes observe *purdah* against each other.

But the educated woman, slowly coming to the fore, has abandoned the custom and in more than one meeting I have noticed women sitting beside men. The movement for female education has started in the country, and the school will prove the best instrument for upsetting the *Zenana* (the women's quarters in the house) world. Mass education and the increasing demands of modern business life will inevitably do away with old and outworn, restrictive habits. The demands of young India will be heeded.

## CHAPTER VII

### SACRED COWS AND HOLY MOSQUES

**S**IDE by side with the Hindus, who form more than three-fourths of the population of India, live the seventy million followers of Islam, descendants from Hindu women, Moghul conquerors, and converts. They make up the other quarter of the inhabitants of the sub-continent. While having many characteristics in common, the divisions have separate cultures. Each has its distinct social customs and outlook on life, and between them, for causes to be described, there prevails an antagonism and a bitterness of feeling which only too often finds expression in murderous assaults, savage riots and callous destruction.

In fact this rancor has so infected every sphere of the national life, that it has wrecked useful efforts for the benefit of the whole nation. It has fostered a discord which is largely responsible for India's inability to control its own political destiny. It is the cancer undermining the forces working today for a united India.

On December 26, 1927, at the annual session of the





"Indian National Congress," its president, a Mohammedan, specifically stated in his opening address that "Hardly a day passes when we do not hear of some violent outburst of communal fury in one part of the country or the other, leaving its legacy of bitterness and hatred, threatening to reduce the country to one vast camp of warring communal factions bent on destroying each other."

The factors which produce this extremely dangerous situation are partly economic, due to the superior financial and educational position of the Hindus as compared with the Moslems; they are, too, political, caused by rivalry over the distribution of offices. But it is chiefly when we hear that the occasions for these outbursts generally arise from the Hindu's desire to protect the sacred cow, and the Mohammedan's objection to music played in front of mosques, that we feel how remote from ourselves it all is.

Beginning with the end of the nineteenth century, the country has witnessed several severe Hindu-Moslem riots. But with the exception of the cow-killing explosion of 1893 in the eastern districts of the United Provinces and Bihar, the disturbances have never been on so large a scale nor have they occurred at such frequent intervals as in the post-war period.

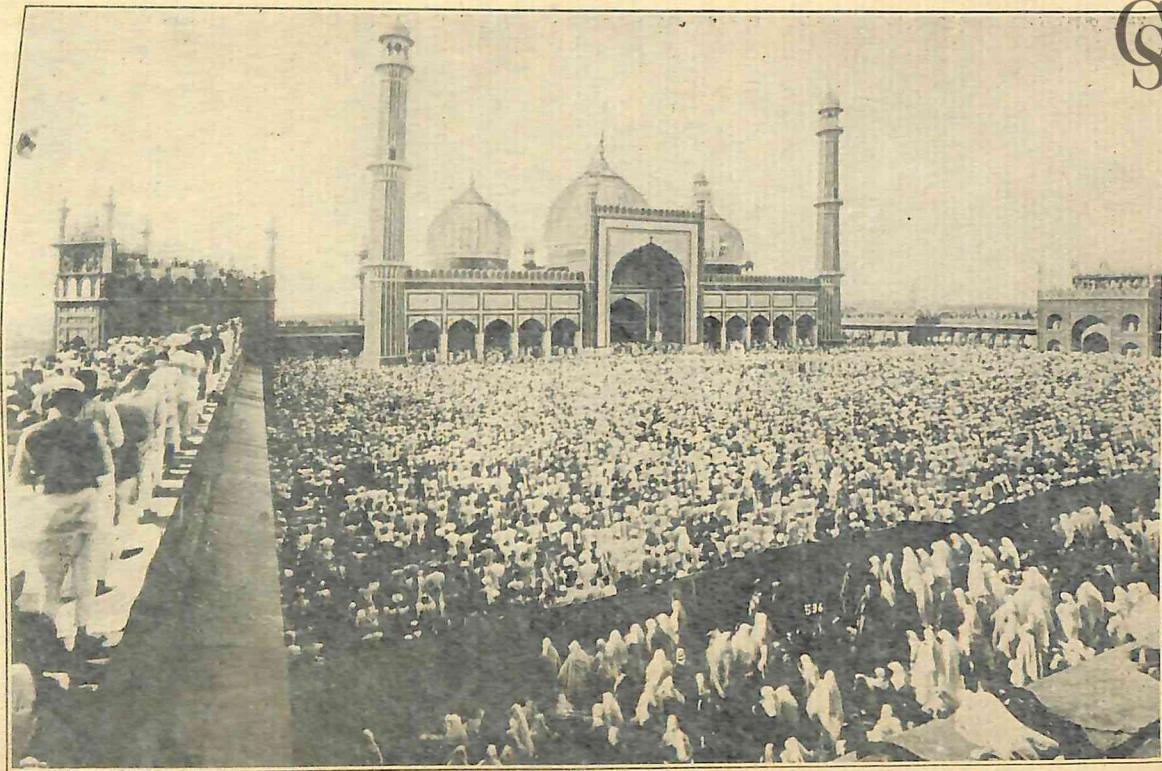
In 1914, in the frontier districts, a seat of trouble, Hindu houses were looted. In 1916, in Eastern Bengal, inhuman atrocities were perpetrated on Hindus because Mohammed was not their Prophet. September, 1917, brought serious struggles in Bihar and the

United Provinces and exceptionally violent ones again in March, 1918. September, 1918, saw similar outbreaks in Calcutta. Then for a few years the communities stopped their inter-strife, and concentrated their attacks on the Government.

In 1920, renewed trouble. And in the following year occurred the most violent explosion of all, among the Moplahs on the Malabar coast. The Moplahs are zealous Mohammedans, descendants of Hindu women and Arab traders, and known as recurrent religious maniacs. Their particular district numbers about one million Moplahs and two million Hindus. During the period of the Hindu-Moslem alliance, a rebellion broke out—directed first against the Government and then against the Hindus. There are few imaginable barbarities which were not committed. "Massacre, forcible conversion, desecration of temples, foul outrages upon women, pillage, arson and destruction were freely perpetrated." Many thousands of Hindus and Moplahs were killed, shot, hanged, or imprisoned for life. But only after nearly six months of appalling savagery—hundreds of Hindus were forcibly circumcised, often resulting in blood-poisoning—were the police able to restore order. And while the sacred cow and Islam were the war-cries, the underlying motive of the revolt was agrarian. The landless poverty-stricken Moplahs really were at war with the oppressive petty Hindu landlords.

From the Moplah outbreak until the end of 1927, each month brought fresh serious disturbances, not to





CROWDS OF ISLAM PRAYING WITHIN JUMA MASJID  
The greatest mosque of India

months, so far as numbers are available, the toll taken by this bloody strife has been between 200 and 300 killed and over 2,500 injured."

In order to understand this tragedy and bloodshed we should remember the singularly striking difference between Hinduism and Islam. The one, as described in an earlier chapter, is a product of Indian soil, the other has been grafted on by foreign conquerors. The Hindu has his many gods and is an idol-worshipper. The Moslem believes in an austere monotheism and is an idol-breaker. One belongs to a community divided into impregnable compartments; the other holds to a democratic faith whose main tenet is the equality of all sons of the Prophet. And neither side (such are the rules in a caste-ridden society), can claim a single relative in the other camp, for intermarriage is simply unheard of.

Though the majority of Moslems and Hindus belong to the same "stock," the religious environment, as Gandhi suggests, has made them different and "my own experience confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward. I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels which I had the privilege of settling."

He points out that "the Mussalman, being generally part of a minority, has, as a class, developed into a bully. Moreover, being heir to fresh traditions, he exhibits the virility of a comparatively new system of life. In my opinion, although non-violence has a pre-





dominant place in the Koran, the thirteen hundred years of imperialistic expansion has made the Muslims fighters as a body. They are therefore aggressive. Bullying is the natural excrescence of an aggressive spirit."

He declares that the Hindu, on the other hand, has an age-old civilization, and is essentially non-violent. His civilization has experienced what the Moslem is still passing through. "If Hinduism" he continues, "was ever imperialistic in the modern sense of the term, it has outlived its imperialism and has either deliberately or as a matter of course given it up. Pre-dominance of the non-violent spirit has restricted the use of arms to a small minority, which must always be subordinate to a civil power highly spiritual, learned, and selfless. The Hindus as a body are therefore not equipped for fighting. But not having retained their spiritual training, they have forgotten the use of an effective substitute for arms; and not knowing their use nor having an aptitude for them, they have become docile to the point of timidity or cowardice." This suggests why, in the majority of riots, the Hindus come out second best.

But it is the crucial question of cow-killing which is so often the immediate occasion for inter-communal strife. In the Hindu mind nothing is so deep-rooted as the sanctity of the cow. No less a person than Mahatma Gandhi loves and adores this animal more than self-government. "Cow-protection," he says, "is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hindu-



speak of a series of smaller quarrels. Religious antagonism intensified. At Delhi, in the summer of 1924, some Hindus assaulted a Moslem boy, and in retaliation the Mohammedans attacked Hindu temples and committed assaults on women and children. The bitterness spread and continued.

Said the Viceroy, addressing the central legislature on the twenty-ninth of August, 1927, "Let me recall the salient incidents of India's recent history. I am not exaggerating when I say that, during the seventeen months that I have lived in India, the whole landscape has been overshadowed by the lowering clouds of communal tension, which have repeatedly discharged their thunderbolts, spreading far and wide throughout the land their devastating havoc. From April to July last year, Calcutta seemed to be under the mastery of some evil spirit, which so gripped the minds of men that, in their insanity, they held themselves absolved from the most sacred restraints of human conduct. The citizens went abroad in peril of their lives from fanatical attacks; and the paralysis that overtook the commercial life of a great metropolis, was only less serious than the civic loss that followed from a naked and unashamed violation of the law, which perforce had to be reasserted by methods drastic and severe. Since then we have seen the same sinister influences at work in Patna, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and many other places; and have been forced to look upon that abyss of unchained human passions that lies, too often, beneath the surface. In less than eighteen





ism will live as long as there are Hindus to protect the cow."

I have already noted that the Hindus believe in the sanctity of all animal life, and especially of horned cattle. For, admitting the validity of the reincarnation theory, any particular ox may be even a god in exile. Undoubtedly the ancients deified the cow in order to save India from the danger of being left without agricultural animals. Having been an economic asset through the ages, she has become the holy god of the modern Hindu.

Now the Indian Moslem is not only a beef-eater—among the poorer Mohammedan townsfolk beef is the staple food—but at certain religious festivals he is enjoined by the Koran to engage in *Quarbani*, or animal sacrifice, and generally he prefers to sacrifice the cow. To the Hindu this is, of course, an unutterable sacrilege.

At Delhi, I was privileged to attend a private dinner given by the most distinguished Moslems of India in honor of the Red Crescent delegation of the Turkish Government. It was in the home of Dr. M. A. Ansari, the president of the "Indian National Congress," whose plain words about the inter-communal hate were quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

There were present the late Ajmal Khan, who died in December, 1927, and was trusted by both Hindus and Moslems to a degree exceeded only by Gandhi himself; the Ali brothers, nationally known figures in the Indian world; the principal of the Mohammedan



University of Aligarh which combines eastern and western learning. There were about ten others present. Squatted on a board laid on the floor, my legs crossed and hands relaxed upon my knees in oriental fashion, I listened to talks in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, French, and English.

Discussing with the great Ajmal Khan the political situation, we naturally came to the holy cow. I mentioned to him a statement of Gandhi, which I had then just read, wherein the Mahatma writes, "My prayer ascends daily to God Almighty that my service of a cause I hold to be just may appear so pleasing to Him, that he may change the hearts of the Muslims, and fill them with pity for their Hindu neighbors and make them save the animal the latter hold dear as life itself."

The great Mohammedan leader was much moved and replied through an interpreter—for he did not speak English fluently—"Bakra-Id is the religious festival in which Moslems perform pilgrimages around their holy places in Mecca. At this festival they have to sacrifice some animal in pursuance of the sacrifice of Abraham. The Mohammedans of India being too far away from Mecca, they go to the city of Ajmir, or perform the sacrifice in their own town. But neither the text of the Koran nor tradition enjoins the slaughter of a cow. In Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Persia, where a cow may be sacrificed without offense to anyone, a sheep is preferred.

"The preference for the cow by the Indian Mos-



lems" he continued, "can be explained by the simple fact that the goat and sheep are much more expensive in India than the cow, and the Moslem cannot afford the price of a sheep."

Another guest—Maulana Mohamed Ali—explains that "the only safe way of decreasing cow-killing is to take steps to lower the price of mutton, which is prohibitively high, and thus reduce the very large margin between the prices of mutton and beef. I am far from desiring that the cost of living should be still further increased for any section of this impoverished land, not excluding my own community, which is admittedly one of the poorest; but I cannot help pointing out that by far the most numerous owners of cows are the Hindus, and that if they did not sell cows after they had ceased to give milk, there would be much less cow-killing than there is today."

Thus speaks a Mohammedan who has not only given up sacrificing cows, but in whose household no beef is consumed, not even by his servants. A great Hindu like Gandhi confirms this and writes, "The cows are almost all owned by Hindus, and the butchers would find their trade gone if the Hindus refused to sell the cows."

There is also difficulty over music. The same effect that the killing of a cow by the Moslem has on the Hindu, the playing of music near a mosque has on the Mohammedan. Hindus love to beat tom-toms and blow trumpets upon all occasions. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony, some of which call for street



*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

**A PALKI CARRYING THE IMAGE OF THE GODDESS KALI**  
 The beating of such a drum before a mosque may start a riot.





processions, can be performed without the accompaniment of music. Occasionally they continue for a whole week, day and night.

But the conspicuous element in Moslem worship is solemnity. He demands silence during his devotion. To him it is a sacrilege if the peace is disturbed near his house of prayer, and when Hindus refuse to stop their music in front of the mosque, trouble is apt to begin.

A Hindu marriage procession may meet with a Moslem mourning cortège; or the Mohammedans may drive their cattle to slaughter through the Hindu quarter; or a fundamentalist Moslem may throw beef during the night into a Hindu temple or break an idol; or a Hindu may shout an insult; or a Moslem may derive particular satisfaction by cutting a branch from the *bo* or *pipul* tree, which the Hindus hold sacred. Any of these childish acts is sufficient to let loose the furies. We have seen the consequences.

The cause of peace is not much helped by the Moslems' missionary societies which are trying to make of every non-Moslem a follower of Islam. Until about a generation ago the Hindus paid little attention to these proselytizing activities. As a follower of the faith put it, "the worst that could be said of a Moslem was that he had a tasteless mess which he called a dish for kings, and wanted all to share it with him, thrusting it down the throats of such as did not relish it and would rather not have it, while his Hindu brother who prided himself on his cookery, retired into the privacy

of his kitchen and greedily devoured all that he had cooked, without permitting even the shadow of his brother to fall on his food, or sparing even a crumb for him."

But alarmed by the increasing conversions to Islam, the Hindus are now displaying missionary zeal. Among others, the "Hindu Mahasabha" (Great Hindu Society) was started to "defend Hindu religion and civilization, to remove social weaknesses and to raise the Hindu community to a plane where it can move in equal status with other communities." It is an association which the Mohammedans do not view amiably. For one of its main features is reclaiming to the fold the millions of Hindus converted to Islam and Christianity.

I asked a prominent member of this society whether its activities, besides making the Hindus more conscious of their aspirations, have not also produced more friction. "No, by no means," he replied, "we want unity. But unity and good will can exist only between two equally strong parties." Yet its leaders are as bitterly hated by the Mohammedans as those of the Moslem missionary societies are by the Hindus.

Indeed, these are potent dissolving forces, these animosities, but they represent merely the outward manifestation of a disease known also to other lands and other peoples. It is best diagnosed by Dr. S. K. Datta, leading Indian Christian, and Mahomed Ali, who in two separate statements have explained its economic basis. The religious feuds of India have





their counterpart in the class rivalries of Europe. They are, in the main, a struggle between the rising middle classes of the two Indian communities. Each seeks recognition, each desires more and better public offices. And in order to secure them, each camp does its best to excite the passions of the masses, using religion as an excuse, which is not difficult in a country where everything is expressed in terms of holiness.

The Hindus, as we know, form the great bulk of the people of India. They include in their ranks the landlords, traders, shopkeepers, capitalists and professional classes of the country. Being the first to take advantage of western education, they have seized every opportunity to establish themselves as a power in the civil administration.

The Moslems are scattered all through the land, but among the major provinces they constitute a minority, except in Bengal and the Punjab. They are largely agriculturists and small tenants, as in Eastern Bengal; or small farmers, as in the Punjab.

Writes Dr. Datta—as quoted in *Young India* of October 23, 1924—"These agricultural communities were the results not of forcible conversion, but they found in Islam a bulwark against the social intolerance of Brahmanism, or the economic oppression of Hindu finance. In addition, the political prestige of the Moslem conqueror was probably an added attraction. Educationally the community has been backward. They find themselves today, therefore, in a singularly weak position."

At this point it is well to remember that the Moham-  
medan religion forbids taking of interest and the Mos-  
lem is often heavily in debt to the usurer, who is  
generally a Hindu. In the Punjab, where Moslems  
form 56 per cent of the rural population, they owe—  
thus we are informed by Mr. M. L. Darling in his  
study on "The Punjab Peasant"—between 50 or 60  
crores or about 200 million dollars.

Sir John Maynard, formerly Member of the  
Punjab Executive Council, writes in the December,  
1927, issue of London *Foreign Affairs*: "In the north-  
west the line of economic demarcation is so marked that  
a law adopted for the purpose of saving the peasant  
proprietors, not less Hindu than Muslim, from the  
loss of their lands to mortgage money-lenders has  
come to be commonly regarded as a crucial issue be-  
tween Hindu and Muslim; and that a further Bill for  
requiring money-lenders to keep regular accounts,  
divided the two communities almost (though not quite)  
integrally into two camps."

A few salient facts concerning the Moslem power  
are necessary to understand how this situation arose.

As long as the Moghuls ruled, the official language  
of the state and court was Persian, even as English is  
today. The faithful had their schools and colleges  
where the Koran and Islamic literature, law and theol-  
ogy were taught. These were almost exclusively reli-  
gious.

The Moslems, fighters and statesmen, had no partic-  
ular liking for the minor administrative services.





Filing of bureaucratic offices was not their idea of the rôle for rulers and conquerors in the state. With their tradition of desert freedom, they had little taste for desk work. The Hindu intelligentsia, who, by their whole nature, were students and thinkers rather than men of action, acquired a knowledge of Persian and thus secured public employment.

Came the fall of the Moghul Empire; then, later in 1837, the change in the language of the law courts from Persian to English, and in 1844 the Resolution giving preference in Government posts to those with a western education. Henceforth the Mohammedan had the choice either of learning a new foreign language or being ineligible to appointment in Government service.

The Calcutta University Commission writes, "They [the Hindu professional classes] had long been in the habit of learning a foreign language—Persian—as a condition of public employment; they now learned English instead. It was, indeed, the Hindus who alone took advantage of the new opportunities in public education in any large numbers. The Musalmans naturally protested strongly against the change; which was, indeed, disastrous for them. Hitherto their knowledge of Persian had given them a considerable advantage. They refused to give up learning it—it was for them the language of culture. To take up English in addition would be too heavy a burden; moreover, they had learned to think of English as associated with Christian teaching, owing to the

activity of the missionaries, and they were less willing than the Hindus to expose their sons to missionary influences. Their pride and their religious loyalty revolted; and they stood aloof from the movement."

A whole generation of Moslems, with few exceptions, refrained from participation in modern education and the political life of the country. Then came Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the first great modern leader of Indian Moslems. In 1877 he founded the Anglo-Mohammedan College of Aligarh. In time this institution turned out a young generation of Mohammedans who began a rivalry for political patronage with the Hindus,—a rivalry which has continued until the present time.

In the meantime the Hindus pressed forward rapidly and occupied the posts of great responsibility. The Moslems are still trying to snatch their positions. "The Punjab," said Mahomed Ali, in *Young India* of October 16, 1924, "is not so much the land of five rivers as the land of five jobs. The whole quarrel is whether the Hindus are to get three jobs out of the five, or the Mussalmans."

This is the economic background of the mass dissension. It forms an exception to the rule that everything in India is of ancient origin. To be sure, the distrust between the two religions goes back to the times when the first Moghul horseman swept down through the Khyber Pass into India. But its form to-day is of recent date.





"It is, of course, true," writes Sir John Maynard in the article already quoted, "that British authority could not have established—and could not now maintain—itsself but for a fissiparous tendency, of which the Hindu-Muslim antagonism is one manifestation. It is also true that the mass rivalry of the two communities began under British rule. Persecuting rulers made their appearance from time to time in the pre-British era, levying tribute on unbelievers or punishing with fanatical zeal the slaying of kine. But the Hindu and Muslim masses—before they had eaten of the tree of knowledge and become religious conscious—worshipped peacefully side by side at the same shrines. The exactions of the usurer were limited by the dangers of popular justice. There was no vista of social and economic advancement to furnish matters for contention. The mass antagonism of today has come from the closer appreciation of theological differences, from the schools, and the newspapers, from the new opportunities which the rivals claim to share: and these things are a creation of British rule. In this sense there is a true responsibility for the development of the quarrel."

Some of the British "diehards" maintain that the traditional sectarian hostility has, since the post-war reforms were given to India, "been aggravated tenfold by the political struggles of the rival religions." But in the words of Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, speaking before the House of Lords on

July 28, 1926, "it is a grossly inadequate explanation to attribute it either to the existence of the reforms or to their nature.

"So far as a tangible cause can be assigned," continued Lord Birkenhead, ". . . it is to be found in the general unsettlement of ideas and of material conditions which followed in the wake of the War and which gave—for good or for ill, who knows?—its final quietus to the system of paternal government which the British Government had carried to high perfection during the preceding half century, and which thereby led the component elements of the Indian population, Hindu and Moslem, Brahman and non-Brahman, landlord and tenant, outcaste and caste-man, to take stock of their new position in relation to their neighbours, and to insist with growing and particular vehemence on their own rights and claims."

The Government is often accused of fostering hatred between the two communities by showing special favors to Moslems. A former British official of India is claimed to have said that the British Government in India has two wives, Hindu and Moslem, and that the Moslem wife is the Government's favorite.

Lord Olivier, Secretary of State for India in the Ramsay MacDonald Cabinet, stated in the *London Times* of July 10, 1926, that "No one with any close acquaintance of Indian affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there is a predominant bias in British officialism in India in favour of the Moslem community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy, but more





largely as a makeweight against Hindu nationalism."

Later on when being questioned, or rather criticised, for this statement in the House of Lords—July 28, 1926—he modified it slightly by saying that he did not impute to the Government "that it has exercised favouritism in its dealings as between Moslems and Hindus." Yet he stated again, "the feeling which I had encountered and which I had underlined in my mind in that letter was something of which I will give you an example. When the Hindu-Moslem pact was made it was a pact which strengthened the probability of an advance towards the Swaraj policy in India. A very large number of persons, officials and others in India, regard the advance towards the self-governing Swaraj policy as a movement deleterious to British interests in India, and I say confidently that when the Hindu-Moslem pact broke up there was a considerable amount of satisfaction felt, and was expressed in what I may call the anti-Swaraj Press in India, that the pact had broken up."

Indians of vision and courage of both camps for some time have sought to end the mutual ill-will and persistent friction between the two religious communities. In 1916 their leaders came together in a common policy designed to present a united front in the struggle for self-government. But this agreement known as the "Lucknow Pact" dealt only with political differences.

They agreed to accept the establishment of separate electorates, Moslem and non-Moslem. The system

was devised to protect the Moslem interests, and the members of the various legislative bodies were to represent a section, a religious faith, rather than the people as a whole.

Communal representations, instead of bringing peace, brought more war. The separate electorates became another great cause of friction. "If the success of a candidate at elections," as a Mohammedan remarked, "depends entirely on the votes of his co-religionists, the tendency to exaggerate and accentuate points of communal friction and division in order to catch votes is inevitable."

This election system still prevails. But at the annual meeting of the "Indian National Congress," held at Madras in December, 1927, the leaders of both faiths accepted for the new constitution the principle of joint electorates, shortly afterwards endorsed by the "All-India Moslem League." In order fully to assure the two communities that their legitimate interests would be safeguarded, it was agreed that "such representation of the communities for the present and if desired, should be secured by the reservation of seats in joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature."

A provision has also been adopted that "reciprocal concessions in favor of minorities in the Punjab may be made by mutual agreement so as to give them representation in excess of the proportion of the number of seats to which they would be entitled on the population basis in any province or provinces, and the propor-





tions so agreed upon for the provinces shall be maintained in the representation of the two communities in the Central Legislature from the provinces."

As a further protection it was decided that, "no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, Central or Provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the members of either community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such bill, resolution, motion or amendment."

The same Congress dealt with the cow-and-music question and decided that each faith should spare the feelings of the other as much as possible; and that persons under eighteen years should not be converted "unless it be along with their parents or guardians." All the evidence available indicates that in the first half of 1928 active hostility has been reduced. This is to be explained largely by the unanimous dissatisfaction of Indian public opinion with the personnel of the statutory Simon Commission. But how long this partial unity will last the future alone can tell. Only the over-sanguine would assume that it represents more than a momentary truce.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INDIAN PRINCES

**T**HE Indian Empire is composed of British India and also of the Indian States. The chiefs of these states, the native princes, Nizams, Maharajahs, Nawabs, and Rajahs, we associate in our minds with priceless emeralds and jewel carpets, mortal intrigues, weird courts with hundreds of concubines, bejewelled dancing girls, rows of gaudily adorned elephants, mediæval pomp and pageantry, mystery and romance. But our acquaintance with their relation to the rest of India is really slight.

That they are very important people can be gathered from the fact that of the total area of the Indian Empire—1,805,332 square miles—thirty-nine per cent is occupied by their territories. Their kingdoms hold twenty-three per cent of the Empire's population, or about seventy-two million persons. Scattered over the map of the peninsula are five hundred and sixty-two such Indian states, each governed by its own prince; or if the prince is a minor, by his regent. Their territories vary in size from properties of just a few holdings to a country as large as Italy.





The state of Hyderabad embraces an area of about eighty thousand square miles; the dominions of Mysore and Gwalior are each as large as Ireland; the principalities of Baroda and Jaipur are about the size of Wales; the petty states of Iawa in Rajputana have an area of nineteen square miles and those of the Simla Hill are no larger than a country estate. In fact, as many as forty states have territories which in no case comprise more than one square mile. Historically, all ruling houses are bound up with the past of India, but no more than thirty reign over the states of major importance.

The premier native state is Hyderabad, carved out of the ruins of the Moghul Empire. Most honored by the Hindus are the Rajput dynasties, who preside over eighteen kingdoms, and the ruling house of the state of Mysore. Next in rank are the Mahratta States, fragments of what was once the Mahratta Empire. Sikh princes hold sway over four states in northern India.

Thus, the princes profess various faiths. But it is more significant that some of them differ in religion from the vast majority of their subjects. Four-fifths of the subjects of the Mohammedan prince of Hyderabad are Hindus. In Kashmir a devout Hindu, the famous Sir Hari Singh, the Mr. A. of 1924 notoriety, reigns over a population largely Moslem.

Not only are some of the ruling chiefs wealthy and others poor, but some are autocrats of the old oriental type and backward, while others are progressive both



## LIVING INDIA

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in dress and politics. I have visited native states where the sovereign was enlightened and again I know of many more,—in fact, they are in the majority—where despotism is supreme. In Mysore, located in the extreme south of India, a representative assembly influences the government in accordance with popular demands. In Kashmir, the Maharajah is invested with full authority over his subjects. Many have adopted the Anglo-Indian civil and criminal codes. Although a few have imitated the English school system, western education is much less advanced in the native states than in British India. The various kingdoms are in all stages of development—patriarchal, feudal, and more advanced. But the personal rule of the prince, as the “Montagu-Chelmsford Report” remarks are characteristic of all, including the most advanced.

The relation of Britain toward the Indian States, as well as the rights and privileges of the ruling princes within their territories, is defined by treaties. When the English merchants first came on the Indian scene, as already noted, they found these kingdoms and duchies under the Moghul Emperor. With some the British concluded treaties and these received protection; those who resisted were defeated and absorbed with the rest of what later became British India.

Lord Dalhousie’s policy of annexing one principality after another disturbed the chiefs and almost cost Britain the Indian Empire. After the Mutiny, and with the dissolution of the Company, the Crown in-





augurated a new policy, and the old treaties made with the rulers by the Company were solemnly confirmed by Queen Victoria. The rights of the princes were kept just as vague as before, but they were allowed honorary salutes to "imperial" grandeur, and the tolerant attitude of the paramount power, especially towards the major states, inspired them with a feeling of security.

During Curzon's Viceroyalty a policy was adopted which they considered overbearing and resented. His successors assumed a different stand and for many years few of the important Maharajahs were removed because of private habits or public conduct. It was reserved for Lord Reading, as we shall soon see, to handle a number of difficult situations in native states and to open again the question of the powers of feudatory princes.

The engagements and treaties between Britain and the princes vary widely, but the relationship is based, roughly, on a few broad principles. Britain guarantees the states security from without, and non-interference in their internal affairs, except when the peace of their territories is seriously threatened. On the other hand, the rulers are responsible for the good government and welfare of their people.

Relations with foreign powers and negotiations between state and state must be conducted through the paramount power, which is represented in each kingdom by a political officer, known as the Resident, who is supposed to "advise" the ruling chief. At times, if the Maharajah is a minor, the political agent acts as

tutor and guardian. In 1919, a Chamber of Princes was set up to take counsel with the Government on matters of common concern. But the Chamber was not permitted to discuss the internal affairs of individual states and the greatest princes have never taken part in its deliberations, probably being unwilling to stand on an equal footing with the petty chiefs.

This much for their theoretical rights. Of course, some enjoy more powers than others and no two are related in the same manner to the paramount power. But to speak of "sovereign rights" of Indian princes, even of those ruling over the largest states, is to speak only of a sheer myth. When the Nizam of Hyderabad maintained that he was not a vassal, but a faithful ally, Lord Reading definitely told him that no ruler of an Indian state can claim to negotiate with the supreme Government on an equal footing.

A glance at the map reveals states virtually surrounded by British territories. Only Travencore, in the extreme South, has a coast line. Their military strength must be approved by the Viceroy and they cannot build fortresses or import ammunition without the consent of the British Government.

In each of the important or strategically located states, a tract of land is assigned for the purpose of a civil and military station. This is administered by the British Resident and regarded as British territory. While visiting native states, I was told by Indian officials that the Imperial soldiers assigned to them prove

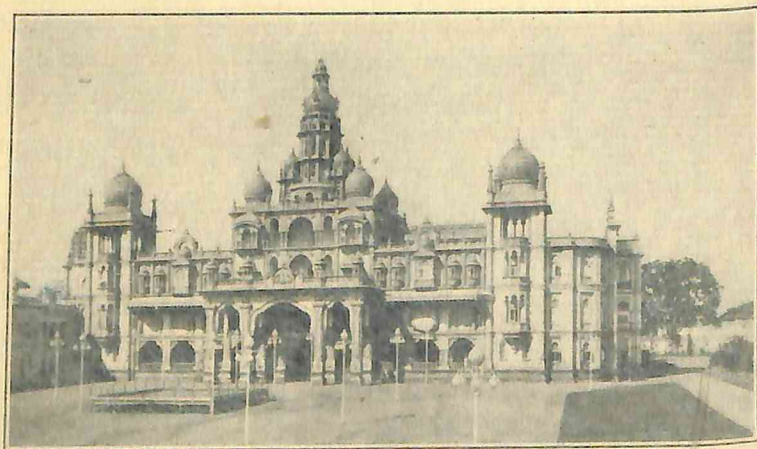




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THE MAHARAJAH OF MYSORE  
A model Indian Prince



THE PALACE OF THE MAHARAJAH





a great material burden. Their large number may be explained by Britain's desire to train recruits for the Empire's use in case of foreign complications. But the native princes themselves have agreed by treaty to provide a certain quota of troops for Imperial defense.

The princes can neither receive representatives from foreign powers nor can they receive decorations from foreign rulers. They cannot travel abroad or even outside their own territory without the knowledge of the British Government. Neither can they employ foreigners without approval. They have no voice in the tariff of the country and no share in its proceeds. The succession to the throne of a native state requires the sanction of the paramount power which in certain states settles the question.

A general clause occurring in many of the treaties between the chiefs and the British is to the effect that the prince shall remain absolute ruler of his kingdom. But it has not in the past precluded, and does not now preclude, interference with his internal administration. Such action is generally taken because of some notorious act of misgovernment.

In the last few years the Viceregal power enforced the abdication and deportation of the Maharajahs of Nabha and Indore. The state of Nabha is located in the northern part of India and is one of the fragments of the old Sikh Commonwealth. Its ruler was held to be wrong in certain dealings with the subjects of a neighboring Maharajah. Nationalists maintain that

the Government was out to "punish" him, not on account of his so-called misdoings, but for his pronounced nationalist sentiments.

The chief of Indore, who in March, 1928, married Miss Nancy Miller of Seattle, was forced to abdicate following a scandal in January, 1925. Muntaz Begum, his favorite dancing girl, was slashed in the face, and her escort, a wealthy Moslem merchant with whom she tried to run off, was killed by nine Indians. These were later identified as members of the ruler's entourage and three were sentenced to death. The Maharajah joined the ranks of other former Indian rulers who had been obliged to leave their thrones.

The limitation of internal sovereignty was made clear, even for the greatest of the princes, by Lord Reading, who, in 1926, read a lecture to his Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad, directing him to carry out certain reforms. The Nizam maintained that, "Save and except matters relating to foreign powers and policies, the Nizams of Hyderabad have been independent in the internal affairs of their states just as much as the British Government in British India. With this reservation, the two parties have on all occasions acted with complete freedom and independence in all inter-governmental questions that naturally arise from time to time between neighbors."

But the Viceroy declared that the sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India, and he further stated that, "(1) the ruler of Hyderabad along with other rulers, received in 1862 a *Sannad* [treaty] declaratory





of the British Government's desire for the perpetuation of his House and Government subject to continued loyalty to the Crown; (2) that no succession is valid unless it is recognized by the King-Emperor; (3) that the British Government is the only arbiter in cases of disputed succession. . . . The varying degrees of internal sovereignty which the rulers enjoy are all subject to the due exercise by the Paramount Power of this responsibility."

And so the powerful native chiefs are not so powerful after all. True, they have the tiny, old guns which the Government allows them to retain for saluting purposes; they bear long sounding titles; they are addressed as "your Highness," or even "your Exalted Highness." But they are a political anomaly, since they are without basic power.

In native states the eye is dazzled not only by fantastic royal palaces, marble fountains, pomp of ancient days surpassing every description, magnificently caparisoned elephants, but also by the motley life in the bazaars and their display of native crafts and arts. Rich tapestries and embroideries, gold and silver lace of exquisite beauty, delicately designed brassware, rugs of all kinds—these are the handiwork of the prince's subjects, preserved and cultivated in nearly all Indian States.

And then in the bazaars one observes the patient people who endure the whims of arbitrary princes. Backward and autocratic though some of the ruling houses may be, and disorganized and inefficient their

governments, yet apparently their show and the splendor atone in the eyes of the populace for the sins of the ruler. There is an appeal in a personal sovereign of one's own color to be seen in all his glory, as contrasted with the foreign, machine-like efficiency of British India's rule.

For two kinds of rulers and two types of government in native states, one may turn to the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharajah of Mysore. Over the kingdom of the former hangs a picturesque atmosphere of days long gone, and its prince might have stepped out from the Moghul court. The latter combines new and old in an interesting pattern and is governed by a most enlightened chief. I have visited both feudatories as the guest of their respective rulers and while the Maharajah is a progressive man working dutifully for the welfare of his people and heeding the voice of constitutionalism, the Nizam loves the antiquity of his provinces and his autocratic word is supreme.

The Nizam is not only the first of the feudatory rulers, but also the richest, and is entitled to a salute of twenty-one guns. Beside the wealth of the Nizam, the fortunes of the other Indian princes dwindle into insignificance. It is said that he is one of the richest men in the world. One resident even assured me that the personal fortune of this man, who in 1928 passed his forty-second birthday, runs into billions.

His treasury of gems suggests the old time magnificence and the oriental splendor of the Moghul Emperors. In the drawing room of one of his palaces





he has in a single glass case jewelled ornaments which, I was told, could not be duplicated for fifteen million dollars. At Hyderabad he once exhibited to a few friends a part of his collection. The display was held in a large room crowded with shelves. Each shelf held rows of glass cases; and the whole room, as the sun blazed in, was a flashing spectacle of diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones. It is doubtful whether there is anywhere another sovereign who owns so rich a treasury of jewels as does the Nizam.

The dominion over which he rules lies almost midway between the south and north of India. Within his state are ancient monuments, Hindu temples centuries old, Mohammedan mosques, historic forts and palaces which talk of a different age; and the very famous paintings which cover the walls of the Abbey of Ajanta are justly called the wonder of the East.

As I was journeying to the capital a revenue collector explained that Hyderabad yields a total annual revenue of twenty-five million dollars. But even more amazing were the stories of the Nizam's idiosyncrasies, which are heard all over India.

It is said that he is more interested in looking at gold and silver sovereigns than in having them invested and drawing interest. Cartloads of coins turned out by his mint are brought to the court and there guarded by his servants. Every year he receives "friendly" contributions, known as *nazars*. The occasion for this presentation is the Nizam's birthday, and poor and rich,

young and old, even the school children, send their gifts.

The Nizam is, by his own right, a large proprietor. His Crown lands extend to about five million acres, and they are outside civil jurisdiction. Besides the Crown lands, there are large tracts owned by his noblemen, gifts of former Nizams. The holders of these lands usually pay annually to the Nizam a percentage of the income, the *peshcush*. When the holder dies, the heir, if confirmed in his title, presents to the Nizam an offering, which varies according to the value of the lands.

No action of any importance can be taken without his knowledge and no regulation can be introduced or altered without his sanction. Energetic as he is, this occupies only part of his time. The daily decisions made and his orders given, he may go to his harem, or perhaps to his verse. For the Nizam is a poet and his poetry has even been translated into English by one of his chief advisors.

But, above all, he remains the ruler fond of ancient ideas and ancient authority, and his picturesque autocratic rule would be anomalous in a self-governing British India.

A totally different type of ruler is the Maharajah of Mysore, who rightly enjoys the reputation of the model Indian prince. In the summer of 1927, at the twenty-fifth anniversary of his reign over the destinies of his state, he received good wishes from every part



of the country. All types and classes of people expressed their tributes and Mahatma Gandhi called him a ruler of great nobility of character who "is kind and always thinking of the good of his people."

This Maharajah is unlike the picture familiar to our minds of the sensual, capricious oriental potentate. As a guest in his Court I found him to be a modest, dignified, and independent chief, more anxious to promote necessary reforms than to acquire new titles from the British Government or to spend his wealth on jewels.

The obvious results tell the tale of his work. His domain, which is the size of Ireland, has some six million people. The city of Mysore, the capital, is a model town with parks and gardens and good houses, laid out with fine roads and suburbs, clean and sparkling with electricity. The modern Central and Engineering Colleges, the University, the College for Women, and the modern hospital, are a few of many conspicuous achievements. Efforts to raise the level of education, a state-aided bank promoting the organization of credit, the construction of big irrigation works, the attempt to develop a "sanitary conscience" among the people, are among the reforms sponsored by the Maharajah and his Dewan or Premier, Mr. Mirza Ismail, a Mohammedan who has enjoyed the confidence of the Hindu ruler for many years.

Recently, in 1928, under the auspices of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, a survey was completed, aiming at the elimination

of malaria and hookworm, and four medical graduates of the state have been deputed for public health training in America.

In contrast to the Nizam, the chief of Mysore has tried to introduce advanced methods of statecraft. As supreme head he recognized that "the incorporation of the people in the government is essential to the strength and the stability of the state."

The people are represented in both an Assembly and a Legislative Council developed along lines adapted to Indian life. As the Maharajah modestly told me, this reform was worked out by the leading scholar of the state, a man whose name is familiar to the educated classes in India.

The Assembly is essentially a body for consultation and reference as well as representation, and it voices the needs of the people. The Council, with its collective wisdom and experience, formulates reasoned policies and laws. These two chambers are supplemented by standing advisory committees and boards, composed of trained experts and men of business, which have a statutory place recognized by the Constitution. The boards are vehicles of expert advice and also of popularizing the administration.

But in considering this record of progress, which stands comparison even with British India, one should bear in mind that the father of the present prince had been trained under British guidance; and that for fifty years (1831-1881) before he acceded to the throne, the principality had had the advantage of British ad-





ministration and the machinery of the government was originally modelled on British lines. The preceding Maharajah, with the help of a far-sighted Dewan, inaugurated the progressive regime. His son, the chief now ruling, enthroned in 1907, has more than followed his example and has given proof of high patriotism and popular sympathy.

Besides Mysore and Baroda, only a handful of states under native rule have any political life. Nationalists believe that the autocratic rule in the states rests on British support, and that the states are maintained by the British Government to prevent the extension of political rights. They consider that their existence works against India's future as a homogeneous political country.

When the leading nationalists are asked what status the kingdoms will occupy in a self-governing India, they answer, "Our treatment of the princes will be not less but more satisfactory than it is at present. They will be more often consulted. Their dignity and interest will be better respected and altogether our relations with them will be better than are their relations with the present Government."

This may be no real answer; but neither has the British Government as yet found a solution other than the protection of their autocratic rule. A committee, under Sir Harcourt Butler, was appointed in the fall of 1927 to investigate the relations of British India and the states of the Princes, with particular reference to the rights and obligations arising from treaties and en-



gements. But Indians claim that the constitutional and political problems of the native states cannot be considered apart from those of the rest of India. The aristocratic princes, on the other hand, are alarmed by the democratic changes which are taking place in British India, and are seeking reassurance that their traditional rights will be respected.<sup>1</sup>

Thus far the majority of Maharajahs still refuse to listen to modern progress. They kill elephants and lions, live in luxury, organize magnificent festivals and pretty shows, are amused by the nautch-girls, dress in golden cloths and are flattered with salutes and long-sounding titles. Mediævalism continues, and probably will go on (or so many nationalists claim), until the British Government "advises" the princes that, in the interest of the people of the states, responsible government must be introduced.

<sup>1</sup> The report of the Sub-Committee of the Indian All-Parties Conference on the constitution of India, made public on August 15, 1928, recommends that "(a) all treaties made between the East India Company and the Indian States and all such subsequent treaties, so far as they are in force at the commencement of this Act, shall be binding on the Commonwealth. (b) The Commonwealth shall exercise the same rights in relation to, and discharge the same obligations towards, the Indian States as the Government of India exercised and discharged previous to the passing of this Act."



## CHAPTER IX

### THE MASSES

OF INDIAN problems, poverty is the most vital. It overshadows every other important question in the country. Everything in the land turns to this grim fact. India's desire for a decently fed and sheltered people, her ambition to train them in practical education and civic responsibilities, her aim to develop the economic structure of the country—these and many other pressing issues are affected by the basic fact of poverty. For notwithstanding her potential wealth, India is one of the poorest countries in the world.

Millions and millions are living on the edge of starvation. Many millions exist on one bowl of rice a day.

The presence of these countless "walking skeletons" in the villages is an easily observed fact, but its explanation is complicated. Climate, economy, lack of education, stubborn adherence to outworn traditions, and the habits of the people are all contributing factors. But Indians maintain that responsibility for such persisting conditions cannot be evaded by those who have controlled the country's destiny for one hundred and fifty years.



Since the advent of British rule the cultivator, or *ryot*, as he is called, has been protected against foreign invasion; to a certain extent he has become acquainted with modern ideas of justice and, on the whole, he has profited by relief measures unknown in other days. But while conditions vary in different provinces, it is generally admitted by British and Indians alike, that the feature common to a great majority of the people is abject poverty. Thus the official publication, "India—1922-23," states that a considerable portion of the masses of the Indian population is still beset with poverty unparalleled in western lands.

A few figures will illustrate its extent. In the year 1881, the financial statement of the Government of India estimated the per capita income of the people as nine dollars per annum. Twenty years later, during Lord Curzon's time, it was put at ten dollars. In 1925, Professor P. Ghose of Calcutta University, after a careful inquiry, calculated the average annual income as fifteen and a half dollars, which would mean that the average income for one-fifth of the human race is less than five cents a day. But even if we take the figures of Mr. G. Findlay Shirras, who in 1922 estimated \$33.33 as the average income per head for British India, it works out at less than ten cents per day.

What such figures mean in terms of human life is told in a study of the Indian food problem for a period of seven years (1911 to 1918) made by Mr. Dayashankar Dubey, and printed in the *Indian Journal of Economics* of January, 1921, and July of the same





year. "Taking an average of all the seven years," he writes, "it will be seen that 64.6 per cent of the population lives always on insufficient food, getting only about 73 per cent of the minimum requirement for maintaining efficiency. In other words, it clearly shows that two-thirds of the population always get only three-fourths of the amount of food grains they should have." And in October, 1927, an Indian economist—Ragun K. Das—pointed out, in the *Modern Review* (Calcutta) that "There exists in India today, under the present state of her industrial efficiency, double the size of the population which could live with moderate degree of opportunity for moral and material development."

### I. Rural India

India is overwhelmingly agricultural. The bulk of the people live in the seven hundred and fifty thousand villages and hamlets and nearly seventy-five per cent of the total number of inhabitants depend directly on the soil. The entire peninsula has only thirty-four towns with an aggregate population of eight million, and only two, Bombay and Calcutta, have each over one million.

Of the two hundred and sixteen million persons supported by ordinary cultivation, nearly eight million are landlords, who depend on rent; one hundred and sixty-seven million farmers and peasant proprietors, who work their own or rented land; the remaining forty-one millions are farm servants and field laborers.

But not all, by any means, of the landlords, enjoy a substantial income. Says the official Montagu-Chelmsford report, "According to one estimate, the number of landlords whose income, derived from their proprietary holdings, exceeds twenty pounds a year in the United Provinces is about 126,000, out of a population of forty-eight millions." Which would mean that the vast majority of landlords in one of the country's biggest provinces earned from their land an income of about thirty cents a day.

The land-tenure varies in different parts of India, but two broad divisions can be distinguished: peasant-holdings and landlord-holdings. Under the first, known as the *Ryotwari* method, the land is State property and the revenue is derived from peasant proprietors who either cultivate their land themselves or sublet it.

Under the second, or *Zemindari* system, which is of advantage mainly to the estate owners, the holdings are worked by tenants paying rent to the landlord, who in his turn pays to the State a revenue for the village as a whole. But the tax was fixed during the time of Lord Cornwallis, at the close of the eighteenth century, and no matter what changes take place in land values or prices, the amount paid by the landlord to the Government remains the same.

The village community includes—besides the owners and cultivators of the fields—its scribes and priests, its artisans, money-lender and sometimes a school-master, all born to their professions. Some of the vil-





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*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

A VILLAGE SCENE IN BENGAL

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ages are almost the size of a small market town; others are mere hamlets of a few huts. In many of them the conditions are still characteristic of thousands of years ago.

The self-sufficiency of the village community is gradually being undermined everywhere in the land. Some of them may still be self-contained and self-supplying, but modern industrial life is making its advent; imported and cheap machine-made goods are displacing those once manufactured locally by the village craftsmen during the long dry season; factories are going up in India. All these influences are disintegrating village life, and they have seriously affected the economic status of the cultivator.

Let us then first face the material fortunes of those engrossed in the agricultural work of that rural India which some call the real India. The peasant usually dwells in a mud hut with mud floors and a thatched roof, one hut among several clustered beside a few trees that bind and shelter the earth. In some villages the walls may support a roof of sticks and palm leaves. The hut is windowless; little holes towards the top are supposed to serve for ventilation.

The *ryot's* furniture consists generally of a bedstead of twisted sticks and a mattress of string webbing. He cooks over a little fireplace outside. His dishes are a few earthenware bowls. Under the same roof are jammed the whole family and often the bullocks, in order to protect them from insects. Some of the huts are kept spotlessly clean and others are reeking



with dirt. India's redeeming feature is that a man spends much of his time under the open sky.

The peasant does not often boast of more than one cotton garment. In order to appear "respectable" he would have to spend for clothing at least eight dollars a year for himself and wife and two dollars for each child. But he can rarely afford this expense.

His meals are simple, meagre and without variety. Everywhere, no matter in what part of India he lives, he is known for his extreme hospitality and, as an English writer has said, for toiling "under a sun that would kill the thin-skulled white." As a rule he can neither read nor write. The village temple or mosque is often his meeting hall, and in certain areas the temples are also used as sleeping places.

On bazaar day he visits the local town and occasionally the district centre on some litigation or business. His pleasure centres in the religious festivals; he is much concerned about the marriage of his children and enjoys the village reciter's narrations of the deeds of the holy heroes. Religion teaches him resignation and in his religion he finds consolation.

The causes of the *ryot's* poverty spring from various sources: (1) precarious rainfall; (2) excessive subdivision of holdings; (3) primitive methods of tillage; (4) debts; (5) lack of education and poor sanitation.

A country which embraces such diverse physical regions—sun-baked plains and arid wastes, forests, swamps, and snow-capped mountains—necessarily experiences great variations of climate. But while the



climate of India varies in degree, its most general characteristic is the dry winter and early summer and the intense heat from the end of March until October. The rainy season, which generally starts the middle of June and lasts about four months, is the lifegiver.

The distribution of the rainfall, on which the majority of cultivators depend, is often alarming. Drought is a constant nightmare, and if the rainfall is much reduced, famine is inevitable. In certain parts of the Bombay Presidency, according to Dr. Harold H. Mann, Director of Agriculture in that province, "the life of the people is a gamble in rain" and good seasons "occur about two to four times in ten years, or nine times out of the last twenty-four; an average year seems to leave the village under-fed and more in debt than ever."

If some fear the drought, others are at the mercy of floods. The rainy season sweeps whole villages and towns under water, washes away bridges, cuts telegraph wires and inundates large tracts of territory. Every province suffers more or less from flood. Thousands of persons often become homeless overnight and their scanty belongings float away. Other thousands may perish. During a trip to Madras, one of my travelling companions told me that in his town, somewhere in the South, out of twelve thousand inhabitants only one thousand survived a monsoon flood. "And if there is too little rainfall," he added, "we have famine."

Combating this distress, to a certain degree, are the railways built under British rule, with a total mileage



of over thirty-eight thousand, and the Government canals irrigating twenty-four million acres. But the *ryot* suffers two-fold. He pays dearly in times of shortage for the grain sent from non-famine districts, and in times of plenty he gets only a low price for his own grain.

Concerning irrigation it must be remembered that there are millions of square miles where the rainfall is so scanty that no agriculture at all is possible without artificial watering. In British India the total area irrigated is about forty-eight million acres, or twenty-one per cent of the net crop area, of which the canals built by the State irrigate only a little over ten per cent.

By far the largest area depends upon wells and tanks. The wells run from primitive ones, costing a dollar, to those of masonry valued at hundreds of dollars, and lifted principally by cattle power. The tank system is a conspicuous feature of the Indian scene, and like well irrigation, has its origin far back in the early stage of Indian civilization. The tanks may be of any size—some hold from four to seven billion cubic feet of water, and others only an amount sufficient to supply a few acres.

Much more of modern irrigation is needed. The "Canal Colonies" of the Punjab, formerly a vast waste of nearly five million acres and now converted into a thriving rural community, prove that these irrigation projects more than pay for themselves. Mr. Malcolm L. Darling, in his illuminating study on "The



Punjab Peasant," states that in 1921-22, a normal year, a net profit of nearly five million dollars was made by the Government from the canals serving the three major colonies. This represents a dividend of 22 per cent upon the capital outlay. Figures of later years put the dividends of some of the larger systems much higher.

Among the *ryots'* holdings we find that the land is subdivided so minutely that exploitation is extremely difficult. In Bengal, for instance, the average amount of land belonging to each worker is estimated at less than two and a quarter acres, and the average holding for India as a whole is less than five acres. Compare this with England and Wales, where it is ten times as much, and the United States, where it runs up to over a hundred and forty-five acres per farm. Then you get a picture of the Indian farm.

It is obvious that a plot of one acre, cut up like a checker-board, cannot keep the Indian farmer and his family in a sound economic position. About eight years ago Doctor Mann made an exhaustive, scientific inquiry into the conditions of two typical villages of the Deccan. He concluded "that by far the greater proportion of holdings could not, under the most favorable circumstances, maintain their owners."

The Hindu law of inheritance, which prescribes an equal division of property of the father among all his sons, is held responsible for this enormous multiplication of minute plots.

The Indian cultivator knows almost nothing of





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scientific farming. The primitive plow—comparatively few iron plows are in use—"looks like a half-open penknife," and is still used by the *ryot*. In many parts the methods of tillage have been little changed in thousands of years. The soil is impoverished, manurial material is kept for household purposes instead of being used for fertilizer. Cow-dung is dried up and serves as fuel, which is very scarce. And because the cow is sacred, millions of superfluous cattle are kept alive and consume the food of more useful animals.

India's low productivity is indicated by her position in agricultural efficiency; it is twenty-second among the countries of the world. An American expert in rural economy testified before the Indian Economic Enquiry Committee of 1925 that "the crop yields of the peninsula were about the lowest of any civilized country he knew of."

The precarious harvest, coupled with the partitioning of holdings, the lack of agricultural improvements, the absence of storage facilities, an increasing birth-rate without corresponding increase of production (the growth of population in India is not greater than that of many countries of Europe), and extravagant expenditures for the marriages of children—these are the factors which send the *ryot* into debt. It has been estimated that two-thirds of all the cultivators borrow from the village money-lender at exorbitant rates of interest—from ten to a hundred per cent and even more. The money lender is a blight on the village



landscape, but the people depend on him, especially during times of calamity.

The peasant is crushed by the piling up of accrued interest. As an illustration: in 1896 a blacksmith of a Punjab village mortgaged his small plot of land for the equivalent of nine dollars at thirty-seven per cent interest. By 1906 the debt, without further loan, had swelled to \$166, and in 1918 a decree was given for the amount in full. After mentioning this and other such instances, Mr. Darling adds, "At first sight it seems incredible, but, as Professor Marshall points out, at 60 per cent (a rate by no means uncommon in India) a debt of £1, if allowed to accumulate, will become £100 in eight years."

The vast majority of the cultivators, which means the vast majority of the whole nation, have not yet discovered the alphabet. Sir M. Visvesvaraya, formerly Chief Minister of the native state of Mysore, said that when the late Prince Albert Victor, the grandson of Queen Victoria, visited the country in the eighties, a triumphal arch erected by the people of the city of Poona greeted him with the words:

*Tell Grandma we are a happy nation,  
But nineteen crores <sup>1</sup> are without education.*

Though education has made some progress in recent times, literacy among the people is negligible. In 1921, out of a total population of 247 millions of Brit-

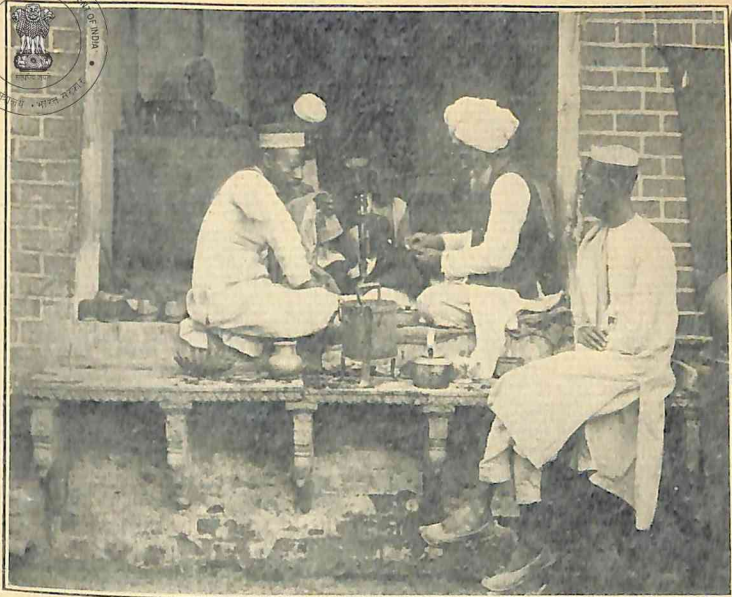
<sup>1</sup> 190,000,000 people.



ish India, only about twenty million males and two million females were literate. During the year 1926, only slightly more than ten million pupils, four per cent of the population, were receiving instruction of any kind—and only about two and a half per cent were getting primary education. British India's total expenditure on education, including municipal, local, provincial and central government, was \$75,666,666 in 1926, or less than one-third of the sum spent for public school education (private schools excluded) in New York State. And in the continental United States, whose population is one-third that of India, we spend annually on public school education over two billion dollars or twenty-six times as much as does British India.

As usual, in countries with so large a percentage of illiteracy, the situation is most critical in the rural districts. Many who do go to school soon lapse into illiteracy for lack of any opportunity to use the little learning they have acquired. The Education Commissioner with the Government of India reported a few years ago, that "only a small percentage of the boys who enter a primary school complete the course and a considerable number of those who complete their course are found after a few years to be unable to read or write."

Lack of schools and teachers and traditional prejudice against school education for women partly explain the desperate condition. The basic cause, however, is the



*Photo. Johnston & Hoffmann, Calcutta*

# A TAILOR SHOP IN THE CITY OF LUCKNOW



# A BARBER SHOP IN INDIA





chronic poverty of the masses. The authorities assign the low attendance to epidemic diseases, adverse conditions, periods of scarcity, and the general rise in the cost of living. When a subsistence wage can be earned only with the help of children, the parents will take these children into the fields or the factories with them.

The official report on the "Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, 1922-1923," says, "The poor cultivator is frequently willing in theory to admit that education would improve his material well-being and would assist him in avoiding the clutches of the money-lender; but it is not so easy to convince people who are daily faced by the problem of poverty and who need the labor of their children that the ultimate benefits of education are worth the immediate material sacrifice involved."

This backwardness in the educational sphere and other human activities, along with malnutrition, low vitality, fatalistic depression, superstition, unsanitary living and lack of medical assistance, explains the high death rate of India, which in the period of 1916-1925 was 32.38 per thousand. Even omitting the year 1918, when it was greatly increased by the influenza epidemic, it was 29.04 per thousand, which is more than twice as high as in the United States.

In the winter of 1918 and the spring of 1919 the influenza epidemic carried away from twelve to thirteen million people—nearly twice the population of



New York State. The epidemic affected a hundred and twenty-five millions and the majority of deaths occurred in the space of three to four months.

I have never passed a place in India without hearing about epidemics and disease. In one district it was small-pox, in another typhus, in another cholera or plague, and malaria everywhere. But with summer the epidemics mount. Thus India enjoys a rather expensive and cruel birth-control system.

In several places I met children with small-pox running around the streets. Religious prejudices against modern medicine greatly hinder the extermination of disease. The peasant is a prey to the village quack who often has one remedy for all sickness, from small-pox to tuberculosis. In tune with this is the insufficient medical organization of the country. Hospitals are few—there are only 3,500 in all British India with its 247 million people—and the village dispensaries are inadequately equipped and very poorly staffed, both in numbers and in medical experience. Diseases like malaria and hookworm are endemic in many parts, and yet are controllable. Europe and America have proved that plagues and epidemics can be prevented when there are resources available.

One of the most promising efforts for the improvement of the *ryot's* material welfare is the co-operative movement inaugurated about two decades ago by the Government. Credit societies have broken the power of the money-lender in some communities. The total number of societies has risen (in 1926) to nearly 70,-





000 with an average membership of thirty-eight and an average capital of nearly \$4,000 per society. Their work may prove the basis for the reconstruction of rural India.

Splendid work is also done by the central and provincial Departments of Agriculture. The former was created about twenty years ago and is engaged in improving the quantity and quality of the crops. The Imperial Department of Agriculture at Pusa, Bengal, which owes its origin to the munificence of Mr. Phipps, an American visitor, the provincial agricultural schools (only 14 in the whole country with 403 scholars), and the agricultural departments in the colleges—all have expended much labor upon instruction in scientific farming and the improvement of crops and better breeding of cattle. But these educational agencies have so far scarcely touched the problem.

It may be long before a sound, comprehensive policy for aiding the *ryot* is devised. The Royal Commission, appointed in 1926 to investigate the main factors affecting rural prosperity, may prove of value. Its report, according to the *Bombay Chronicle* of June 29, 1928, emphasizes the need for Government initiative in improving village life and for the establishment of an Imperial Council of Agricultural Research with branches in the provinces, these to be assisted by special propaganda committees provided with necessary funds. But this Indian nationalist paper observes that in practice "the scheme of research may be pursued at the expense of more urgent reforms like bringing land

revenue assessment under the control of the legislatures, establishment of land mortgage banks, compulsory primary education and popular agricultural instruction."

The difficulties are immense and conflicting. The cultivator needs adequate land, adequate capital and adequate knowledge in order to achieve "better farming, better business, better living." On the other hand, the country is poor and, as officially stated, not at present organized for the production of wealth.

The *ryot* is poor because he is ignorant and ignorant because he is poor. But a way to improve his material condition must somehow be found. For the cultivator is the mainstay of the country and on his prosperity depends the future of India.

## II. *The Industrial Worker*

This rural India supplies workers for the country's mills, mines, and factories. Impoverished by the scanty earnings from the land, they are driven to seek industrial employment. Some come for the eight months of dry weather and then return to the villages. Others are lured by the stories of city life.

The new proletarian meets usually great disappointments and has a difficult time in adjusting himself to the surroundings of the city. His struggles and his hardships, as well as those of his family, have been vividly described by Miss Janet Harvey Kelman, in her excellent volume on "Labour in India."

During the first month, before he receives any





wages, he is apt to fall prey to the money-lender, who is also a grain merchant and frequently supplies him with adulterated food. Living expenses in the city are high and eat up a great part of what he earns. Dreary meals, prepared at a filthy place called a "hotel," and strange new conditions may tempt him, and often do, to the liquor shop. This place combined with the money-lender absorbs nearly all that he makes. Even if he does not succumb to them, little if any remains to send home. For eight dollars a month—assuming that as a beginner he makes so much—will not take him far.

Meanwhile, his wife and children remain at home, waiting for the savings to come. After a time they may follow him and find their way also into the mills and factories. If they have any land property at all, however, they will probably return to the country after a year or so. Comparatively few, Miss Kelman mentions ten per cent as an approximate estimate, never return to their former homes, and these as a rule own no land and have no near relatives in the villages. But as she goes on to say, "The life of the city in India, as elsewhere, tends to make village surroundings unsatisfying. The continuity has been broken; the wanderers cannot find their places again and tastes and desires have been created which draw them back to the industrial areas. There are exceptions to this. There are those for whom the country life retains its charm, who work for a few years in the city and then leave it for ever. Others return home to die."

When they live in the cities they are housed in slums that cannot be duplicated anywhere in America or Europe. On the land they had at least the clean air of the open spaces and they were not jammed on top of each other. Here, in Bombay, Calcutta, or any other industrial town, they breathe filth in the one-room tenements which constitute the average working-class accommodation. Inadequate sanitary and water arrangements surround them and breed plague and cholera and such diseases.

For instance, in the industrial city of Bombay, seventy-five per cent of the population dwell in single rooms, averaging over four individuals per room. About a fifth of the single rooms contain from six to nine persons and thirteen per cent lodge ten or more. Such is the data of the last Census.

In an official report, printed in the *Labour Gazette* (Bombay) of September, 1922, "the Lady Doctor," appointed by the Government to investigate the conditions of women industrial workers in the city of Bombay, reported that, "For some fourteen hours of the twenty-four, the family inhale an atmosphere laden with smoke and other impurities. Nearly every chawl (tenement house) contains animals such as goats, fowls, cats, and in some cases monkeys. Rats were also in evidence in most rooms visited. . . . I have several times verified the overcrowding of rooms. In one room on the second floor of a chawl, measuring some fifteen feet by twelve feet, I found six families living. Six separate ovens on the floor proved this





statement. On enquiry I ascertained that the actual number of adults and children living in this room was thirty. . . . Three out of six women who live in this room were shortly expecting to be delivered. . . . When I questioned the District Nurse, who accompanied, as to how she would arrange for privacy in this room, I was shown a small space some three feet by four feet which was usually screened off for the purpose. The atmosphere at night of that room filled with smoke from the six ovens, and other impurities, would certainly physically handicap any woman and infant, both before and after delivery. This was one of many such rooms I saw."

Such housing conditions foredoom children. In Bombay, the infant mortality rate reached the figure of 667 per thousand registered births in 1921. In one-room tenements the rate was 828.5 per thousand.

And from these disease-breeding homes, the worker goes to the factory where, in the roar and dust of the driving machinery, which is so new to him, he plods along from sun to sun.

India's industrial development is recent. Only since the Great War have the industries grown at a rapid pace. The factories employing the greatest number of workers are the textile plants, located chiefly at Bombay and Ahmadabad, controlled to a great extent by Indians, and the jute industry of Calcutta in English hands.

While eleven per cent of the people are engaged in various industries, especially of the village type, less



than one per cent of the total find employment in organized industrial establishments. The latest report, 1925-1926, puts the factory population at one million and a half. The effect of the factory system upon the family can be gauged from the fact that nearly a quarter of a million of the factory workers are women, and seventy thousand are children. The conditions under which women and children are working in India are reminiscent of the early stages of the industrial revolution.

Of the two hundred and fifty thousand persons employed in mines, the number of women exceed eighty-four thousand, of whom forty thousand work underground. Four thousand are children.

The hours of labor are long. Fifty-four per cent of the factories work their employees more than fifty-four hours per week. How body and soul destroying is the average daily wage of sixty to seventy cents (the skilled workers get a little more and the earnings of the coolies are much less) is seen by the dietary conditions. Most of the workers consume a maximum of cereals which is less than the diet prescribed for a prisoner in the "Bombay Jail Manual."

The skilled worker who earns sixteen dollars a month spends over half of it on his rice, grain, pulses, and cheap vegetables; a tenth on rent for his room in the tenement house, and about the same proportion on clothing. What is left goes for fuel and lighting, to the usurer, for religious rites, liquor, and perhaps on





opium to keep the baby quiet while the mother helps in the factory. At the same time the mill owners, English and Indians alike, share in enormous profits. During the year 1922, while the workers of the cotton mills of Bombay received an average daily wage of thirty-three cents, the factory owners made an average profit of over a hundred and twenty-five per cent. In "better" years it exceeds two hundred per cent.

Yet the workers are at present more favorably situated than they were a decade ago, when there was no limit to the hours of work and the humiliating treatment accorded the industrial worker. The trade unions, though still in their infancy, have helped, directly and indirectly. In addition, India's association with the International Labour Office resulted in beneficial legislation. The Factories Act of 1922 established a maximum of sixty hours of work per week and ten hours per day, complete prohibition of night work for women, twelve years as the minimum age for employment in factories using mechanical motive power and employing more than ten workers. Child workers must be on half time until they reach the age of fifteen. Legislation providing compensation for accidents was passed in 1923. The welfare work and housing schemes of certain employers, and also of the Government of Bombay, have helped.

But all this is merely a drop in the bucket. On the whole, the new proletariat of India lives and works under conditions as they existed in England at the be-



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ginning of the industrial era—very low pay standards, fines, long hours, child labor, foul housing, extreme mental and physical misery.

But the Indian of today, *ryot* or industrial worker, is a different being than he was twenty-five years ago. His first awakening came during the Russo-Japanese War. Then came the Great War and India sent over a million men to the battlefields of Europe. Here they saw the white conquerors, whom they believed to have a superior civilization, descend to the depths of barbarism, cruelty, and horror. They compared their own material welfare with that of the European farmer and artisan and saw what a different life their *confrères* lived. Once back in India they told tales that travelled far and wide over the bazaars and market places.

Came Mahatma Gandhi whose propaganda only strengthened their changed attitude towards the British *Raj*. Since then their discontent with chronic misery has smouldered continuously. And at times their voices come to the ears of the country.



## CHAPTER X

### WHITE BRAHMANS

INDIA is the keystone of the British Empire. She is the largest and most populous possession of the imperial structure; three out of four subjects of the King live in India. Economically, the peninsula is indispensable to Britain; more than half of her imports come from the United Kingdom, and over twenty per cent of her exports go there. Politically, the control of this Asiatic sub-continent is essential for the maintenance of British world supremacy. In fact, for the last hundred and fifty years Britain's foreign policy has been much influenced by the Indian problem and by the necessity of dominating the lines of communication between the two lands. The most earnest students of oriental affairs assure us that, if India were lost, the Empire could not endure.

But in India a profound distrust of British rule prevails, a sentiment so deep and widespread that when the Simon Commission, a Parliamentary body without Indian representation, arrived in India in the winter of 1928 to study conditions and confer on the changes to be made in the present constitution, it was effectively



boycotted by the people. Seldom has such unanimity of action against British policy been shared by all classes—Hindus and Moslems, extreme nationalists and mild liberals.

If one seeks to understand the Indian resentment, one finds a long accumulation of grievances, racial, economic, and political. Some of these are on the surface where they easily catch the eye. Others are ghost-like. But if a referendum were taken among the people of India today on their chief grievance against the English, the majority would undoubtedly say it is racial and social discrimination. For while less fundamental than economic and political issues, it is continually felt in daily life.

The official policy in this respect, as stated by Lord Reading during his term of office, runs as follows, "There cannot be and must never be any humiliation under British rule of any Indian because he is an Indian." Though the enlightened British officials are trying to carry out this policy, many of the distinctions drawn against Indians are like those made against the Negroes in our own South—minus lynching. No matter how often one has heard of them, however, they mean little until they have come under one's personal observation. I could fill a volume with such incidents, but a few may serve as examples.

I remember one day getting into a railway third-class compartment for Indians, not reserved for Europeans. It was only half occupied. I wore my sun hat, and was surprised that no one else tried to enter





The carriage, though the rest of the train was, as usual, desperately overcrowded. Travellers took one glance and then hurried off, struggling to squeeze in elsewhere. I asked one of my companions, a *Vakil* (country lawyer), to explain.

"They are afraid of you," said the *Vakil*. "They think you are English."

"But," said I, "even if I were English, I could not very well put out of the carriage people who have paid their fares as well as I have."

"That shows," he said, "that you have not been very long in this country, or you would know that the English can do many things here not permitted by law." He added, "If you take your sun hat off, you will look like a Parsee.<sup>1</sup> See what happens."

He was right. As soon as I was bareheaded they came flocking in. When I saw that one more in our carriage would mean suffocation, I put my hat on again and no one else entered. I tried this several times, and it worked.

A trifling incident, you will say, and perhaps rightly. But multiply it, see similar things happening every day and hour, year in and year out for generations, and you begin to understand why so many in India, of all castes and races, are today so irritated and exasperated by British rule.

In one of the main cities of the United Provinces I was staying with an Indian scholar. During a drive

<sup>1</sup>The small but very influential religious community in India whose members revere Zoroaster, and whose original home was Persia.

through the city the learned pundit pointed to a beautiful looking building. "This," he said, "is the main club of our town and no Indian, no matter what his rank may be, can become a member. My assistant in the University, an Englishman, is eligible for membership, but I, his chief, am ineligible."

"Yes," said I, "but why do you care to belong to a club where you are not wanted?"

"It is not that," he said, "India is our country and the club is on our land and still the ruling is that no Indian can join."

This Indian scholar was right. There are the luxurious Yacht Club of Bombay, the Bengal Club of Calcutta and many others like them. No Indian (except as a servant) ever has been admitted to any of these.

British residents of India, when asked why they have such rules, answer that it is because of the attitude of the Indians themselves. I was told by many that if Indians would be willing to bring their wives along matters would be different. "If we are not good enough to meet their wives, why should we admit them to the place where we bring our wives?"

The real reason for the exclusion of Indians from British clubs is partly a matter of color discrimination and partly because the Britisher residing in India wants to have a place that reminds him of his own country. He wants a little of London or Lancashire transplanted in India. He wants a place where he can be alone with his own people. No matter how just and natural this





feeling may be, this ostracism continually irritates the Indians.

It is true that a small group of officials have shown in the last few years a different social spirit in their dealings with Indians. The more liberal among them realize that the period of conquest and subjection belongs to the past, and they view with pride the resentment of the Indian towards the old system. They consider this growing self-respect the greatest testimonial to British rule.

But, broadly speaking, the charge of racial discrimination cannot be denied. It is based on reality and is a stumbling block towards a better understanding between the two peoples. There still exists the domineering, arrogant type of Britisher who feels that the Indian is beneath him as an employee; that he is less conscientious, less intelligent, and less efficient; that he is inferior as a citizen, inferior as an animal.

Equally humiliating to the Indian, and a serious complication, too, is the color prejudice against him in other parts of the Empire. This is manifested in discrimination and exclusion acts adopted by East and South Africa, Australia, and Canada. In some places they are debarred from holding land, in others they are denied the right of franchise, or are forced to live in segregated areas. And this has come after they were called in to develop some of these colonies! Indians went out to South Africa, for instance, as indentured laborers on sugar plantations in Natal. It was recog-



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nized that without their help the industries could not have been carried on. But when, with the passage of years, they rose from the class of indentured workers and became effective competitors, a white man's monopoly was established. And in Transvaal the most degrading requirements were demanded of them. It is worth recalling that in the South African War one of the complaints sent by the British to General Krueger, the Boer, concerned the mistreatment of the Indians. Now, under British rule, history repeats itself. It was against such discriminations that Gandhi began in South Africa his passive resistance movement.

When the *Komagata Maru* steamed into Vancouver in 1914, carrying four hundred Indians who wished to challenge the Canadian immigration laws and test the right of Indians, as British subjects, to land, the Canadian courts upheld the law and the Indians were deported.

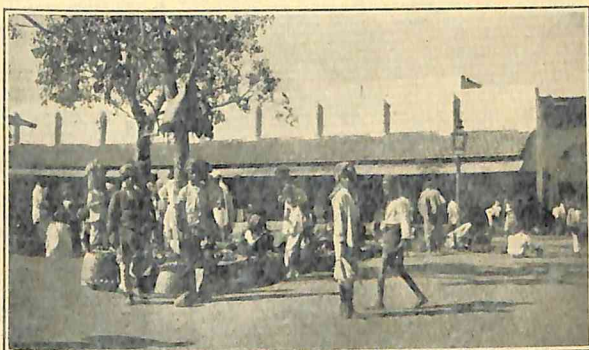
Of the thirteen million square miles of British territory outside of India, special laws against Indians are in force in over eight million.

The racial discrimination against Indians in other parts of the Empire is a problem to test the statesmanship of the leaders of Britain and the Dominions. The present policy has resulted in bitter resentment. The Indians rightly claim full imperial citizenship. But the Dominions naturally fear that their admittance on an equal basis might, due to their great numbers and different standards of living, endanger white supremacy. The Government of India emphasizes the

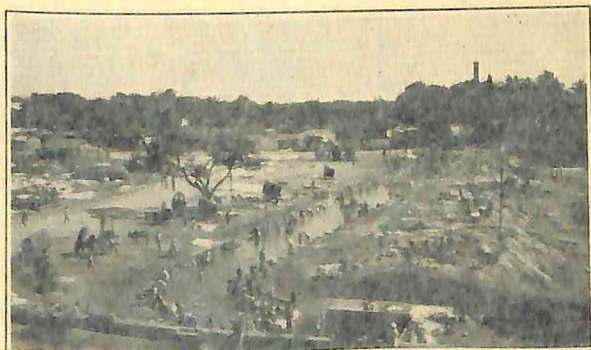




INDIAN WELL



MARKET PLACE OF SECUNDERABAD  
 In the Native State of Hyderabad



"DHOBIE GHATS"  
 Indian Laundry at Hyderabad



right of overseas Indians to be treated as equal citizens. But Downing Street, to whom the Government of India is responsible, only too often approves a racial policy which might be called unfair to India.

The nationalists are convinced that, without striking a new balance in the governance of India, they cannot hope to secure from the self-governing dominions an acceptance of racial equality.

In considering the Indian indictment of Britain's economic policy, one must bear in mind the achievements of the British Government in introducing western ideas, in bringing political unity, in the maintenance of peace, and the protection of the land from foreign invasion. With "an efficiency hitherto unknown in India," the British restored order and administered justice.

Thus Lord Olivier—in "The Problem of India" by Rao and Poole—"The Government has aimed in its own fashion at the welfare of the common people of India. It has done so, no doubt, with crude and imperfect methods of militarism and bureaucracy, and many of its spokesmen and official agents have consistently opposed all movements towards political democracy with autocratic and arrogant self-complacency. That, and not any active purpose of exploitation, is truly the besetting vice of our Indian Government, which, in fact, defends its position constantly, and not without plausibility, on the ground that, were its regulating power removed, oppression and exploitation of the poor would increase unchecked."



But a prominent English statesman, in a speech made several years ago, is reported in *Young India* of November 19, 1925, to have said, "We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know that it is said at missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we should hold it. . . . I am stating facts. . . . I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular."

Assuming that this rather blunt statement contains a big germ of truth, it is not difficult to understand the extremists' complaint: that the British Government regards India "as a plantation growing raw products to be shipped by British agents in British ships, to be worked into fabrics by British skill and capital, and to be exported to India by British merchants to their British shops there and elsewhere."

When the British merchants first came to the land, hand-made cotton goods, whose manufacture was a leading occupation of the people, sold at such low rates that Britain imposed a heavy tariff on Indian cotton. With the perfection of the industrial system in Britain cheap machine-made goods flooded the Indian market—her craftsmen suffered the same fate as the English hand-loom weavers—and India became converted from an exporting into an importing country. By putting



very low import duties on its own manufactures, Britain created a monopoly for her goods. Later, when textile plants made their appearance on Indian soil, Lancashire began to fear Indian competition and free trade which Indians had been taught to view as a blessing was discarded. From 1896 to the Great War, Indian cottons were subject to an excise duty equal to the customs duty on similar British imports.

As a result of India's war contributions and nationalist activities India was permitted, in 1917, to raise the duties on imported cottons to seven and a half per cent, in 1921 to eleven per cent and, in 1925, the three and a half per cent excise tax was finally abolished.

It is worth recalling that every year India spends about two hundred million dollars for British cotton goods and another hundred million for iron and steel products. Yet India has her own raw materials, and her mineral wealth of coal and iron has hardly been tapped.

The importance of India to British capital is a matter of record. According to Parker T. Moon's "Imperialism and World Politics" the public debt of India (government bonds) much of which is held by British investors has been put roughly at \$3,500,000,000. Sir George Paish estimated British pre-war investments in India at £379,000,000 or \$1,895,000,000, which sum did not include the important item of British companies doing business with India.

The relatively unimportant position Indians hold in the large concerns of the country may be gathered from



the ownership of the paid up capital of India's joint stock companies. "The capital of all the joint stock companies registered in India in 1914 and held mainly by Indians," says Sir M. Visvesvaraya, "did not exceed sixty million pounds. The total capital of all joint stock companies operating in India was four hundred and seventy-one million pounds, the greater portion of it, namely, four hundred and eleven million pounds, being of companies registered in England and presumably held by the people of the British Isles." And the "Indian Year Book" of 1924 states that the great majority of the larger concerns are financed by European capital.

A case is made against the high cost of the administration. India has been paying about \$100,000,000 a year for the salaries and expenses of British officials in the peninsula, and since 1924 this amount has been materially increased. The Indian Civil Service has maintained to this day a very high standard of efficiency and integrity. In fact, few countries can claim a more outstanding civil service. England sends to India her best men to occupy these positions and they are entitled to liberal compensation. But it entails an enormous expense for a poor country.

Moreover, until after the Great War, little was done to Indianize the superior civil services. Only eight per cent of the offices paying \$4,000 a year and more were filled by Indians. The majority of responsible administrative positions are still held by the English. The Government of India declared itself in favor of



rapid Indianization of the higher posts, but at the same time the Premier of Great Britain described the services as the "steel frame" which could never be dispensed with.

Said Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons on August 2, 1922, "I can see no period when India can dispense with the guidance and the assistance of this small nucleus of the British Civil Service . . . They are the steel frame of the whole structure."

Yet in 1924 the Lee Public Service Commission, while approving an increase in the salaries of these officials, also recommended such increasing association of Indians in the civil services that an equal proportion of Europeans and Indians should occupy Indian Civil Service offices within fifteen years, and Police offices within twenty-five years.

A decade ago, a majority of nationalists might have approved such an arrangement. But so strongly has the general body of opinion drifted to the left that these concessions did not satisfy even moderate nationalists. Indians now want the higher positions transferred into their hands within a much shorter time.

Then there is objection to the constant drain of the country's resources by the pensions paid to retired British officials. Writes Mr. Ramsay MacDonald: "Upon civil and military pensions alone the Indian taxpayer has to find for claimants living in England something like £3,500,000 to £4,000,000 a year."

The extremely high military expenditure is one of the most frequent arguments brought by the national-



ists against Britain's fiscal policy in India, especially since, as in the case of the civil revenue, the Indianization of the army proceeds very slowly. In 1927-28, although the bulk of the army was composed of Indians (158,000 as against 61,000 British troops), only eighty Indian officers held King's Commissions as against about seven thousand British officers. Several branches exclude men as well as officers. The report of a committee, headed by an eminent British military officer, recommended the establishment of a military college in India, but this was not approved by the Government.

Of all the rupees expended by the central and provincial Governments together, in 1925-26, nearly five times as many were used for strictly military purposes as for health and education. It is natural that under such circumstances the burden of military expenditure should be considered oppressive, especially since the Government is continually reminding India that only more education can improve the condition of the people!

But even the small amount spent for education at present, when Indian ministers have some word in the matter, compares very favorably with that of the pre-war years when the Government was entirely autocratic. Expenditures for education increased between 1882 and 1907 less than two million dollars, but military expenditures during the same period increased more than forty-three million dollars.



Apologists for the high military costs in India have pointed out that the United States, with no possible enemy within thousands of miles, spends about six times as much as India. It has also been said that if India, with her vast sea-coast of over five thousand miles, were not part of the British Empire, she would have to spend four and probably six times as much as she does now.

But in his "The Government of India," Mr. MacDonald calls attention to the fact that "a large part of the army in India—certainly one-half—is an Imperial army which we require for other than purely Indian purposes, and its cost, therefore, should be met from Imperial and not Indian funds. When we stationed troops in other parts of the Empire, we did not charge them upon the Colonies, but in India we have the influence of the dead hand."

The moderate Indians, while admitting that they are much better off in some respects than formerly, consider that this partial progress does not compare with that of other countries, especially Japan. It is the opinion of every educated Indian that real change can only be accomplished after fiscal autonomy is conceded.

Thus, the desire for a change in the system of government gave birth to the nationalist movement. While, as we have seen, India is composed of divergent elements, the antagonism toward what are considered the wrongs of British rule has more or less welded





## LIVING INDIA

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them and produced a united opposition to foreign imperialism. The struggle for redress becomes the story of the development of a rising tide of independence, of a nationalism transcending creed or caste.



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PART III

SEETHING INDIA



## CHAPTER XI

### THE MAHATMA COMES

**D**URING the Great War there appeared upon the Indian horizon a little man weighing less than ninety pounds, who later became the most potent figure in Asia. It was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the holy man of present day India.

One of my many vivid recollections of Mahatma Gandhi is a scene in the Prince of Wales Museum of Bombay. At that time, the first week in February, 1924, Gandhi was still a prisoner, and in this city the cotton workers were on a general strike. I wandered through the museum and came upon a group of these strikers with ragged and filthy pieces of white cloth tied around their thighs. They were gazing at a painting. From where I stood I could not make out what they were regarding so intently. I saw one of them point his finger and then I heard another exclaim the familiar name of Mahatma Gandhi. I waited until they left. Then I approached the place and was amazed to find that they had been looking at a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. They could not have mistaken him for Gandhi. It may be that the name of the

great liberator was known to these simple workers as that of a man to be compared to their saint. Perhaps they read in his face, also, Mahatma, which means "great soul."

The man who was to influence his countrymen so deeply was born on October 2, 1869, in the west coast town of Porbander. His people belonged to the merchant caste. But we are told that the Gandhis for two generations held the post of Chief Minister for the little native state. Gandhi was born in the Vaishnava faith, and like his family was deeply influenced by the Jains, the Hindu sect having as its outstanding feature the extreme sanctity of all forms of life. In his home he learned about heroes of the great Hindu epics. His mother's influence was the strongest. As a young boy he seemed to have taken to meat-eating, and it was his mother who saved him from meat-diet and wine.

At the age of twelve he was married, although he has since taken a strong attitude against early marriages. His autobiography tells how he looked forward to having "a strange girl as a playfellow" and recounts his jealousy.

"I had absolutely no reason to suspect my wife's fidelity," he writes, "but jealousy does not wait for reasons. I thought that I must be forever on the look-out regarding her movements, and therefore she could not go anywhere without my permission. This sowed the seeds of a bitter quarrel between us. The restraint was virtually a sort of imprisonment. And Kasturbai was not the girl to brook any such thing. She made it a





*Photo from "Mahatma Gandhi by R. M. Gray and M. C. Parekh*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI  
As a student. From a photograph taken in London



THE SPINNER OF A NATION'S DESTINY  
Portrait by Abanindranath Tagore

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point to go out whenever she liked. More restraint on my part resulted in more liberty being taken by her, and in my getting more and more cross. Refusal to speak to one another thus became the order of the day with us, married children. I think it was quite innocent of Kasturbai to have taken those liberties with my restrictions. How could a guileless girl brook any restraint on going to the temple or on going on visits to friends? If I had the right to impose restrictions on her, had not she also a similar right? All this is clear to me today. But at that time I had to make good my authority as a husband!"

These quarrels continued for several years and not until Gandhi began his social reform work in South Africa did a real understanding grow between them. Since then Kasturbai has taken an active part in all his struggles.

The married boy finished high school in India and at nineteen he decided, contrary to the wishes of his family, to go to England and qualify for the Bar. His mother gave her consent only after he had sworn before a priest to abstain from wine, meat, and sexual intercourse.

He spent three years in England, studying at the London University and the Inner Temple. First he set out to be an "English gentleman." But after a short period he threw style to the dust and devoted himself to serious study. Law was his chief concern, but he read Tolstoi, Ruskin, Thoreau, and Mazzini, interested himself in Christianity and Theosophy, and

followed the advice of his mother to lead a rigorous life.

On his return he settled down in Bombay to practice law. There he met with a young jeweller who wrote poetry and studied mysticism. The poet-jeweller influenced him profoundly and together they studied and discussed religion at the expense of his practice.

His legal clients did not increase. He abandoned cases when he discovered that he had received wrong information, he refused to prosecute debtors, and the question of self-support became critical until an offer from an Indian firm in South Africa saved the situation.

The young lawyer went to South Africa. It was then, in 1893, that his public life began. Originally he did not intend to stay long. But seeing the conditions to which his countrymen were subjected, he remained. He gave up the lucrative practice which he had in time acquired, and devoted himself to improving the status of his people. Twice over he served in the Red Cross during the time of war in the Transvaal and raised a volunteer ambulance corps. And on both occasions he received gold medals and was mentioned in the despatches.

But while he served friend and foe alike, he could not endure the humiliations visited upon his fellow countrymen. For twenty years he toiled in South Africa to remove racial feelings and prejudices and to improve the political status of his people in that land. When he left the country, on the eve of the Great





War, he had succeeded in securing for them many civil rights.

It was in these struggles that he first adopted what he calls *Satyagraha* as a means of securing freedom. The word, roughly translated, means "Love Force." Gandhi views it as a movement intended to replace methods of violence, a movement based entirely upon truth.

"It is," he said, "as I have conceived it, an extension of the domestic law on the political field and my experience has led me to the conclusion that that movement, and that alone, can rid India of the possibility of violence spreading throughout the length and breadth of the land, for the redress of grievances."

During eight years of continuous struggle he experimented with *Satyagraha* as a weapon against injustice. In one of these fights two thousand of his followers went to prison. Two thousand out of a population of twelve thousand. A number of times he himself was put in jail. But in the end he emerged victorious.

One of his main contests was against a fifteen dollar poll tax imposed on men, women, and children. Those who did not pay were to be forced back into indentured labor on the plantations. For eight years the struggle lasted, and in the beginning of 1914 the tax was abolished. At the end General Smuts said that if all conducted themselves as the *Satyagrahists* had done, there would be nothing to fear.

The outbreak of the Great War found Gandhi in



England, about to return to India. He immediately offered his services to the Government, and before leaving London organized a volunteer ambulance corps. Once in India, he helped to raise a large number of recruits and encouraged his countrymen "to fight unconditionally unto death with Britain for victory." In a letter to the Viceroy he wrote: "I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment, and I know that India, by this very act, would become the most favored partner, and racial distinctions would become a thing of the past."

Incomprehensible as it may seem, the leading pacifist urged men to fight. Gandhi said that during those years he believed himself to be a citizen of the Empire and that "on the whole the Government, from the popular standpoint, was not wholly bad and the British administrators were honest, though insular and dense. Holding that view, I set about doing what an ordinary Englishman would do in the circumstances." He found that while himself believing in non-violence, many not believing in it at all were refusing to do their duty in assisting the Government merely because they were actuated by anger and malice. "They were refusing out of their ignorance and weakness, and as a fellow worker it became my duty to guide them aright. I, therefore, placed before them their clear duty, explained the doctrine of non-violence to them, and let them make their choice, which they did. I do not repent of my action in terms of non-





violence. For under *Swaraj*, too, I would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country."

Returning to this question in 1928, he states that various motives prompted his participation in the war, and one was to qualify himself for self-government by serving the Empire in its life and death struggle. "It must be understood that I am writing of my mentality in 1914 when I was a believer in the Empire and its willing ability to help India in her battle for freedom. Had I been the non-violent rebel that I am today, I should certainly not have helped, but through every effort open to non-violence I should have attempted to defeat its purpose. My opposition to, and disbelief in, war was as strong then as it is today. But we have to recognize that there are many things in the world which we do although we may be against doing them."

The war over, he devoted his efforts to securing home rule. He was not an extremist in his demands. He was willing to co-operate in working the Montagu reforms. But certain disastrous events occurred, culminating in that black day of Amritsar, a day which, more than anything else, widened the gulf between the British and the Indians.

A conservative element of the bureaucracy was not in sympathy with Mr. Montagu's reforms and feared that the ferment going on in Russia and Germany might spread to Asia and involve India. Influenced by this group, the Government of India in December, 1917, appointed a committee over which Mr. Justice

Rowlatt of the King's Bench Division, England, presided. It was to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movements in India, and to advise on the legislation necessary to enable the Government to deal effectively with them.

The report of the committee published in July, 1918, proved the existence, largely in the provinces of Bengal and Punjab, of revolutionary propaganda. And in March, 1919, against the pleading of all politically conscious India, the national legislature of India (then composed of a majority of Government officials), passed the so-called Rowlatt Bills. The application of this legislation would have suspended liberty of the individual, liberty of the press and of speech, and would have meant the substitution of the executive for the judiciary.

It is undeniable that there still lurked in some parts of India a spirit of sedition unloosed years before. But the Government already had sufficient powers to deal with it, an assertion proved by the fact that the Rowlatt legislation has never been put into effect.

The Hunter Commission, which was appointed in 1919 to investigate the disturbances following the passage of this enactment, stated: "After the splendid contribution made by India in the winning of the European War, there was no necessity for passing an act of the character proposed."

The whole country protested against this "Black Act," as it was called. National days of mourning





were observed. To pass such a coercive measure in times of peace, and after the sacrifices made by India during the War, was considered by moderates and extremists alike to be an insulting distrust. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, a moderate leader, wrote in a letter to the Viceroy, "In my opinion a Government that passes or sanctions such law in times of peace forfeits its claim to be called a civilized Government."

Mr. Gandhi was now a completely disillusioned man. After the legislation was passed he said, "I have a right to interpret the coming reforms by the light that the Rowlatt legislation throws upon them, and I make bold to promise that if we do not gather sufficient force to remove from our path this great obstacle in the shape of the Rowlatt legislation, we shall find the reforms to be a whited sepulchre."

Such was the origin of the non-co-operation movement. Constitutional methods having failed, he decided upon the *Satyagraha* tactics used in South Africa.

As a first step he requested his people to pledge refusal to obey the Rowlatt legislation and in this struggle to "refrain from violence to life, person or property."

He toured all over the land familiarizing his countrymen with the idea and purpose of *Satyagraha*.

But notwithstanding the plea of non-violence, the feelings of the people against this legislation ran too high and led to disturbances throughout the country. At Delhi a collision occurred between the people and the police. The crowds were ordered to disperse and



when they refused the people were fired upon by the military. A number of them were killed and wounded.

The atmosphere in the Punjab was charged. In the city of Amritsar two total suspensions of work were declared, one on the thirtieth of March and the other on the sixth of April. On these days all business stopped and no disorder occurred. On the ninth of April two outstanding nationalist leaders were ordered deported from the city. The news spread and business was again suspended. Excited crowds protested against the deportation, the authorities urged them to disperse, and all warning being without effect, they were fired upon by the police. Once more a number were killed. This excited greater rage. The disturbances spread. Five Englishmen were killed, property was destroyed, telegraph wires were cut, and some brutal deeds committed. The situation was serious. But, with the help of Indians themselves, order was already restored before General Dyer reached Amritsar.

At one o'clock of the thirteenth of April, General Dyer was informed that a large meeting was to be held in the city at about 4.30 P. M., in spite of his orders that no meetings should take place. The General did nothing to prevent the meeting. At 4 P. M. he was told that the meeting was in progress at Jallian-wala Bagh—once a garden—a rectangular piece of ground enclosed on every side by mud walls, surrounded by tall buildings, and with few and narrow approaches. He marched out immediately with a





force of about fifty soldiers armed with rifles, and two armoured cars.

When the General reached the place by one of those narrow approaches, he left the cars outside. Inside he found a peaceful and unarmed crowd, estimated at about ten thousand, listening to a speaker. He did not order them to disperse. He ordered firing thirty seconds after his arrival, and the firing continued until the last ammunition of his force was exhausted. The General, as he himself later testified, directed the firing into the heart of the crowd. Men and women crowded the narrow entrances, trampled upon each other and tried in vain to climb the walls about the enclosure. The volleys continued. The firing lasted for ten minutes. The people were mowed down and the General left the place a shambles. According to official figures, they had killed 377, and left 1,200 wounded on the ground. If the soldiers had carried more ammunition with them, the casualties would have been much higher. Many of the wounded died there because the curfew order was not relaxed to enable persons to go to their help.

General Dyer, attempting to justify his action said: "It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect, from a military point of view, not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity." In fact, he admitted that he could probably have dispersed them without firing, but "they would have all



come back and laughed at me and I should have made what I considered a fool of myself."

The General was convinced that only such stern action as this could kill in its infancy a spreading revolutionary movement which might endanger British rule. Undoubtedly he did what he considered to be his duty. But, to quote the Secretary of State's Despatch on the Report of the Commission which investigated the matter, "the gravest feature of the case against General Dyer is his avowed conception of his duty in the circumstances which confronted him." And the rigidity of the censorship can be gathered from the fact that not until a few months later did the news of this horrible happening leak out in the American press.

But a still blacker chapter was written into the administration of martial law in the Punjab. Sir Sivaswamy Iyer, for five years a member of the Executive Council of the Madras Government, has stated that main British witnesses before the Commission investigating the Punjab happenings disclosed ferocious and humiliating penalties suffered by Indians. They told of the flogging of men in public; of an order compelling thousands of students to walk sixteen miles a day for roll-call; of the arrest and detention of five hundred students and professors; of the compelling of school children of five to seven years to attend parade to salute the flag; of an order imposing upon owners of property the responsibility for the safety of the martial law posters stuck on the properties. They testified





to the flogging of a marriage party and the closing of a mosque for six weeks. They told about the censorship of mails and the arrest and detention of people for no substantial reasons, among them people who had rendered service to the State in the War or otherwise. They reported the flogging of six of the biggest boys in the school simply because they happened to be in school and to be big boys. They told also of the construction of an open cage for the confinement of arrested persons; the invention of newer punishments like the crawling order, the skipping order, and other such cruel commands. The "crawling order" compelled all Indians to go on their fours if they wanted to pass through a certain street where an English woman had been mishandled by a mob. They testified as to the handcuffing and roping together of persons and keeping them in open trucks for fifteen hours. They told about the use of aeroplanes, Lewis guns, and other tools of scientific warfare against unarmed citizens. They mentioned the taking of hostages and the confiscation and destruction of property to secure the attendance of absentees, and cutting off electric and water supplies from Indian houses.

These are a few of the incidents of the martial law period as revealed by British witnesses and summarized by Sir Sivaswamy Iyer. In the words of the Secretary of State for India, the administration of martial law was "marred by a spirit which prompted—not generally, but unfortunately not uncommonly—the enforcement of punishments and orders calculated, if not



intended, to humiliate Indians as a race, to cause unwarranted inconvenience amounting on occasions to injustice, and to flout the standards of propriety and humanity which the inhabitants not only of British India in particular, but of the civilized world in general, have a right to demand from those set in authority over them."

"At the moment when the country was awaiting the application of principles proclaimed to all the world by Anglo-Saxon statesmen," as a French writer remarked, "India found herself treated as Belgium had been treated by Germany. Amritsar was the equivalent of Louvain."

Though the House of Commons approved the Secretary of State's censure of General Dyer, the House of Lords, incredible as it may seem, passed a motion condoning his action. And while some British residents of India condemned the excesses of martial law, the great number regarded the General as a hero and savior of the Punjab. A fund of more than \$120,000 was presented to him, raised by public subscription.

But let it be mentioned here that the tragedy of Amritsar has neither been forgotten nor forgiven, especially since, in the summer of 1924, a London Court of Justice brought in a verdict virtually condoning General Dyer's action. The Labor Government at that time in office, declared that the judge was not in full possession of the facts and reiterated the condemnation of its predecessors.

The years 1919 and 1920 entered into Indian his-





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tory as a great turning point. Said the Duke of Connaught, in 1921, when he opened the Indian legislature in behalf of the King, "the shadow of Amritsar lengthened over the whole of India." The Rowlatt Bills, the horrors of Amritsar, the administration of martial law in the Punjab, and the British foreign policy towards Turkey had stirred all India to its depths and loosened a new nationalism. At Gandhi's hands, it was turned into the great protest movement of non-co-operation.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE NEW INDIA

THE Jallianwalah Bagh "massacre" started the eruption. After the Punjab atrocities Gandhi considered the Government "satanic," and refused to co-operate longer with it.

"I consider," he wrote, "that I would be less than truthful if I did not describe as satanic a government that has been guilty of fraud, murder, and wanton cruelty, which still remains unrepentant and resorts to untruth to cover its guilt." And in a letter written to the Viceroy on August 1, 1920, he said: "Half of India is too weak too offer violent resistance, and the other half is unwilling to do so. I have, therefore, ventured to suggest the remedy of non-co-operation."

By taking up the grievances of the Mohammedans who were outraged by Britain's oppression of the Turks, and championing their cause, Mahatma Gandhi achieved a temporary unity among the two communities. While it lasted the fraternization between Hindu and Moslem was such as it had never been before. Hindus were freely admitted to mosques, on occasions





even occupying the *Mihrab* or niche indicating the direction of Mecca, and at the great Juma Masjid of Delhi, a Hindu leader of the Arya Samaj community, known for his antagonism towards Moslems, delivered a sermon. This was an unheard-of event.

But in his alliance with the Mohammedan leaders Gandhi made a stipulation. He asked that the struggle be conducted in the spirit of non-violence. The Mohammedans, never exactly classified as believers in non-violent methods, accepted this condition and pledged themselves not to use force or to ask their followers to do so, as long as the union lasted.

The cry throughout the country was, "Redress the wrongs in the Punjab and the wrong against the Khalifat." The latter was the movement aiming at the restoration to Turkey of the places holy to the Islamic world and under its control before the War.

Gandhi now devoted all his zeal to persuading the country not to co-operate in any way with the Government. With untiring effort he wrote and preached non-violent non-co-operation. His saintly character, his simplicity of life, his personal charm and sincerity, captivated the imagination of the people. His message aroused the whole country. The moderate leaders viewed his doctrine with fear and apprehension. But the masses and the intelligentsia felt that he was expressing the lofty ideas of ancient India. He reached the masses as no one had done since the occupation of the country by England. Other leaders before him had tried to gain the support of those who

read. Gandhi reached those who "had no political education whatsoever."

Starting at once, under his leadership, the voice of nationalism penetrated deep into the life of the country. Gandhi was out to secure freedom by the united action of the teeming millions. He said, "The Non-Co-operators are at war with the Government. We want to overthrow the Government and compel its submission to the people's will. We shall have to stagger humanity, even as did South Africa and Ireland, with this exception—we will rather spill our own blood, not that of our opponents. This is a fight to a finish."

The secret of his power to sway millions lay mainly in the religious interpretation he gave to politics. Plain western politics are incomprehensible to the masses of his country. Politics bereft of religion are understood only by the few. This is perhaps one of the reasons why nationalist leaders of former days have never reached more than a small group. For Gandhi "there are no politics devoid of religion." He has said, "Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man."

All India followed him, believing him to be a saint. "To see a whole nation of different races, of differing temperaments and ideals, joining hands to follow a saint," said Rabindranath Tagore, "that is a modern miracle and only possible in India. The worst and most deep-rooted passions are soothed by the words:





'Mahatma Gandhi forbids it.' . . . I don't agree with Gandhi in many things, but I give him my utmost reverence and admiration. He is not only the greatest man in India, he is the greatest man on earth today."

Thus he marched from strength to strength. To the country the terms "Nationalism," "Freedom," "Self-sacrifice," "Religion," *Swaraj*, were synonymous with the name of "Gandhi."

"He stopped at the thresholds of the huts of the thousands of dispossessed," declared the poet, Tagore, "dressed like one of their own. He spoke to them in their own language; here was living truth at last and not only quotations from books. For this reason the Mahatma, the name given to him by the people of India, is his real name. Who else has felt like him that all Indians are his own flesh and blood? In direct contact with truth, the crushed forces of the soul rise again; when love came to the door of India that door was opened wide. . . . At Gandhi's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as once before in earlier times, when Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow feeling and compassion among all living creatures."

When I asked the Mahatma to define non-co-operation for me, he replied, "Non-co-operation is as old as time and is part of the system under which the universe is governed. There can be no light without darkness somewhere. There is no attraction without repulsion, no love without hate. There can be no co-operation without non-co-operation. Co-operation



with what is good implies non-co-operation with what is evil. Not that the foreign system under which India is governed today has no good about it. Evil cannot stand on its own legs. But the net result of its working has reduced India to pauperism and emasculation. We have lost self-confidence. We are afraid to fight not because we do not want to, but because we are so hopelessly demoralized.

"We had only two choices," he continued, "either to take to secret assassination, gradually rising to desultory warfare, or to take up peaceful non-co-operation, i. e., to cease to assist the administrators in ruling India to her undoing. India seems to have chosen the latter way."

A distinction should be made, however, between non-violence, as Gandhi understands it, and non-resistance. I can best illustrate the difference by a story which an Indian nationalist told me. A snake charmer reprimanded one of his snakes for continually biting people.

"Why," he asked, "don't you adopt new tactics and become a non-co-operator?"

"But," said the snake, "what shall I do if people hit me?"

"Well," said the charmer, "let them alone and they won't hit you."

The snake followed his advice. When the children of the neighborhood came the next day they found that the snake was not biting. The news spread and the children began to tease the snake. Others threw stones at it. The snake only ran away from them and hid





himself. One day the charmer came around and found the snake hidden in a hole.

"Is that the position you have come to?" he asked.

"From a very proud creature you have changed to a coward. Shame on you."

"But," protested the snake, "I have only followed out your non-co-operation theory."

"Oh, no," answered the charmer, "I told you not to bite, but I did not tell you not to hiss."

The period of non-co-operation, which started in 1919, reached its climax in 1922. During that time the great majority of nationalists, with the exception of a small group organized into the Liberal party, fought under the banner of non-co-operation and non-violence. Self-government was to be achieved by rejecting its make-believe, by non-participation and civil disobedience. Economic self-dependence was to come through the reintroduction in every household of the *charka*, or spinning wheel.

The revival of hand spinning and hand weaving was advocated, and is still advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, for two main reasons. India needs to supplement her main occupation of agriculture with some other employment, and hand spinning is the only such employment for millions. If the two hundred million dollars worth of cloth now imported from England were produced by the spinning wheels at home, not only would the prosperity of the people increase, but the British would find out that it does not pay to misrule India.

It is often taken for granted that the Mahatma's emphasis on universal introduction of the *charka* is part of his crusade against machinery. I cannot do better than give his own words: "Do I want to put back the hand of progress? Do I want to replace the mills by handspinning and handweaving? Do I want to destroy machinery altogether? My answer is, I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. What I want to do at the present moment is to supplement the production of yarn and cloth through our mills, save the millions we send out of India, and distribute them in our cottages. This I cannot do unless and until the nation is prepared to devote its leisure hours to handspinning."

What he objects to is "the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labor saving machinery. Men go on saving labor until thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labor, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labor, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

In this connection, and second only to it in importance, is his slogan of *Khaddar*. The word stands for the wearing of homespun cotton. Wearing of *Khaddar* will increase the usage of the *charka*. If *Khaddar*





is in demand in the city, the spinner and weaver are also in demand in the village. One implies the other.

One may doubt intensely the political benefits that India may derive from the universal introduction of the *charka*, but one will still realize that, with the agricultural population idle a great part of the year, the people will be much better off spending their free time at the spinning wheel.

For carrying on the N.C.O. (these are the initials by which the non-co-operation movement is known), Mahatma Gandhi, as the leader of the movement, devised the following strategical moves: the triple boycott against schools, law courts, and elective assemblies; the *Hartal*, which means a total suspension of business; individual civil disobedience, and as the last resort, mass civil disobedience. The *Hartal* was "designed to strike the imagination of the people and the government," and to serve as an indication of how far civil disobedience might be carried out in the spirit of non-violence.

To analyze each of these moves in detail is not my intention. It is sufficient to say that the boycott against the schools has not only been a failure but has done much harm. The nationalists had no schools of their own and the few schools created were suffering from neglect. An Indian scholar estimated that while the boycott was at its height over fifty thousand boys were out in idleness.

The boycott against the law courts has not been more successful. A group of prominent lawyers gave up



their practices and threw themselves into the nationalist movement; but they might have done so without the boycott. The boycott against the legislative assemblies was given up by most of Gandhi's followers after he went to jail.

The *Hartals* and civil disobedience have been successful only in a sense. At the end of 1921, for instance, when the Prince of Wales paid a visit to India to appease the people, a boycott was declared against him as an outstanding representative of British rule. When the future Emperor landed in Bombay, he was faced with street riots, while in other important cities he was greeted by deserted streets and shuttered houses, with not an Indian to cheer him. As a rule, business was suspended on the days when a *Hartal* was declared, but the spirit of non-violence did not prevail everywhere. Riots and serious disorders, accompanied by bloodshed, broke out repeatedly, and the Mahatma confessed publicly that his people were not ready for mass civil disobedience.

The great achievement of the 1919-1922 period was the awakening of the national consciousness. It spread the desire for independence throughout the land. I found it everywhere. Nationalism was carried as never before to the masses. Before Gandhi made his appearance on the political stage of India, the movement was in the hands of people who were talking nationalism from a pedestal. Conspiracies and secret orders had been the rule of the day. The leadership of the Mahatma made such tactics impossible. In its





practical outcome, the non-co-operation period of 1919-1922 was not a success, but in spirit it succeeded to a remarkable degree. Gandhi's arrest marked the end of this chapter.

In the spring of 1922, when the campaign of civil disobedience was suspended—for which action Gandhi has been much criticized by the revolutionists—and strife began to appear within the ranks of the movement, the Government decided to arrest Gandhi for his activities. A few articles published by the Mahatma in his paper *Young India* were offered in evidence as part of his "campaign to spread disaffection openly, and systematically to render government impossible and to overthrow it."

On March 18, 1922, the case of the "spinner of Sabarmati" (the name of the place where he lives), which has been compared with the case of the Carpenter of Nazareth, came up for trial. Gandhi's behavior in court so impressed the land that the English Bishop of Madras declared in a public address, "I frankly confess, although it deeply grieves me to say it, that I see in Mr. Gandhi, the patient sufferer for the cause of righteousness and mercy, a truer representative of the crucified Savior than the men who have thrown him into prison and yet call themselves by the name of Christ."

The apostle of Indian freedom rose up and assumed full responsibility for the popular excesses which occurred during the non-co-operation period. "I wanted to avoid violence," he declared, "I want to



avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth, when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it and I am therefore here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

He told how in 1892, during his first contacts with British authorities in South Africa, he discovered that he had no rights as a man, because he was an Indian. Yet for nearly thirty years, until the Rowlatt Acts, he gave the Government his loyal co-operation. "I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator," he declared to the Court, "much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in





the various articles, tendered in evidence against me."

The judge, almost reluctantly, sentenced him to six years imprisonment.

But two years later, on the fifth of February, 1924, I was present in the courtyard of the Sassoon Hospital of the city of Poona when Gandhi was released from prison.

It was well known that during the previous month Gandhi had undergone an operation and this, combined with Labor's coming to office in Britain, made it seem probable that he would soon be released. No one knew exactly when, but everyone expected that he would be given back his freedom.

As it happened, I did not start off to Poona—a night's ride from Bombay—a bit too soon. By good fortune I arrived at an early hour of the day when word came that Gandhi was no longer to be held a prisoner.

All was quiet in the courtyard of the hospital. The nurses and physicians were making their rounds. The servants were carrying on their duties. The poor of surrounding villages were waiting to be examined.

Suddenly a magic change occurred. "Have you heard the good news?" whispered one employee to another. Telegrams began pouring in from all over the country, for word had arrived that Gandhi was no longer to be held a prisoner. Most of the intimates of the illustrious were still far away. The journalists were at a distance of two hundred miles. The nationalist leaders were at their posts throughout the country. Only the family of Mahatma Gandhi, his be-



loved friend, C. F. Andrews, and a few others were near him.

I was talking to Mr. Andrews in an adjoining room while Gandhi was being dressed. He was too weak to stand. About half an hour later as I looked out into the corridor, I noticed lines of men in white caps, white shirts, and white *dhotis*. The people of Poona had heard the news and were waiting to salute the modern prophet of India on his release from prison. Gandhi, dressed in white cotton, was carried out in a chair. The white caps stood silent on both sides of the corridor. A few nurses were near the front. More white caps in the back. On both sides of the chair were more youths, the vanguard of new India. The scene contained all the simplicity, sincerity, sympathy, and faith which characterize this ruler of gentleness. The Mahatma held his hands folded together in reverence, greeting his people; and from his eyes radiated that "Love Force" which is the first and last line of his gospel.

The cottage put at his disposal was in the compound of the hospital, and only a few steps from where he had been interned. His medical treatment would go on; but the cottage had more light and sunshine and it stood for freedom.

The courtyard was now a sea of white caps. Mr. Andrews took me with him into the cottage and we shook Gandhi's hands. The thought came into my mind that here was a modern St. Francis. Here, in the





fresh, he looked entirely different from any photograph I had ever seen. I remember many weeks later showing him a portrait done by Abanindranath Tagore. "What a caricature," Gandhi exclaimed, and he added, "I never look in the mirror, but I never believed that I could look so horrible." Gandhi never uses the mirror, not even for shaving.

At first sight there seemed nothing extraordinary about this man. But as I looked at his face again and again it told much. Sympathy and infinite patience and gentleness, sincerity and simplicity, joyfulness and tenderness were there. But his jaw and chin suggested something else—power and determination, the fighting nature, the man of action. Yet the difference between the sculpturing of the skull of Lenin and that of Gandhi is striking. One is a man whom the intellect decides, the other is one who acts because his insight tells him the way. But he can hold his own with any living statesman. Did he not come out victorious in South Africa when he pitted his wits against so shrewd a political leader as General Smuts? It is just that Gandhi has the heavenly gift of acting swiftly without dwelling long in the house of reason.

He regarded me with his large brown eyes. Visions came and went, and I could not utter a word. I could only bow reverently and leave the room. Outside people of all ages were present, from school children who proclaimed a national holiday, to old wandering fakirs. Young students tried to get a glimpse through

the bars of the corridors. Old women lifted children to see the saint. Thus did India receive back to freedom its Mahatma.

Weeks and months after this, I again saw Gandhi. This time his cottage was near the seashore, not far from the city of Bombay. The place was a Mecca for the nationalists. The Mahatma gets up at four o'clock in the morning for his morning prayer. He lies down again for a short period, but from five o'clock on he works, writes, discusses policy, edits his papers, spins, until late in the night.

"Do you feel," I asked him, "that a true relationship between the British people and the Indian people can come only by complete independence of India?"

"A true relationship between the British people and the Indian people," he answered, "does not necessarily imply an India outside of the British Empire."

"What is your message to America?"

"I would like," said he, "on the part of the people of America an accurate study of the Indian struggle and the methods adopted for its prosecution."

What he asks of his countrymen is to adopt non-violence for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of attaining *Swaraj*. "This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong."

"Do you believe," I asked, "that your people will give up every kind of violent method in their struggle for *Swaraj*?"

"I believe that the Indians will gradually come to





adopt the doctrine of non-violence," he replied. "All our ancient traditions, our epics, our history show that we are more ready to suffer than to inflict punishment on others."

No matter what one may think of Gandhi's economic program, of his idea that modern civilization is pernicious in its effects upon the individual, it must be admitted that his method of non-violence has contributed to the advance of self-sacrifice and self-respect in India. It is the message of the great peace apostle standing out in disparity against imperial army and law and civil establishment.

When I left this creator of a nation's destiny it was with the awestruck feeling of having talked to the man whose word is the mightiest spiritual force in the world today.

## CHAPTER XIII

### TRAGEDY IN THE PUNJAB

A SUPREME test of Gandhi's gospel of non-violence came with the partly political, partly religious crusade in the Punjab of the martial Sikhs, his most warlike followers, who, up to a few years ago, were staunch loyalists.

The aggressive form of the anti-government campaign, and the tragic results which followed, not only tell of the rising nationalist sentiment, but also illustrate how apparently very small mistakes can start real conflagrations in India. It is the tale of a moving heroism, even if misguided, which tells of Mahatma Gandhi's widespread influence.

The Sikhs are the followers of Guru (prophet) Nanak, of the fifteenth century, who, as we have seen, challenged the polytheism of Hinduism and formulated a monotheism free from all idolatry and caste. In 1577 the great Moghul Emperor, Akbar, granted to the Sikhs the site of the tank and Golden Temple at Amritsar. The city became the headquarters of the Sikh faith, and its adherents form a powerful community. They are those tall Indians whom we meet





wearing five K's, namely: *Kesha* (long hair), *Kanga* (a comb), *Kara* (an iron bracelet), *Kacchera* (breeches), and *Kirpan* (somewhat like a court sword).

The centres of the religious, social, and political life of the Sikh community are the Gurdwaras or shrines. There are about three hundred such shrines and the important Gurdwaras are either connected with the lives of the Gurus, or stand in memory of the Sikh martyrs who died in defense of their faith. Four important Gurdwaras are considered as "Four Thrones" of authority, from which commandments for the guidance of the community are issued. And of these four, the so-called Akal Takht, situated opposite the entrance of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, is regarded as supreme.

They were originally free from idolatry, but as time went on, idol worship was gradually introduced into their shrines, which came under the control of resident abbots or mahants, who led immoral lives and spent in luxuries the money contributed by the community.

A few years after the Great War the Sikhs started to purge their religion of abuses and to drive out their immoral abbots. They organized The United Shrine Protection Committee, and called themselves the Akalis, or followers of the Eternal. In many cases the abbots, who had been the legal owners of the shrines, appealed to the Government for protection. The Sikhs held that this was a purely religious matter and that the British had no right to interfere. The Gov-



ernment took the attitude that the Akalis could investigate the conduct of all Mahants in accordance with the provisions of the law, and could replace those whose conduct was found to be unsatisfactory. The Akalis replied—and this is well known to all familiar with administration of civil law in India—that important civil cases usually lasted five years from the institution of the action to the final decision, and that by such a slow method generations would pass before they could accomplish their aim. The Government, following its position to the logical conclusion, was forced to aid priests whose conduct it did not approve. Special legislation might have saved the situation. But it came too late. In the meantime the drama began unfolding itself like a Greek tragedy.

On February 21, 1921, came the first part of the tragedy. The Nankanasahib is the most sacred of shrines, because it is the birthplace of Guru Nanak, and the Gurdwara is erected to the memory of the founder of the Sikh faith. The abbot of this shrine was leading a corrupt life. The Akalis came to eject the abbot. They entered the shrine at dawn and began their morning worship. The temple is a small four-doored room built on a platform, with a verandah before it. A low path runs around the platform, and the whole open space is bordered with rooms, with only two outlets besides the main gate facing east. The Mahant placed hired gunmen in his sitting room, which lies close to the west, and other gunmen were posted at the different gates. When the Akalis en-





tered the temple they raised the usual religious shout of "Sat Sri Akal!" which means "Glory to the Eternal!" Then, at a signal given by the priest, all the doors were closed and the Akalis were brutally massacred by the gunmen. After this the bodies of all the dead—with the exception of three—were burned. Altogether, about one hundred Akalis met their death in this butchery.

The Mahant and his accomplices were subsequently punished. But this terrible event aroused the Sikh community, and not long afterwards the great majority of the Sikhs allied themselves with the puritan Akalis. Many Mahants amicably entered into agreements with the United Shrine Protection Committee and transferred their shrines to its administration. Among these was the Mahant of the Guru-ka-Bagh shrine, situated about ten miles from the city of Amritsar.

In the midst of this period of religious reform, Gandhi visited the Punjab and turned the movement into non-violent channels. The Akali leaders pledged themselves not to use violence in their struggle for the reform of the Gurdwaras. Though it should be mentioned that the extreme wing known as the "Babar" Akalis refused to follow the non-violent course.

How faithful they were to this pledge was soon demonstrated at the Guru-ka-Bagh shrine. In spite of his agreement to release the shrine to the Committee, the Mahant retained possession of the house connected with it. Now it is a Sikh custom to have attached to the temple a free kitchen for the use of pilgrims, and

the fire is generally made from the wood of the Gurdwara land. The Akalis said, "We have the same right to cut wood from the Gurdwara land as to control the Gurdwara itself. Both go together. The property of a Gurdwara is a trust meant only for the maintenance of the Gurdwara and its institutions, like the free kitchen, and it cannot be used for any other purpose."

The Mahant, however, claimed that the land belonged to the house; he complained to the police. Reliable non-Indian people who witnessed the whole affair claimed that the Mahant was only looking for an excuse to make trouble. In cutting the wood he believed that he had a case where he could take vengeance upon the Akalis who ejected him. He knew well enough that the pilgrims needed the wood for cooking their food, and yet he invoked the protection of the law. The result was that the Akalis who cut the wood of the jungle land were arrested and sent for trial.

More pilgrims came to the shrine and, naturally, more wood was cut. This time police were sent to protect the Mahant. The Akalis took up the challenge, and as the pilgrims had to be fed each day, more Akalis were arrested. To the western mind the whole thing will appear childish. Yet this wood cutting stirred up the most serious and unfortunate events.

The Government officials, as the defenders of law, ordered the police to protect the jungle land, since it was recognized as the Mahant's property. This spurred on the Akalis, and from every part of the Pun-





tab they came to Guru-ka-Bagh and took part in the cutting of the wood. It was the beginning of a passive resistance movement which became known all over the land.

On their arrival at Amritsar, the Akalis went to the Golden Temple in groups called Jathas or companies. There at the Akal Takht or the throne, and before their sacred book called the "Guru Granth Sahib," they took the vow of non-resistance. Then, garlanded with flowers, they started for the Guru-ka-Bagh shrine.

In the beginning the police only arrested those who attempted to cut the wood. The sentences were six months of rigorous confinement. But later, when the arrests mounted up into hundreds, an order was given not to arrest but to disperse the bands by the use of the "minimum of force."

Regarding the "minimum of force," two Englishmen of very high repute—Mr. C. F. Andrews described the story at the time in a few striking articles in the *Manchester Guardian*—maintained that the Akalis were knocked down with heavy blows. They rose up and stood silent; again they were knocked down. Others who looked on were praying and shouting "Sat Sri Akal!" None of them raised a finger. The victims were beaten into unconsciousness, taken to the hospital and the next day new ones came and went through the same ordeal. Nearly five hundred Akalis were dispersed in this way.

The Government, hearing about this treatment, stopped the use of force, and returned to the policy



of arrest. Such are the facts as told by Mr. C. F. Andrews in the *Manchester Guardian* (weekly edition) of February 15, and February 24, 1924.

The whole affair was finally settled in November, 1922, when Sir Gangaru, a Hindu gentleman of Lahore, known for his philanthropic work, bought the land from which the wood was cut from the Mahant, and presented it to the Akalis for the use of the shrine.

Not long after this unfortunate affair was brought to a close, a new and bitter quarrel started over the deposing of the Sikh prince of the Nabha State. It is this last affair which was largely responsible for that conflict between the Government and the Akalis which occurred on February 21, 1924. At this time five hundred Sikhs, many of them heroes of the Great War, stood with heads erect, without moving an inch, while firing went on.

Regarding the conflict over the deposition by the Government of the ruling prince, mentioned in the chapter on the Indian Princes, it should be remarked again that the Government stated that it has in its possession complete evidence showing both appalling misdoings, and an immoral private life led by the prince. Besides his misrule, the Maharajah of the Nabha State also quarrelled bitterly for years with the Maharajah of Patiala State (another Sikh state). Finally the conflict was brought to the courts and the Maharajah of Nabha lost.

The facts brought out at the trial are supposed to have implicated so deeply the ruler of Nabha that he





offered all kinds of compromises to close the case. The Maharajah was deported for life from Nabha, and a regent was appointed to administer the state until his son came of age and in 1928 the Maharajah was also deprived of his title.

Besides the Maharajah's private life, he sympathized strongly with the Akalis, and sided with the nationalists against the Government. When he was deposed, the Akalis immediately took up his case. They claimed that the accusations against the Maharajah were pure inventions, and that he was merely a victim of Government persecution because of the stand he had taken.

And so the Akalis started a campaign to restore the Maharajah. In the state of Nabha there are naturally a number of Sikh shrines. Two such shrines are located in the village of Jaito. After the deposition of the Maharajah, the Akalis came together at the main shrine at Jaito. They had done this before. The British administration, however, suspected now that their purpose was political agitation. It is true that the Sikhs, while assembled in their shrine, were either reciting the Holy Book or listening to the recitation. But it is also stated that they were continually praying for the deposed Maharajah and quoting those parts of their Holy Book which refer to tyrannical rule and the necessity of fighting for a just cause.

The authorities made up their minds that these pilgrimages, during the critical period the state was passing through, were not without danger. They raided

the shrine and arrested a large number of the congregation. This in itself would not have agitated the Sikhs, but the interruption of the reading of the scripture is considered a great sacrilege. Once the reading of the Holy Book is started it cannot be interrupted until it is finished. And because it takes about twenty-four hours to read the entire scriptures, it is generally so arranged that there are a few Sikhs on hand to take up the reading when others leave off. Thus great precautions are always taken to prevent any interruption.

This was in September, 1923, and the news of the arrests spread like wildfire wherever Sikhs lived. The very next day pilgrims began to pour in at Jaito to renew the reading of the Holy Book. Thousands arrived on foot and many were arrested. The Government refused to change its decision, and the Sikhs refused to give in until they renewed the reading. Thus the matter went from bad to worse.

The Akalis, seeing that they could not achieve their aims by marching only a few at a time, decided to select five hundred of their most trustworthy people from different parts of the country, and have them march to Jaito. In order to be selected, the first and main requirement, besides being a good Akali, was that the person could be depended upon to remain non-violent under all circumstances.

The village of Jaito is about a hundred and forty miles from the city of Amritsar. On February 9, 1924, a company of five hundred Sikhs took the pledge before the Supreme Throne to observe non-violence





in thought, deed, and action, and thereupon started on foot the march to the village of Jaito.

The Jatha (company) was to reach its destination on February 21. I had arrived the morning before in Amritsar, and I motored to Jaito in company with two Indian leaders to observe the outcome of the affair, which had become national. We ran the whole day through the Punjab districts, passed a few native states, and after dusk reached the village of Bargar where the company was encamped for the night.

After the evening meal, I visited the different tents where the pilgrims were resting. All was peaceful and orderly, the quiet broken only by the singing of "Wahiguru, Wahiguru, Wahiguru Jee, Sat Nam, Sat Nam, Sat Nam Jee" (praises of glory to God and their prophet).

I went back to my tent and at about 10 P. M. walked out again. There was an eclipse of the moon that night, and one of my companions said to me, "Tonight all the good Hindus will be bathing in the Ganges to purify themselves." But the Sikhs did not worry about the eclipse of the moon. A religious service was being held and about two thousand villagers from nearby places were listening to the recitation of the Sikh scripture. The next morning, after a night passed sleeping on the ground, I looked carefully over the whole body of men, the pilgrims and the crowds assembled there, and did not see anyone carrying fire-arms or any other weapons. The only shot fired was directed at me in fun. It was a firecracker.



Groups of good-humored people were amusing themselves. Many were praying and shouting "Sat Sri Akal." Others surrounded me, wondering what I was doing there; one got up and garlanded me. They were in great part rustics; but many trades and professions were represented.

About noon the Jatha, or company of pilgrims, started for Jaito, marching like a regiment to war—as the Sikhs had marched in the British campaigns in Asia and on the western front in Europe. They had flags, a band, a separate kitchen and a small ambulance corps. But they had no arms, which was all that distinguished them from a military regiment. On the way we came upon crowds of people waiting for the Jatha with refreshments; others were clearing the roads of branches and leaves for the feet of their heroes. Every face was lit with the fire of religious devotion. A crowd of about seven thousand men and women of all ages accompanied them. As they advanced, their continual shouts of "Sat Sri Akal" were like the murmur of an approaching storm. At the frontier were a number of uniformed officers with an order from the Administrator of the state which made it known that the Jatha would not be permitted to enter the shrine in bands of more than fifty at a time. But the Jatha passed into the Nabha State. "Sat, Sri, Akal," "Sat, Sri, Akal." Those who were waiting on the roadside took up the cry; and it resounded louder than ever.

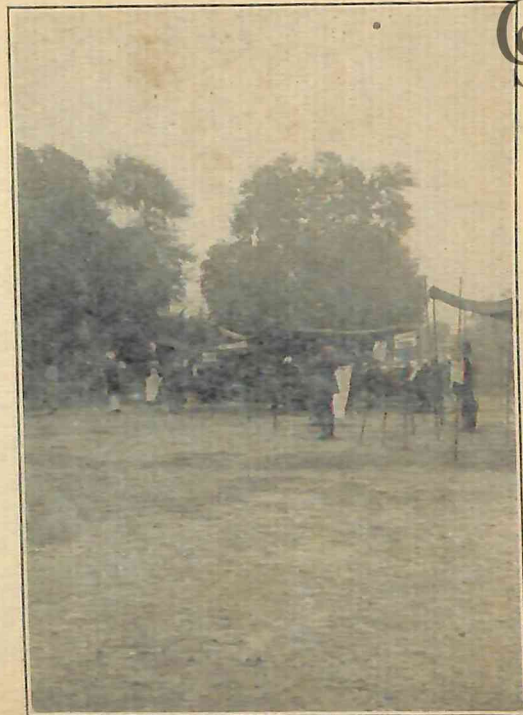
The Jatha moved slowly. Five flags were borne in front and "Guru Granth Sahib" was carried on a





### THE AKAL TAKHT

The Supreme Throne of the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar. It shows the Akali Pilgrims taking the vow of non-violence.



### INDIANS VOTING AT LAHORE



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paranquin in the middle. The crowds followed generally in the rear and on the right. Some kept up the shouting "Sat, Sri, Akal," and others sang words of praise and victory to the Deathless and the Prophet.

The head of the procession, with its five flags, reached a point within a few yards of the main shrine of Jaito. The British Administrator advanced to meet the Akalis and, according to the official version, explained that if they did not comply with his order he would be compelled to open fire. The Jatha kept on towards the shrine and fire was ordered. The firing was in regular volley, and without the desultory shots which would have followed had the Sikhs returned the fire. Men and women from the crowds rushed away, seeking safety.

But the Jatha advanced again. They were ordered under arrest and submitted cheerfully. With heads erect they marched to the local prison, while their wounded and dead were deposited in nearby places. According to official figures there were about seventeen dead and thirty-one wounded. Others estimated forty dead and eighty wounded.

During the firing only three of the Akalis left the ranks of the Jatha and these only after they were wounded. The rest stood their ground. They kept their vows of non-violence even under fire. It has been stated officially that the Government ordered the fire to be directed against the unorganized crowds, which were supposed to have become menacing, and not against the Jatha.



Two days later, I talked at the Amritsar hospital with the three who had left the Jatha, wounded. The bullets had been extracted, and as they lay on sick beds they expressed to me their sorrow at not being in jail with their Jatha; better that they had died, they thought, than to have been separated from their fellows.

The official British report charged that the Sikhs were armed; and a statement on this question made in the House of Lords by Lord Olivier, at that time Secretary of State for India, maintained that six thousand of them opened fire. At the request of the authorities, I told the facts as I knew them. I also made them public in an open letter to Mr. Gandhi.

Eighty thousand Sikhs volunteered as British soldiers in the Great War. Many who came that day to the shrine at Jaito had been under fire in its engagements; they had attacked and they had fought back when attacked. Counted among the best fighters of the Empire, they had rallied to all British causes from the Mutiny down to the Great War. And now they turned from loyalists into bitter enemies of the Government. The Government was certainly not desirous of alienating the loyal Sikh warrior. The officials dealing with the problem may have tried to arrive at some compromise, yet unfortunate mistakes irritated tempers and prevented any agreement.

The Akalis were not cowed by the shooting at Jaito. The next day women offered their sons as a religious sacrifice to go with a new Jatha. Old men prayed to





be taken. A second Jatha set about almost immediately, and every two weeks a new Jatha took the road to Jaito, only to be arrested without resistance on arrival. Up to May 1925 fourteen thousand of these Akalis had been thrown into prison.

Only in 1926, when legislation was passed which vested the control and management of the shrines in a representative board composed only of Sikhs, was the dispute partly settled.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CHALLENGE TO THE EMPIRE

#### I. *Home Rule and Obstruction*

“**T**RAGEDY,” once said a philosopher of the last century, “is not the conflict of right and wrong, but of right and right”—as viewed differently by conflicting minds. The antagonistic attitudes of ruler and people struggling for a solution of the Indian political problem emphasizes that truth.

From the position of the extreme sun-dried Anglo-Indian official, the just and wise policy for the happiness of the Indian people is one of “constructive repression.” He feels that the old system has worked *for* India.

From the standpoint of the nationalist, the only solution for the benefit of the country is immediate introduction of self-government. He wants a system by which Britain will work *with* India.

The one points backward to the past and sees there political justice and human wisdom. The other turns for hope to the future.

To those who survey political conditions, who travel





up and down the land, talking alike with Indians and English of all ranks, the impressions are in turn bewildering and tragic. You hear a small band of British officials, only a little over three thousand in all civil services, four thousand in the police and less than sixty thousand in the army, telling how beneficently and efficiently they rule a country of 320,000,000 people. From experience you know that these British officials are hard at work honestly to fulfill their duty. But you hear the Indians with renewed youth criticizing the system adversely, finding it humiliating not to have Indians performing the task. You sense everywhere a mounting bitterness against the rulers. You feel the British are sitting on a volcano which may become active.

The trouble centres in the fact that Indians want to be free. That tradition which moved a Washington, an Adams, and a Franklin animates the best of India's manhood, who feel, rightly or wrongly, that India should be governed by its own people. They demand a home rule by which they will control the internal affairs of the land. And they refuse to listen to those who assure them that good British rule is at least as good—or even better—than to be governed ill by one's own people. They want *Swaraj*, which in plain English means self-government. It is the Indian equivalent of the Irish *Sinn Féin*.

Some years ago Kipling, in referring to India, asserted that in those longitudes "there ain't no Ten Commandments." But the attitude of the British



Government toward its eastern subjects has changed. Great Britain, as Lord Birkenhead said in 1925, no longer talks of holding the gorgeous East in fear, but asks India "to march side by side with us in a fruitful, harmonious partnership which might create the greatest and proudest days of Indian history."

To be sure, there are officials in India who doubt gravely whether India will ever be able to manage its own affairs. A most distinguished British administrator said to me, in answer to my question if he believed in granting home rule: "If you mean home rule as the Irish have it, perhaps never." And the political parties of England, Conservative, Labor, and Liberal uniformly believe that "immediate full self-government for India is out of the question."

We have already mentioned the constitutional charter providing for the new legislatures. But unfortunately the first three years of the 1919 political reforms coincided with the non-co-operation movement and hence were inaugurated under the most difficult auspices. The great majority of nationalists believed in boycotting the legislatures, many of the leaders were in jail, and even the limited franchise was not used to any extent; in certain constituencies less than one per cent voted. Only the liberal groups with hardly any following in the land put up candidates and elected them.

But during the two years of Gandhi's forced absence from the political arena, some of his ablest co-workers began to think that it was better to go in than stay out





of the legislatures. The boycott program having failed, they decided to take part in the elections and carry non-co-operation into the councils.

During Christmas week of 1922, the Swarajist party came into being under the leadership of the late C. R. Das, Mayor of Calcutta, and Pundit Motilal Nehru, their present leader, and in time it became well organized and strongly disciplined. It had not the entire backing of Gandhi's followers. Many of those who participated in the non-co-operation movement of 1919 still favored the boycott program. Nevertheless, in the fall elections of 1923, in spite of opposition from the moderates, and also from those who still believed in the boycotts, known as the no-changers, the Swarajists defeated the liberals and captured a large number of seats in the national and the provincial legislatures, notably those of Bengal and the Central Provinces.

Once in the legislatures, they refused to pass bills, aired their grievances in debate, and tried to make use of Parnell's tactics of obstruction to bring about a constitutional change.

While admitting that the enactments of 1919 had somewhat widened the scope of political rights, they rejected this charter on the ground that "it left the Central Executive irresponsible, the Provincial Executives only very inadequately responsible and the power of the purse in the hands of the Executive." A budget is voted down and the Viceroy replaces it immediately; an increase in the salaries of the higher civil service is rejected, only to be ratified subsequently by the British



authority; a resolution in favor of self-government is passed, but Government need pay no attention to the action.

For exactly such reasons representative Indians of all parties united with the Swarajists for a change in the basis of power which would give them fiscal control. This demand was for the first time formally expressed in a memorable debate in the Delhi legislature and the resolution subsequently adopted still voices the feelings of all Indians of any political consciousness.

For three days I listened to the discussion on this resolution, seconded not by a Swarajist, but by one who had probably done the most to make effective for the first three years the 1919 reforms.

The resolution recommended that "the Governor General in Council take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish a full responsible government in India, and for the said purpose: (a) summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend, with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities, the scheme of a constitution for India, and (b) after dissolving the Central Legislature, place the said scheme before a newly elected Indian Legislature for its approval and submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute."

The president of the Assembly, clad in the regulation black gown, with bands and horsehair wig, does not





often have to call for order. Yet one can feel that a storm is brewing beneath the surface.

At his right are the European members, either officials appointed by the Government, or merchants and industrialists representing the British community. At his left sit representatives of the new Indian nation.

Of these not a few are in European dress, many in homespun cotton clothing and white caps, others bare-headed and with white robes lightly draped about them, still others in the brilliant turbans of orange, crimson, gold, and other hues peculiar to their native provinces, and not a few in fezes and garments of many colors. They constitute the opposition, but, as far as numbers are concerned, are in the majority.

Pundit Motilal Nehru, their spokesman, addresses the House. Before 1919 distinguished for his knowledge of law, his wealth, and his aristocratic tastes, he stands now as the leader of the Swarajist party, clad in a toga-like garment, white stockings, and beautiful suede shoes. In gentle tones, even when making the gravest charges, he pleads for the adoption of the resolution. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, a most distinguished barrister and Mohammedan leader, in assured sentences builds up the case for home rule and associates himself with the leader of the Swarajists.

Pundit Malaviya, whose influence is profound among the orthodox Hindus of the country, stands in native dress with his sad face and mystic eyes, like some bronze Savonarola, and in marching phrases tells about the splendors of India's past, and her support of the Em-

pire in peace and in war. Since 1885, when the first "Indian National Congress" met, he declares, "we have been agitating, urging, petitioning that the Government should admit Indians to the commissioned rank of the army. How far have the ranks been opened? I hear that about twelve young men are receiving training." (In 1927-28, there was a total of eighty Indian officers.)

Young men with tenacious Indian memories quote one example after another of what they call Government perfidy. Moderate minds, rich in years and experience, deliver carefully prepared addresses begging the Government to agree to the nationalist demand and help introduce a new era in British-Indian relations.

Here and there an Indian, appointed by the Government, reminds his countrymen that they should first find some solution for the fights between Hindus and Mohammedans, that they should first try to emancipate the millions of outcastes. But his is only a voice in the wilderness. Wild young orators hiss mildly, but the majority is only faintly amused. They know that all that is best among the Indians sympathizes with them.

The Government benches describe at length the dangers which lie ahead if new political reforms are granted. The official spokesman admits that "the intelligentsia of the country has a great, perhaps a prepondering, influence over the mass of public opinion." But attention is called to the enormous obstacles in the path of home rule.





The main arguments raised are: first, the incompatibility of Hindu and Moslem; second, the difficulties presented by the existence of the native states which still live in the days of mediævalism, and which might, sooner or later, come into conflict with a home rule government in British India, if it tried to extend the new order over all the land; and third, the inability of the Indians to guard their country against external aggression.

The nationalists do not deny these difficulties. But past experience, they point out, shows that the tension between Hindu and Moslem can be settled by themselves alone; that it is only accentuated by a third arbiter.

Says a nationalist, in discussing the problem of the native states, "The British Government who have been responsible for the training of our Indian Princes have not done their duty faithfully by them. If they had trained them in the right way, there would have been more Princes of the type of Baroda and Mysore and there would have been representative institutions in every Indian state by this time."

Sir Malcolm Hailey, the present Governor of Punjab, has remarked on the question of defense that "Full dominion status means a dominion army under full control of the dominion government. I have not yet seen any serious thinker who pretends that India is yet in a position, or will in the immediate future be in a position, to create a dominion army."

Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer, one of the moderate liberals,

replies: "None of the Colonies was in a position to assume its defense at the time when a self-governing status was granted to it. For many years, the Colonies were not even able to pay for their defense. It was the Home Government that had to contribute towards the military expenditure of the Colonies. We, on the other hand, from the beginning have paid for our army, raised our troops, and paid for the British troops in India. We have gone further than the Colonies have in the matter of undertaking our defense."

The form of *Swaraj* desired, the nationalists explain, is one giving Indians autonomy in internal affairs, and not control of foreign affairs or defense.

When the debate is over and the roll called, the president announces that the resolution has carried by a great majority.

This occurred in February, 1924. A short time afterward, at the initiative of the British Labor Government, a "Reforms Inquiry Committee" was appointed to investigate the 1919 Indian Constitution and to discover "what grounds there might be for dissatisfaction."

In 1925 the Committee issued a majority and a minority report. The majority report of the Government spokesmen suggested remedies consistent with the policy and aim of the present Government of India Act.

The minority, the Indian members, described the present Act as a failure and held that no alternative, transitory system "can be devised which can satisfac-





terily solve the administrative or political difficulties which have been brought to our notice," and urged that the Constitution "should be put on a permanent basis with provisions for automatic progress in the future so as to secure stability in the Government and willing co-operation of the people."

This minority report was approved by political leaders who had joined the Gandhi boycott movement and those who had tried to work the reforms, and also by Indian ministers from the nine major provinces. It is significant that the report maintained that "Dyarchy" cannot be worked successfully and that the only remedy lies in changing the basis of the Constitution.

Meanwhile many important events had occurred which determined the future political tactics of the opposition. Two days after his release from prison, Gandhi declared that, though he had not in any way altered his opinion about the boycott of councils, the lack of data made it impossible for him to arrive at a judgment upon the changes in method adopted during his incarceration.

Feverish weeks of consultation followed between Gandhi and the Swarajist leaders. The country waited with anxiety. At length statements were issued; an agreement had not been reached; the parties held to their different paths in seeking for the common goal.

So the situation stood until the last days of June. The Executive Committee of the Congress met at that time to take up the issue of "council-entry." Gand-

his stand was that those who did not practice the program of non-co-operation should not be permitted to become members of the Congress Executives. This would have barred any Swarajists, and they were his foremost co-workers. When the vote was taken, his resolutions were carried by a majority of only eight votes. Gandhi withdrew and, while holding to his old program, decided to wait until the yearly session of the Congress in December.

But before the Congress met, new Hindu-Moslem conflicts made Gandhi realize that only long education could meet the demands his original program placed upon men's spiritual natures. Also the Governor of Bengal, considering the political situation serious, had asked for special repressive measures. And in October, 1924, the Viceroy—with the approval of the Labor Government—proclaimed an ordinance similar to the Rowlatt Bills, which applied to this province and gave to the Executive and to the police officers extraordinary power to make arrests without warrant. A large number of summary arrests were immediately made, and these included some of the prominent followers of Mr. C. R. Das.

A storm of protest was raised. Gandhi, in common with the Swarajists, considered that the ordinance was aimed not at any party of violence, but at the Swarajists in Bengal. In order to assure the united strength of all groups against this policy, he advised the suspension of non-co-operation. He asked the whole nation to unite under the roof of the All-India-





Congress, with, as we would say in America, "three planks to their platform": unity between communities; removal of "untouchability"; each member of the organization to spin for half an hour a day, whatever his rank or profession.

But at the December Congress, when Gandhi delivered his valedictory presidential message, the delegates decided to eliminate the penalty clause from the spinning resolution so favored by him. This was one more proof that the educated Indians no longer believed they could ever achieve freedom by belonging to spinning associations and were now determined to oppose "western materialism" with western methods. Subsequently, Gandhi played little part in politics, though he is still revered above all other men in the land, and in 1926 he formally resigned leadership. Since then he has given his attention to social questions and spinning.

With Gandhism in eclipse, the element of Indian life which became most formidable to British rule was the Swarajist party.

While Gandhi was retiring to his *charka* and the Swarajists were extending their control, C. R. Das, their greatest leader, startled the country. He, who was powerful enough to cause the suspension of the existing Constitution in the Bengal legislature, was now ready to give up his policy of wholesale opposition supplemented by obstruction, and to co-operate with the Government on the following conditions: "First, the Government should divest itself of its wide discre-



tionary powers of constraint and follow it up by proclaiming a general amnesty of all political prisoners. Next, the Government should guarantee to us full recognition of our right to establish *Swaraj* within the Indian Empire in the near future. In the meantime, till *Swaraj* comes, a sure and sufficient foundation for such *Swaraj* should be laid at once. A sufficient foundation must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement—settlement not only between the Government and the people as a whole, but also between the different communities, not excluding the European and Anglo-Indian communities.”

He added, “that we on our part should be in a position to give some sort of undertaking that we shall not by word, deed or gesture encourage the revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement.”

A few months before his death, in the course of a conversation, he remarked to me, “We want to remain in the Empire, if that is not inconsistent with establishing our own system of government. It is only the lack of vision in the British policy which is driving some of our young men to think of going outside the Empire.” He probably possessed greater political sagacity than any one of the country’s leaders and it was due to his efforts that the first well-organized political party had come into existence. At his death—in the summer of 1925—he was Mayor of Calcutta, and never has the city seen such a multitude of people as followed the funeral procession to the Burning





Ground, with Gandhi carried on their shoulders as chief mourner.

The Swarajist party, his creation, has remained to the present day the strongest in the country, though for nearly two years after his death it bristled with dissensions. Prominent members gave up hope of tangible results through indiscriminate obstruction, and adopted the view that political offices should be accepted and the present national and provincial legislatures used for constructive purposes. Even Pundit Motilal Nehru, on whom had fallen the mantle of leadership, served for a time on an official committee dealing with the Indianization of the army. And Mr. V. J. Patel, extreme Swarajist, was elected president of the Delhi legislature in succession to the English speaker.

In the fall elections of 1926, the Swarajist party lost ground in a few provincial legislatures, held their ground in the others and gained a great victory in the Madras Presidency, which until then was controlled by a non-Brahman "Justice" party. But one year after this election, while the country was still disturbed over Hindu-Moslem riots, and the book of an American woman which was interpreted by Indians as a weapon to poison the world with prejudice and ignorance against them, the Simon Commission was instrumental in bringing about the unity of Indians on a boycott policy—co-operators and non-co-operators marched together under a banner of "no co-operation" with the non-Indian Commission.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE CHALLENGE TO THE EMPIRE

#### *II The Simon Commission*

WHEN Sir John Simon and his colleagues reached Bombay in the winter of 1928 to examine and report upon a readjustment of the relationship between Great Britain and India, they were received with black flags as a sign of mourning, business was completely suspended, the Stock Exchange closed, the shops of the city were shuttered and even the Indian owned newspapers stopped publication—all as a protest against the composition of the Commission. These scenes were repeated more or less all over India, and where receptions were tendered, they were not participated in by the real representatives of nationalist India.

This was the reply of the politically minded Indians to both Houses of Parliament at Westminster which almost unanimously had approved a Parliamentary Commission without Indian representation as best suited for an inquiry into the Indian Constitution. And soon after the Commission landed, the Legislative





Assembly officially expressed lack of confidence in it.

Dr. Ansari, president of the Congress, voiced the nationalist position: "It is not the question of the appointment of a Hindu peer or a Moslem knight, nor is it a question of whether Indians should participate in its work as members, assessors or advisers. The principle involved is totally different. It is basic and fundamental. No sane or self-respecting Indian can ever admit the claim of Great Britain to be the sole judge of the measure and time of India's political advance. We alone know our needs and requirements best, and ours must be the decisive voice in the determination of our future. It is our inherent and inalienable right. Taking its stand on these principles, the Congress has all along advocated the convening of a Round Table Conference of the representatives of India and Great Britain with plenipotentiary powers to decide the basis of the future constitution of India, to be incorporated into an Act of Parliament. It is only on these conditions that Indians can, consistently with national honor and dignity, agree to co-operate. Until Great Britain accepts these terms, the Indian National Congress has no other alternative but to ask the people of India to treat the Statutory Commission as our Egyptian brothers treated the Milner Mission, and leave it severely alone. We can have no part or lot in a Commission which has been appointed in direct defiance of the declared will of the people of India."

In justifying the Government's decision, Lord Birkenhead pointed out that a commission other than Par-

liamentary would either have to be composed of representatives from the various interests of India (Brahmans and non-Brahmans, Moslems and Sikhs, the English services and "the untouchables," and therefore be an unwieldly body of about twenty persons), or else only certain Indian groups would be represented, and then there would be complaints from the others. Moreover, it would be difficult for the nationalists, or so it was said, to bring an unbiased judgment to the framing of a constitution, because there is hardly a leading Indian who has not already committed himself to some definite point of view.

On the other hand, a commission composed of members of both Houses of Parliament, who have had no special experience with India, could, going there without any preconceived ideas and with the sole object of learning India's problems, really help in framing the future constitution. Even such a body might not bring back a unanimous report. "But at any rate," said Lord Birkenhead, "we shall have a report which proceeds from the same general point of view and principle."

In view of the hostility of the Indians to a commission of this type, the Government offered certain limited concessions and Sir John Simon, on his arrival in India, invited the Indian legislature to choose from its elected members a committee to sit with the Commission appointed by Westminster. Although there could be no question of equality between the two





bodies the Indian side could scrutinize and, if necessary, elucidate the memoranda and testimony.

The evidence from public and representative bodies and individuals could normally be given before the two committees sitting together. And according to a statement given out by Sir John Simon, in July 1928, there will be made no distinction between the Commission and the Indian Committees as regards the examination of witnesses and documents. Just as the British Commissioners would report to Parliament, the authority by which they were constituted, so could the Indian members present their document to the Indian national legislature. Or, if they preferred, their report would be annexed to the main document and thus both would go at the same time to the British Parliament.

But this inequality between the two bodies, the fact that Indians cannot sit on equal terms with the British, is exactly what the Indians resent. Their exclusion from the Commission is regarded as a direct national insult. Moreover, in the minds of Indians of all parties, the firm conviction prevails that the Indian Committees can have no real power unless they are given the right of joint voting and joint recommendation with the British Commissioners.

Lord Birkenhead's argument that a commission which included Indians would have to include representatives of all the various religious and social groups of the country was characterized by the nationalists as merely excusing their exclusion from the Commission.

"We who have read his stirring plea on behalf of the untouchables of India," says Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the leader of the independent nationalists, "also know that when it suits England, the Government is able to find an Indian to represent the vast territories and multitude of peoples of India. For instance, when the delegate is annually selected to represent India on the League of Nations, the untouchables are neither consulted nor considered. No more are their preferences ascertained regarding the Imperial Conferences which recur so regularly."

Indians agree that it would be impossible to unearth one of their leaders who has no opinion on the type of constitution desired. But, they say, such considerations did not prevent the invitation of Michael Collins, Arthur Griffiths and others, to co-operate with members of the British Cabinet on the Constitution of the present Irish Free State.

A proposal has been made by the *Pioneer* of Allahabad, the leading English daily of India controlled by British interests, for the appointment of a Viceroy's commission composed of Indians to work in conjunction and on parallel lines with the Simon Commission. But the Indian political leaders rejected this suggestion on the ground that the latter body is appointed by the Crown under a royal warrant, approved by Parliament, and supported by all major political parties of Britain, while a commission appointed by the Viceroy could be only a subordinate body as compared with the Parliamentary Commission.





Yet the British Commissioners, with or without the support of Indians, will make the investigation and communicate the results of their findings to Westminster. Their visit in the winter of 1928 lasted two months and was of a preliminary nature, to see the machinery of the Government at work and to gather first impressions. In the spring the Commission returned to England and the last week of September of this year is to sail again for India. It will take two years to complete the inquiry and the report will be submitted to the new Parliament of 1930, which, in turn, will decide on India's new constitution.

The function of the Commission as defined by the Act of 1919, is to enquire "into the working of the system of Government, the growth of education and the development of representative institutions in British India, and matters connected therewith," and to "report as to whether it is desirable to establish the principles of responsible government, or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing."

It is the task of this imperial mission to advise whether India should continue to be governed as the British Parliament directs or be given home rule, and if the recommendation is against home rule, whether provincial autonomy should be granted. Other important questions must be dealt with such as the future powers of the Secretary of State for India and the continuance of his Council, the position to be held by the British civil services, the basis and the composi-

tion of the electorate, communal representation, education.

The chief problem is the Indian demand for home rule. The present Constitution has been in force for the last eight years, and provides that the Governor-General, who is the ruler of the land, his own Prime Minister, in charge of foreign affairs and who wields vast powers, may prevent a bill from being discussed in the legislature or "certify" that the passage of the bill is essential for the safety or welfare of India.

Sir John Simon and his colleagues will have to decide whether or not the Central Government shall remain irresponsible to the legislature, and if in favor of some degree of responsible government, to advise which of its seven main departments (Army, Home, Finance, Railways and Commerce, Education, Health and Lands, Industries and Labor, and Law), shall be subordinated to the legislature. Though the heads of at least three departments must be Indians, none is responsible to the legislature.

A committee under the chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler is investigating the treaty relations of the Indian States with the Imperial power. But notwithstanding this special inquiry it is unlikely that the Simon Commission will neglect this all important matter. Apart from such questions as defense, customs, communications, foreign affairs where an understanding may be achieved, with not too much difficulty, there remain such problems as the desirability of a federal union between British India and the native states





which are in all stages of political development, the future personal relations between the native rulers and the Crown, and the machinery to be devised for the adjustment of disputes.

As regards the government in the provinces, the Commission will have to pass on the future of "Dyarchy." Indians demand its abolition and autonomy in the provinces. "Dyarchy," as one of the provincial governments observed, has been working "creakily." And to illustrate the difficulties of a minister in charge of a "transferred" subject, the Minister of Industries in Madras said, in 1923, "I am Minister of Development *minus* Forests, and you all know that development depends a good deal on forests. I am Minister of Industries without Factories, which are a reserved subject, and industries without factories are unimaginable. I am Minister of Agriculture *minus* Irrigation. You can understand what that means. How agriculture can be carried on extensively without irrigation in the hands of those who are responsible for it is rather hard to realise. I am also Minister of Industries without Electricity, which is also a reserved subject."

The transfer of all the "reserved" subjects such as finance, land revenue, law and order would mean that the administration in each province would be under a cabinet of Indian ministers responsible to the Indian provincial legislature with a British governor appointed by the Crown.

The Commission may be expected to report, for instance, on the desirability of placing under the control



of provincial ministers and legislatures the work of the chief officials of the land revenue service, one of the most important administrative divisions of the Government, now carried on by the higher British civil services, responsible to the Secretary of State. The question to be answered is, for how long and to what extent British officials should continue to supervise the administration of the country and whether Imperial interests in India can be safeguarded only by a British bureaucracy.

They may favor the transfer to Indian ministers of all "reserved" subjects, and yet advise, as a number of Anglo-Indian authorities have been urging, that in such administrative units as the Punjab, Bengal, and the United Provinces, where there exists the possibility of Hindu-Moslem conflicts, the portfolios of law and order be retained under an Executive Councillor not responsible to the legislature. Needless to say nothing less than real provincial autonomy will satisfy even the mildest of nationalists.

Not least important for the Indian people is the report the Commission will bring regarding the Secretary of State for India with his special Council—whether the India Office should continue to exercise from London complete power over the revenues of India, or whether the Council should be abolished and replaced by an advisory committee composed of members of Parliament.

This body is composed largely of Anglo-Indian officials, most of whom have lived for years in India, and





are thoroughly imbued with an attitude hostile to any change which might lead to full self-government.

The Council has been characterized by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as destroying "real Parliamentary interest without giving India control or expert political advice," and "an adjunct to bureaucracy, not to Indian opinion. It is a Civil Service imposed as a check upon a Legislature, and it becomes more and more anomalous as representative institutions in India are established and broadened."

How true this is has been described eloquently by E. S. Montagu, co-author of the Montagu plan, whose death in November, 1924, was a severe loss to the ranks of those Englishmen who understand India.

"It has sometimes been questioned," said Mr. Montagu, "whether a democracy can rule an empire. I say that in this instance the democracy has never had the opportunity of trying. But even if the House of Commons were to give orders to the Secretary of State, the latter is not his own master. In matters vitally affecting India, he can be overruled by a majority of his Council. I may be told that the cases are very rare in which the Council has differed from the Secretary of State. I know one case, anyhow, where it was a very near thing, and where the action of the Council might, without remedy, have involved the Government of India in a policy out of harmony with the declared policy of the House of Commons and the Cabinet. And these gentlemen are appointed for seven years, and can only be controlled from the Houses of Parlia-



ment by a resolution carried in both Houses calling on them for their resignations. The whole system of the India Office is designed to prevent control by the House of Commons for fear there might be too advanced a Secretary of State."

Then there is the demand for a change in the suffrage. Sir Malcolm Hailey addressing the Punjab Legislative Council in November, 1924, said, "The extension of the electoral system has brought into the orbit of politics classes whose interests were previously unvoiced, and the free discussion here of their needs and requirements has given a new aspect to the whole of the public life in the Punjab. The value of this development must not be judged merely by the force of the impact on Government policy of the views of these classes. . . . The awakening of political consciousness among our rural classes has given them a new outlook; there is an insistent demand among them for better education, and for vocational training, great activity in availing themselves of character-building institutions, such as co-operation, a new and more intelligent interest in all that concerns their economic welfare."

Other British authorities contend that the present property qualification is very low, and that the present electoral arrangements have not established effective responsibility between the legislature and the masses.

Universal suffrage as we understand the term in America may not be conceivable in India for perhaps





another half a century. If complete home rule came today it would mean that the laborer and pariah would be governed by a legislature composed of the wealthy and middle classes. Should self-government therefore be deferred until a democratic electorate is possible? The nationalists, even the most convinced democrats amongst them, say no. Spokesmen for the Government and the majority of Anglo-Indians say yes.

These are a few of the problems confronting the Commissioners. On the one hand their recommendations must be sufficiently moderate to guarantee the acceptance by, or at least have the tacit approval of, the Anglo-Indian elements; on the other, if they neglect to take into consideration the Indian point of view, they may, and probably will, permanently alienate politically minded India.

For there are two distinct camps of opinion. There is an Indian opinion which insists on some limited form of home rule. The resolution for complete independence, passed in the Congress of December, 1928, is of no practical value. The nationalists passed it merely to show their teeth. Again, there is the Anglo-Indian and British opinion which persistently believes that the time is not ripe for any basic change.

Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India, before the House of Lords, said, "Do you desire that the British Army should be withdrawn from India? Do you desire that the Civil Service should be withdrawn



from India? Do you desire that the protection of the British Navy should be withdrawn from the Indian shores?"

To this retorts Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the Indian nationalist: "Having disarmed us, we are asked whether we should like the British Army to be withdrawn. Having debarred us from any part in the Navy, we are asked whether we would like the protection of the Navy to be withdrawn. Having, after a struggle of fifty years, allowed us a third share in the civil service, we are asked whether we should like the civil servants to be withdrawn. As Lord Birkenhead is so anxious to know our desire, we may mention that we would like the Secretary of State and the India Office disbanded and it would be highly appreciated, were the irremovable executive to be withdrawn and replaced by elected representatives responsible to the Legislature."

Sir Austen Chamberlain, in his Christmas 1926 memorandum to the other Great Powers interested in China, said: "His Majesty's Government proposes that in this joint declaration the powers should make it clear that in their constructive policy they desire to go as far as possible towards meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Chinese nation. They should abandon the idea that the economic and political development of China can only be secured under foreign tutelage. . . . They should expressly disclaim any intention of forcing foreign control upon an unwilling China."





Writes Major Graham D. Pole, Hon. Secretary of the British Committee on Indian Affairs, commenting on this note, "Indians ask why Great Britain should propose and suggest to the other Washington Treaty Powers interested in China, the abandonment of the idea that the economic and political development of China can only be secured under foreign tutelage, and yet maintain that the economic and political development of India can only be secured under the foreign tutelage of Great Britain. Why should Great Britain expressly disclaim any intention of forcing foreign control upon an unwilling China, and yet continue to force their own foreign control upon unwilling India? For India *is* unwilling to continue indefinitely under the foreign tutelage of Great Britain as at present. It is regarded by her as a slur on her manhood." (*Labour Magazine*, London, March 1927.)

So far as political developments are concerned, that is where the Indian question rests in 1928. But no recital of political history gives any inkling of the terrible undercurrents of passionate hatred which are sweeping the country today. The situation was best summed up by the *Pioneer* of March 30, 1928. This leading British paper said, "If the problem is not solved, India will drift into the same condition as Ireland drifted in the terrible days of the Black and Tans. And whatever people may think, no nation can govern or direct the affairs of another group of nations by force alone. Unless Great Britain can live in the future



as the purveyor of political ideas superior to those of the rest of the world, her fate will, indeed, be a gloomy one."

Great Britain has to her credit real achievements in India. But her greatest opportunity still lies ahead. It is to find a solution for the most serious imperial problem yet encountered—that of making the teeming millions of India political equals of the white dominions.

On the type of constitution which the Parliament of 1930 decides to grant, on the imagination of British statesmanship, greatly depends whether India will, within the next generation, be incorporated as a loyal member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The alternative, as one British writer has rather prematurely suggested, is that she will be added to the lost dominions of the British Empire.



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