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The Garden of Adonis.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

I KNOW of a certain town-like village that stands high on the green hills. The airs seem always cold and clean there, there the turf is close and smooth, there also are trees that give cool shadows, and there is abundance of rippling water. In many a sleepless tropic night and in many a sun-smitten camp I have thought back with desire on that pleasant place. But now and here when Scirocco darkens the sky, it is not in the streets of the bright little market-town that my spirit wanders, nor in those of the mediæval city with its guilds, its great churches, its abbeys and its hospitals, but in Corinium the city of forum and basilica, of bath and colonnades, of theatre and temples. In this island indeed it was the Master of the World who, withdrawing from

that which hated him and which he hated sought, amid slave-girls and cup-bearers and torturers and Chaldæans, forgetfulness of the dreadful past and of the dreary future. There it was thousands of little men who awaited an honourable dismissal from a world which had no longer need of them. But this island and that city are alike but antechambers of the sepulchre of dominion; in both we move among the elements of a perished majesty.

For Corinium was not a colony. It was not, that is, a place where the wearied legionary looked forward, as compensation for years of vigil and march, of the oppression of the mattock and the vine stock, for biting dawns and torrid noons, to the gracious donative of two acres and a concubine, but it was a city where the prudent pensioner passed, amid growing diseases and the continual disappearance of contemporaries, his last few superfluous years. Here lived those men who had worked hard but in obscurity, expecting and earning no laurel. Not for them the command of legions, the governorship of provinces or the high offices of equestrian nobility; they were the correctors of small cities, tribunes of obscure cohorts, presidents of outlying jurisdictions. Condemn not the mediocre. It is on these men, my brethren, that the security of the State rests. For he who wishes to succeed

greatly may fail greatly, and in his fall bring down his city with him, but the mediocre seeks and wins security. For in the games there are the also-rans, for whom no Pindar, no Bacchylides raises the epinicia, but the failure of the horse in the race is the meed of a physical deficiency; but to men who start equal at the post, the order at the goal is assigned partly by the pleasure of the Immortal Gods, and partly by the power or deficiency of the will of the competitor. Will strongly and if the Gods permit you may be an Augustus or an Antonius, but it is perhaps better for you and for the republic that you should be a Mattius or a Hirtius. For it is not only the Cæsar that makes the empire, but those also that serve him.

In any case, I like to think of my brethren the leading citizens of Corinium, and how they lived, ere ever Stilicho called the legions home, and before the Burgundians crossed the Rhine. With them I arise in the morning from the light sleep of age, and with asthmatic breath and creaking joints make for the window to see if blue skies and warm winds promise help to the thin blood which runs so cold in vein and artery. I share with them the pleasures of the table, despite the frowns of domestic nurse and doctor, for age which impairs this sense and that leaves the taste intact. The

old man can still be vicious with his palate. Time is our enemy. It passes so slowly, though there is so little left. We are busied therefore in the nugatory industriousness of the retired. To each man his own pastime, whether it be the pursuit of the small ball, or a flutter in slaves and copper, or the service of the Gods, or a seat on the town council. But it is, after all, in conversation that is our principal hope of escape from ennui or escape from terror. We gather in the forum, or on the sunny side of the promenades, or in private circles and informal conventions, and talk and talk and talk. The ladies talk also, but, while they discuss the demerits of servants and of their neighbours, we deal with the mighty affairs of Princes. For we are well situated for the receipt of news here at the intersection of five great roads. If only the rulers would listen to *us*. We know how Nisibis should be relieved, and how to maintain the frontier of the Rhine, the Danube, the Ocean, and the Wall. We have a curious and intimate knowledge of the domestic politics of Armenia—did not old So-and-So serve his first campaigns there? But no one pays any attention to the opinions of age and experience. Thus in Corinium the general feeling is that the Empire is going to the dogs.

They were right, the old croakers. That

Empire was going to the dogs. All Empires do. God has no Corinium for his veterans. He has for his fighting men those rest-camps which are worship and sleep and love and music and the like, but the time-expired units are marched away into the darkness, and such tremendous darkness. But praise be to the Master of Death! When an organism has fulfilled its functions it dies, either as the climax of a long process of senile decay, or suddenly and catastrophically. Dreadful is this boon of death, but better than the gift to linger on eternally a pernicious Struldbrug in a world ever more abhorring and abhorrent. Let us then not lament the dead. Let us write their biographies and court the favour of their heirs.

This is not a history of the Indian Autocracy. The veritable history of that great system cannot yet be written. Indeed it may never be written. In the meantime, an obituary notice may be not without its uses. Every prudent newspaper keeps in its pigeon-holes and periodically revises such an obituary notice of every prominent person. Thus, when some great man dies, it is able at once to satisfy the legitimate curiosity of its readers who ask who such notable was, and why he was famous? These obituary notices must necessarily be reticent and perhaps superficial, and

therefore to some extent misleading. Nevertheless they have their value especially if the author be a friend of the deceased, for to know "how it strikes a contemporary" is always interesting to posterity, who may also wonder at the shortsightedness of man. Moreover, the British people, though perhaps not mentioned in the will of the deceased, has yet a sentimental interest in the devolution of his estate, and might well inquire how he cut up and who were his executors? It is possible also that the British people may find itself unexpectedly a contributory to the liabilities of the estate. It may well therefore be inclined to ask for a little information as to how the estate stands.

Superficially at least the legatees and executors show no alarm. The estate is, they say, in first-class order, and will not only pay all debts and legacies in full but will leave a handsome residue. That is to say, there is at present an air of comparative calm in India, and there is in certain places and among certain classes much material prosperity. To this the friends of the new order point as a triumphant vindication of the policy of Britain in the last few years. But is that prosperity durable? Or is it merely like the greenness of the Garden of Adonis that was grown from seed to foliage in one day, and was the next day cast into the

running waters? This is a subject worthy of inquiry. In our inquiry it is necessary to look below the surface, for there are no people less competent to tell us the truth than those whose interests depend on the continuance of this prosperity. For merchants and bankers and traders in general rarely look further than next year's balance-sheet, yet a boom may be as certain an indication of deep-seated trouble as a slump. Nor are transitory panegyrists, whether those high in official position or special emissaries, very safe guides. The first are inclined to pray that there may be peace in their time, and if this be granted them they almost by necessity think that all is well and for ever. The latter see little except what they expect to see. Be it remembered that systems are never so beautiful as when about to perish. There is the beauty of robust health, and there is the ethereal beauty of incipient decay. Misled therefore by appearances, the superficial observer may himself mislead. But I repeat that the British people is entitled to know the truth. It has still large material interests in India, and it is entitled to know whether those interests are secure or jeopardised. It is therefore not a work of supererogation to consider what problems faced the old Autocracy, and how it solved or attempted to solve them, and to

consider how far the succession governments will be qualified to carry on or to improve on its work. I propose to address myself to this task.

I do not wish to expatiate at length on the effect of the Reforms on the relations of India to the British Empire and to foreign countries, but I have found it impossible wholly to omit these topics, for after all prosperity rests on security, and there is a foreign danger to India as well as domestic danger. Clearly the form in which that foreign danger may appear, and the arms with which it must be met, differ according to whether India is a province of the Empire, or a Dominion, or wholly independent. I must therefore touch at least cursorily on the foreign affairs of India.

The treatise will, I hope, be written in a plain and comprehensible style. There will, I trust, be nothing in it except facts, which may easily be verified, and the necessary deduction from those facts. I would warn the political student that oratory and rhetoric and the graces of style—except that grace which comes from the absence of graces—are in political treatises to be regarded with grave suspicion. They mislead and seduce, and are often intended to mislead and seduce.

Thus in writing about India it is well to make it clear what one means by India. How

often does one see—and not merely in the extravagances of the stump-orator—phrases like these: "India is proud of her four thousand years of civilisation"; "India will no longer tolerate the insults of foreigners"; "The heroic soul of India"; "India with her calm eyes fixed on the centuries,"—and so forth and so on and what not. Consign all these fripperies to Wardour Street.

India is a geographical expression, and in strict accuracy the word should be used merely as a description of a certain area of land having defined boundaries and known physical peculiarities. It is, however, convenient to use the expression as a sort of portmanteau word to include the people of India past, present, and future,—convenient that is, but dangerous without due precautions. Fraud lurks in generalisations. The habit of forming abstract conceptions from observation of numerous isolated phenomena, and bestowing on these figments attractive feminine names and forms, and attributing to these idols, not made with hands, such properties as intelligence and purpose and passions and energy may be well enough in poetry, but is utterly out of place in political discussion. Some metaphysicians indeed have held that these idols once created are animated by extraneous life, and like Putois, govern the fates and fortunes of such as believe in them.

If this be true it might be worth while sometime to complete an up-to-date Lemprière, a handbook useful to the student of the new mythology. Certainly some of these creatures have strange attributes. We know this of Liberty at least, that she has a powerful voice and strong boots—or should it be sandals ?—for

> "She danced upon the heath,
> And sang the song of death."

Or again: "Ma Mère c'est la Republique." A statement which opens up a wide field of pleasing speculation. In parenthesis, the newest of these godlets "Self-Determination" seems an active, energetic, little deity, with rather an ugly name, but as anxious as her more euphoniously named sisters for holocausts and hecatombs. The Semites are perhaps fortunate in this that their languages do not lend themselves with great facility to the formation of abstract nouns. It is for this reason perhaps that the politician, as distinct from the statesman, was not a common figure among the Semites, till some of them went a-whoring after the philosophy of the Goyim. But now Ephraim is joined with his idols, let him alone.

For it being the duty of the politician to seduce the intelligence of us his masters, that

he may the more conveniently lead us into paths dangerous to us, profitable to him, it is clear that this is the more easily effected by exciting our emotions and thus clouding our reason. For this purpose the use of tropes and images is recommended. Thus many of us picture to ourselves India as a lovely dusky maiden, dressed in a bright sari, adorned with nose-ring and bangles, sitting under a palm-tree with an empty pitcher by her side. This image arouses sentiment and a vague amativeness till reason wavers. The wise man in the music-hall knows well how unequal is the contest between philosophy and a pretty girl. But in fact India is a defined area containing about three hundred millions of people who, most of them, are anxious chiefly for their daily bread, for security, for the love of family and friends, and for reasonable freedom to do what they like. If this be remembered, there is no danger of any deification of the abstract term India.

My monitor says: "It is admitted that this shallow realism has its dangers, if not spiritual at least mental. But is not shallow nominalism a danger in politics and political discussion? Is there not a communal will other than the divergent wills of the units of the community? Is the community merely the sum of the individuals? Moreover, I am open to a wager

that you will not write two pages without the use of "universals." That is true. The administrator and legislator must deal with men in the mass, and cannot provide for each individual case. Thus the Anarchists are perhaps not wholly wrong when they aver that all government is necessarily tyranny. For tyranny is no more than the inequitable exaction by force of sacrifices from A for the benefit of B. But all governments compel minorities to sacrifice their will for the benefit of the majority, and if the minority is reluctant to make the sacrifice, then it will be compelled to do so. It is necessary to exact these sacrifices. True, but necessity was ever the tyrant's plea.

But if I talk, for instance, about "the peasant," thus giving an apparent personality to abstractions, does that imply that I believe there is in heaven any sort of sealed pattern of peasant to which the actual toiling lord of the plough corresponds more or less accurately? If I say "the peasant is thrifty," do I forget that some peasants are spendthrifts? Certainly not, any more than the authoress of 'Gentlemen prefer Blondes' forgot the existence of the practical negrophil. With this warning I turn away from those bold bad men the rhetoricians, and invite the reader

to consider the effect on the fates and fortunes of some sections of the Indian people of the collapse of the Indian Autocracy. But first, it is necessary to consider in some detail what the Autocracy was and did, and what are its successors.

II.

THE AUTOCRACY.

To compare the Indian Autocracy with the Roman Empire is tempting, for there is a superficial similarity between the two systems. On inspection, however, it will be found that this similarity is, in fact, merely superficial.

There is one great difference to which all other and minor differences may be referred. The Roman Empire was a great "breaker of stones," the Autocracy was not.

At the beginning of the third century B.C. Rome found the shores of the Mediterranean and the neighbouring lands inhabited by at least twenty nations. Many of these were gifted richly. All of them possessed what may be called strong personalities. All of them, if allowed to develop under favourable circumstances, might have added each in its own way to the sum of the achievements of the human race. Some of them had, no doubt, passed into a period of profound decadence,

but all of them, it would appear, had sufficient vitality—given favourable circumstances—to renew their youth. Rome required from all "friends and allies and those in subjection to the Roman people" the sacrifice of their national identity. It was their duty "courteously to preserve the majesty of the Roman people," and this could best be done by those who were in a state of complete intellectual and political subservience. Individuality was crushed out, if necessary, with the rods and axes. The legal, administrative, and financial system of Rome forwarded the work, and despite the murmurs of a few irrepressible Celts, the sacrifice was early and completely consummated. Rome admitted all her subjects to her citizenship, sometimes as a punishment, sometimes as a reward, sometimes as a fiscal measure, but the subject was required to purchase that franchise at a great price, the price, that is, of the sacrifice of his nationality. *Quisquis es noster eris* was a formula applicable not to the deserter only. Thus there was rarely made a more misleading statement than that of a recent history which averred that the Byzantine Empire was, in fact, a resuscitation of the Kingdoms of the Diadochi. The result of this trampling down of the nations was that eventually the Mediterranean basin was populated by vast hordes of devitalised and

denationalised bastards, incapable in the political sphere, at any rate, of any effort physical or moral.

The Indian Autocracy spared its subjects this deadly boon. True, it conferred on them a nominal British citizenship, but that grant did not exact from the donees any correlative sacrifice of nationality. On the contrary, the Autocracy which found all the races of India plunged into profound demoralisation, has encouraged the growth of an idea never yet known in the history of the world—namely, that of Indian nationality. This idea is not a growth very natural to the soil, and will soon wither when the causes which have brought it to flower are removed, but, at any rate, the Autocracy cannot be justly accused of having denationalised India, for the various Indian races were given full liberty (a liberty of which some have availed themselves), and indeed encouragement to develop their own culture, modified no doubt, but in no way poisoned by the infiltration of foreign culture.

The imperial system of the Romans was permeated with the policy of the ancient city-State which claimed complete control over every action of the citizen, and laid it down as an axiom that the State had the right to dispose, without appeal, of the life and fortunes of every one of its citizens. This axiom,

true in the case of a small city-State surrounded with enemies, where the government was controlled by the citizens, was not true in the case of a universal monarchy where the subject could not, in fact, control the executive.

Misled by this false idea, the Roman Empire developed eventually into a police-ridden bureaucratic despotism of the worst type, where any initiative on the part of the citizen was presumptive proof of a spirit of treason. A system which discourages initiative will soon be freed from all anxiety on this score, and the Empire, before the end, found itself compelled to look to the foreigner for its defence and in vain among its subjects for competent civil administrators, so that the State which in its palmy days had executed Corbulo and Papinian, found itself ere the end compelled to assassinate Stilicho and to lynch Rufinus. But the Indian Autocracy was erected during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when paternalism was not much in favour in Britain. The Indian system was called a bureaucracy, and there were no doubt many offices, much red tape, and much circumlocution, but the superior officers had not the soul of the bureaucrat, and the area of behaviour over which administrative control extended was very limited, for the people were prepared to resist to the death any invasion

by the civil power of the wide provinces of religion and consecrated usage. In the sphere to which the Autocracy confined its labours it in vain attempted to evoke and to employ indigenous talent. Thus, while the Autocracy is accused of having killed out the martial spirit of the people and its administrative capacity, the truth is that the martial spirit is much as it was, and that administrative ability of a high order was never found in India except among the invaders.

Like the Empire of Romanoffs the Indian Autocracy and the Empire of Rome were mechanisms. The Roman Empire remained a mechanism and made no attempt to organise itself. The Indian Autocracy has just sacrificed itself in the attempt to organise itself. But the Indian Autocracy was, at any rate, the mechanism used by a progressive and vital people to administer the affairs of a distant and valued possession. It was not therefore so dead a thing as the Roman system, which, rigid itself, was held rigidly in dead hands. The Roman Empire, up till the time of the reforms of Diocletian, was committed to the elaborate imposture that it was really the Roman Republic as it had existed in the second century before Christ. Men therefore looked back for their ideals. They never looked forward in order to fit policy, domestic and

foreign, to grapple with the social and military problems of the future.

Thus it was that the dangers which beset that Empire and finally destroyed it were never frankly encountered: at best, there is the acceptance of the accomplished fact. But the Indian Autocracy, though not perhaps so far-seeing as it might have been, was, at any rate, regardful of the near future. It did not live wholly in the past as did the Roman Empire, or for the moment as did that of the Romanoffs. Thus there was not that continual process of deterioration which affects those structures, the owners of which are so busy in admiring the sixteenth century façade that they have no time to stop the twentieth century leak.

The Roman Empire at its first establishment did much to facilitate the increase of capital. In India it may be calculated that the wealth of the country has increased at least ten times in the last century. In antiquity the accumulation of wealth was by no means a blessing. Capital, always ruthless when unchecked, was here indeed unchecked. It sought opportunities for profitable commercial investment, but these were few and hazardous. Ultimately, therefore, increase of capital meant increase of large landed estates, which could best be turned to account in the southern pro-

vinces by slave culture on the plantation system, in the northern by reducing the free cultivator to the condition of a serf. Capital was thus in antiquity a nation-devourer. Not so in India. The bond-slave is there no doubt not unknown, but much capital is applied to the creation and development of useful industries, which in their turn create fresh wealth to fructify in the hands of the worker.

Destructive as was the Roman system, deteriorative as were the selective processes it applied to the most highly gifted races of mankind, yet its work lasted so that we in the West, at any rate, are still citizens of Rome. The Indian Autocracy, which prided itself on its aloofness, and by necessity assumed the character rather of an impartial arbitrator between warring ideals than of a Cæsar-Pope whose decrees are final on all questions whatsoever, will receive that reward which all systems which remain somewhat apart and aloof necessarily receive. That is to say, while such a system endures it may do great things, but after it has passed it will leave small trace of its presence. The Indian Autocracy will thus bequeath to posterity the memory of a brilliant but transitory adventure, and will ultimately be of little more significance in the history of mankind than the Latin occupation of Achaia, or the conquests of the Macedonians in Bactria

and Iran. It is indeed no small thing to have given peace and prosperity to about three hundred millions of the human race for over a century. Posterity will note this with approval, and will then pass on to consider creatures that did not die childless.

The Roman Empire lasted for about six hundred years, and perished of inanition. The Indian Autocracy lasted for a little over a century—I date from Assaye—and up to the time of its dissolution showed no signs of decrepitude. To the superficial observer it would appear that the Indian Autocracy had perished in consequence of a caprice and by means of an intrigue. Intrigue and caprice were not wanting, but to him who looks deeper than the surface, it will appear that the fate which befalls all Governments befell this one also.

Power is never lost by those who hold it while they are fit to hold it. The British became unfit to hold India partly owing to changes in the condition of the country held under that dominion, partly owing to changes in the institutions and ideals of the British people, and partly owing to the pressure of external forces. I have dealt more largely with these matters elsewhere. Here I may briefly recapitulate.

In India the spread of education, familiarity with Occidental ideas, especially with those

of liberty and nationality, the consciousness of equality with the British in respect of some abilities, of superiority in others, and a large amnesty as regards inferiority, the accumulation of wealth, now the great test of virtue, had given to a small section of the Indian people the natural belief that they were competent to conduct the administration of their own country and ought to be allowed to do so. The history of Japan seemed to show that an Oriental nation could successfully contend with Occidentals on their own chosen ground. Internal and external peace seemed to render the protection of Britain less valuable. Those in power in Britain considered these claims not unreasonable, but found it very difficult under the autocratic system to adjust them. Thus there was what seemed to the Indian undue delay in meeting his wishes. On the other hand, there was among some sections of educated Indians a reaction towards Orientalism and a consequent dislike of the British Government which, whether Christian or not, was at least not Oriental. The first, or political discontent, gave rise to a harassing and teasing political agitation; the second, or religious discontent, to a series of political crimes. Agitator and assassin played intentionally or unintentionally into the hands each of the other. The British Government found itself unable to

govern without permitting the Indian Autocracy to use coercion. The discontented classes were not formidable by their numbers and influence in the country, and thus in theory their coercion should not have been difficult. In practice, however, it was impossible. The Autocracy had neither the faith nor resolution, nor indeed the apparatus, necessary to him who would effectively coerce.

At the same time a school of thought was influencing those in power in Britain which made coercion without concession abominable, and rendered even coercion with concession hesitating and reluctant, and therefore inefficient and so cruel. Moreover, there was now little continuity in the policy of Britain towards India, and India began to appear to be a place where a great political reputation could be earned at little cost and risk. Thus the affairs of India, which had by tacit agreement between the English factions been kept out of politics, began to enter them. Thus repression became spasmodic and more ineffective than ever. Further, British public opinion, while resigned to the establishment in its home lands of a severe administrative despotism, yet insisted that that despotism should drape itself decently in democratic robes, and had a deep and puritanical abhorrence of naked absolutism.

Then came the war. Few nations which partook of that cup of fury preserved their sanity whole and unimpaired, for this terrible conflict, which was in effect a civil war, produced that total transvaluation of all values which we find again and again in times of civil discord. Thus, for instance, the reckless spirit of the gambler was called manly boldness, cruelty was a reasonable precaution, perfidy was a happy versatility, lying skilful advocacy, a vile licentiousness generosity, and a thirst for vengeance exceeding the vengeance of Lamech a zeal for justice. Thus there could be no good leadership amid the darkness and fallacious gleams of this night of Cithæron, wherefore this conflict was, despite the valour of the soldiers and the patriotism of the peoples, more than any other civil war, a war which could have no laurels. Victory was certainly better than defeat, but it brought not the wearied peoples to any isle of Avalon: it left them in a cheerless desert, a prey to an immense weariness and an immense disillusionment. In these Dionysiac orgies it is ever the neophyte who feels most deeply the full influence of the God, accordingly it was those nations who were unused to militarism who found this cup of mystery indeed a cup of madness. Accordingly, just as in the agonies of war the Punic peoples used to pass through

the fire to Moloch their most precious possessions even to their children, so did the various Governments in power during the years 1914 to 1923 revel in casting to the flames the most sacred idols of British policy, idols reverenced and placated with torrents of blood for many hundreds of years. In that holocaust perished all manner of strange fetishes—the doctrine of the balance of power, the sacrosanctity of Antwerp, the integrity of the United Kingdom, the control of the Bosphorus, the last checks on electoral democracy, the gold standard, ministerial responsibility, naval supremacy, the dominion of the seas, and many others. Thus it might seem a light thing to expose to the same sacrificial fires what had been considered as a sacred trust—namely, the responsibility of the British people for the wellbeing of the people of India. "If," it might reasonably be said, "we cannot keep ourselves, how can we claim to be the keepers of others? See now what the lust for dominion, the denial of rights to the vanquished, the rule of intelligence divorced from morality, reasons of State, the expert, the amateur Machiavellian have effected. In God's name have done with it." The sacrifice may have been made with greater readiness because it appeared that the trust might in the near future become onerous and unremunerative, but the historian will

assuredly give to the much maligned British people credit for a certain idealism in this matter, even if he pronounce that that idealism was after all but the idealism of Sancho Panza in his cups.

Thus fell the imperial structure for so long the sure asylum of so many of the human race. There are those who regret it and would restore it. These are foolish. Ilion twice doomed to fall may never be rebuilt. This hand at least would never carry one stone to that hopeless task. There are some revolutions which it is the duty of the truthful man to oppose to the last breath. There are some systems so odious that the honest man can never ratify their erection even by tacit acquiescence. In these cases it is the duty of the veritable Die-Hard to die fighting, for to die is after all to condemn. But such occasions are rare. In most cases it is the duty of the citizen to accept the decree of fate, and to accommodate himself to changed conditions.

Cato did well to die, but who can doubt that it would have been better for the world had not the Roman aristocracy as a whole fought against the Cæsars to its total excision, until there was nothing left in the world except a despot and an army and title-holders and a populace and slaves? What picture is more piteous and ridiculous than that of the Marquis

de Carabas watching, from some safe retreat in Holyrood or the Heritage, with senile malignance the splendours of Napoleonic France? When the last shot is fired and the last trench is carried and the banners of Ahriman are everywhere wafted on the winds of victory, it is the part not only of the prudent man but of the good citizen to play the Sumroo and to rally to the victor. Should the last bootlegger die in the last ditch grasping in his hand the last broken bottle of hootch? It would be better to bring his experience to the service of his country and seek some snug post in the preventive department.

Thus I should think it a wicked and disloyal thing (even if I had the power) to write merely destructive and carping criticism of the present system in India. I do not think that system the best possible, but it is there, and we must make the best of it. Sparta may not be Argos, but it is ours, let us adorn it. Temperately and candidly to state what is amiss, to ascertain what problems confront the administration, to suggest the possible outcome—this is surely open to all who have an opportunity to study such matters at first hand. Nor is the lowliness of the critic any reason why his criticism should not be judged on its merits. The hoopœ may bring an offering to Solomon.

Moreover, the British people have still certain stake in India. It has a moral and intellectual interest, for the establishment and maintenance of the Indian Empire was a great feat, and has made the people who did it the admiration and envy of all the races of mankind.

Further, the British people have still great material interests in the country, and will probably be invited to increase them. "What have you done with my honour?" is perhaps an obsolete cry; but the bitter lamentation of Sganarelle over his lost wages still strikes a chord in all human hearts. The British people may therefore very reasonably desire to know the exact position of affairs in India, and it will not find any very trustworthy source of information open to it. It will, for instance, in vain apply to the daily press for any sort of illumination. Of the untrustworthiness of temporary and peripatetic panegyrists, whether official or lay, I have already spoken, as of the blindness of the men of business. Officials and ex-officials are hampered in many ways. To admit that one has been in error is always damnatory to self-esteem and often to ambition and pocket. The leading case of the Emperor's State Clothes may be cited as authority for the proposition that man is very prone to believe what he thinks he ought to believe, and to see what his fellows think they see. There

is also what may be called the *lues cassiana*, or that malady which so affects the perceptions of a veteran official that he must needs think that the most perfect of systems of which he is an integral part, and from which he derives place, power, and privilege. Contrariwise there are always rebels, frondeurs, renegades, and temperamental pessimists who think that a system which damnifies them, or of which they do not approve, or indeed any existing system, must necessarily be wholly bad. Amid the lucubrations of these conflicting authorities the conscientious elector might well grope in despair and, not finding what he needed, deposit the whole mass of papers in their appointed place, and reach out for the 'Guardian' or the 'Sporting Times,' which are at any rate clear and comprehensible.

Again, it is not necessary or desirable that the British people should interfere with the details of the internal affairs of India (such interference was never very profitable and is now impertinent), yet it has an interest in knowing what the course of affairs is likely to be. It is not true that each municipal State of the British Empire, or indeed of the invisible Empire of Humanity, has an indefeasible right to do what it likes within its own boundaries. That Empire, like Humanity, is a partnership, and it is a matter of vital importance to every

partner in a concern to know what is the private life of each of the other members. In office hours my partner may be a model of propriety and business acumen, but if in his off-hours he is a drunkard, a gambler, and a debauchee, I may reasonably apprehend that in time his solvency and honesty—matters in which I am vitally interested—may be affected. Contrariwise, a prudent business man would put up with a little crossgrainedness and touchiness in the case of a partner perfectly upright and honourable in his private life.

It must be confessed that truth is never agreeable to an Imperial ear. Hence among other cases the case of the fig-tree of Kabul, and the pit in the house of Malchiah. Yet it is not wholly inexpedient that the ruler should know the truth. In our present system of Government the true rulers are the people, and the apparent rulers are merely the agents of the people. The people wisely give to their agents very full powers. But there is a great difference between a loyal confidence and a blind abdication of control. The best and most honest of agents is all the better for knowing that his principal has the knowledge necessary to check him on the day of audit, and this is none the less the case if the principal be somewhat capricious and the agent knows that his day of power is likely to be short. There is

here a temptation for the agent to attempt to assure his position by seeking rather a brilliant and spectacular success which must necessarily be shortlived, rather than the slow consolidation of the permanent interests of his principal. This may be done the more conveniently if the principal is ignorant of what his real interests are.

Thus it is clear that Imperial and international questions may be complicated by Indian problems. It is but right therefore that the elector, who should have the last say on Imperial and international questions, should be informed as to Indian problems.

III.

THE REFORMS.

It is no part of my plan to enter into a long investigation of the so-called 'Montford Reforms,' or minutely to examine their working. From the point of view of the theoretician the new constitution had grave defects, but all constitutions have grave defects, but nevertheless sometimes march. The constitution of the Roman Republic? The constitution of the United States? Any schoolboy could demonstrate that they could never stand for a moment. On the other hand, it would be easy to draw forth from the archives of history about a hundred constitutions which on paper excited the awe and wonder of the beholder, but which when put into effect collapsed at once and for ever. In fact, the constitution is made for the citizen and not the citizen for the constitution. If those who have to live under the constitution possess the civic sense, they will make the most absurd in-

stitutions effective organs of the national will, whereas the slave, the factious, the intriguer, the tyrant, will, unless kept in order by the will-to-live of the community, turn the most perfect constitution into an instrument of tyranny or a lever to subvert society.

In reading 'The Federalist' one is tempted to wonder whether Hamilton was not writing merely *ad hominem*, and whether behind the façade of free institutions he was not actually building the palace of the tyrant. Similarly in reading the so-called 'Montford Report' one wonders whether the author was not (intentionally or not) occasionally guilty of a little suppression. It represents, for instance, the constitution now in force as a natural evolutionary development from the old constitution. But it is clear that this is not the case, and that the present settlement is a revolutionary settlement. It is not necessary for a revolution to be effected by force of arms, it may be effected in so quiet a manner that its true nature is not perceived. There have been in history many revolutions in which the old institutions of the State were left apparently intact, yet all had undergone a radical change in character, such a change being effected catastrophically and *per saltum*, and not by a slow process of development. Revolution should not be a word of disparagement.

It is clear that many revolutionary changes may be meliorative, and indeed inevitable, but there is always the onus on the revolutionary to show that the system he has subverted was incapable of evolutionary betterment, and that his new system is an improvement on the old. But the gravest objection to revolution is that it encourages the impatient idealist. Disgusted with the slow march of organic progress, with the drabness and sordidness of politics, hampered in every direction by fools, rogues, and cowards, he is ever yearning for the splendid hour of the barricades and for the swift arbitrament of the firing party.

Under the old system of Indian Government the Governor-General was in truth an autocrat within the sphere of the powers left to him by the Secretary of State, and subject to ultimate control by the British Parliament. He held in his hands the supreme legislative and executive power, and also that power of the purse which is the true mark of the executive chief. His councils might advise and delay, they could not effectively control. His judicial power was fettered by the existence of the Royal Courts, but he who commands the full legislative power can never, except by his own will, be long hampered by courts which are not mere standard-bearers of sedition. The

Reforms, while leaving this power nominally intact, yet subjected the use of it to the control of the elective legislature, which could in theory reject any law proposed to it by the Governor-General, and might in theory refuse all supplies.

In the provinces the same change had been effected in the status of the Governor, but here as regards certain subjects called "the transferred subjects" there was an attempt to avoid a possible deadlock. It was intended that there should be a ministry responsible to the legislature, and therefore necessarily in harmony with it, which should "advise," that is command, the executive in the exercise of its functions as regards these subjects, which were numerous and important.

This constitution, though the hostile critic might point out that it did in effect destroy the executive power as it had hitherto existed and did not, except in the case of the "transferred subjects," clearly designate any successor, might nevertheless have worked well, and formed a basis for a true constitutional Government. It was expected that the political men would appreciate the "frank generosity" with which all parties in England had attempted to meet their claims, would lay aside suspicion, forget the past, and seriously attempt to co-operate with the agents of Britain in governing well and worthily. It was admitted that

mistakes might be made, and that there might at first be a general slight deterioration in the character of the administration, but it was well thought that this was a light price to pay for the advantages of liberty. Statesmen trained in the school of practical politics would learn much from their own mistakes. These mistakes would be looked on leniently by the people, who would feel that their rulers, no longer aloof and alien, but really in touch with the governed, would have both the will and power to govern well. Misgovernment would encourage the subject to think for himself, and he would soon find that the remedy was in his own hands. The subject would in time learn that the Government was not an alien semi-divine incomprehensible creature, extraneous to the nation, but was actually his own agent. He would in time learn to control this agent, and compel it to administer his estate in his own interests. The art of Government cannot be learned from handbooks. It is learned in the office, in the council, in the heat and dust of the conflict. It is not he who makes no mistakes who is the perfect statesman, but he who has the wit to learn from his own errors and those of his opponents.

Indian politicians, it was supposed, would recognise that at present they were lacking in knowledge and experience, and would eagerly

avail themselves of the experience and knowof the British politician and British official, and that thus the transfer of full powers to Indian hands would be a slow process, effected only as the Indians felt themselves more and more capable of administration. It was provided by the Reform Scheme that there should be a periodical revision of the constitution, and it was hoped that every decade would mark the gradual self-effacement of the British element in the Government. In sixty years or so, Indians trained by a couple of generations of self-government, more and more closely approximating to parliamentary government, would find themselves in possession of full Dominion status.

In the meantime, it was expected that the politicians, seeing that the Kingdom must ultimately pass to them, would be careful to do nothing to damage the heritage which would one day be theirs. It was expected that they would have the common prudence of the remainder-man in preventing waste, that is, that they would carefully avoid anything which might possibly bring down constitutional Government in ruins. They would therefore cooperate with the British in suppressing, both by precept and example as well as by the effectual support of the executive, those dangerous movements, half-political and half-

religious, which menaced the very existence of civil government. In fact it was supposed that the reaction to Orientalism was merely a sign of political discontent, and that, if political aspirations were satisfied, the religious agitation would die down of itself.

One advantage which was both expected and obtained from the Reformed constitution must be pointed out. In old days the Government of India rather prided itself on its aloofness. They were the Olympians. The ambitious young civilian, within five years of arrival in India, made for some provincial secretariat, and then rose through the ordered degrees of the official hierarchy, through the Imperial Secretariat to Council. Thus it was common enough for the supreme directorate and its ministers to know little more about India than a clever man could have learned if he had never left Whitehall.

It was for this reason that the Government was rather apt to consider its subjects as algebraical expressions. They legislated, that is, for the "peasants," or the "bunnias," or the "soldiers." They had never seen Bapu sweating over the plough, or Manilal casting up his accounts in preparation for the Divali, or Zabardast Khan in the frontier camps or swaggering about his native village, the admiration of all. Now that is all over—Member and

Secretary are now brought into daily contact with Indians and must work with them. That experience is good for both.

It is true that the Indian elected members are not very representative of the toiling masses, but they are at any rate not denationalised intellectual mestizos. To know the true Indian is to like him. There is about the race, and especially about the politicians, a certain childishness. Now childishness is always engaging, even the childishness of a naughty child. It is by no means only among moderate politicians that this quality is found. Veteran agitators, who are not yet entirely free from the shadow of the prison and even of the gibbet, are often very agreeable companions, courteous, devoid of malice, most open. They are very quick to detect humbug, and despise, while they flatter, the weakling who uses fine words to conceal his imbecility, his timidity, and his ignorance. But for the courteous and straight opponent they have nothing but respect, and it is easy to command not only their confidence but their affection.

Thus, in spite of unfortunate incidents like that of the Pandit's moustaches, the conversion of the Imperial Headquarters from a camp of officials into a national capital, the true meeting-place of the peoples, has done little but good. Moreover, many of the politicians

brought to the front were eloquent debaters, some were versed in affairs, high-minded, conscientious, and, in fact, fit to be counsellors to any Prince. Yet this was not enough.

The most fervent apologist for the Reforms will admit that they did not work quite as was expected. The Reforms were, as a matter of fact, not launched at a very proper time nor in a very proper manner. It was generally believed that they had been extorted by clamour and menaces from weakness, and the question was whether more menaces and more clamour might not extort more. In order to "prepare an atmosphere for the Reforms," the country had been kept in a state of unrest for years.

Along with this agitation very dangerous political and religious movements had been allowed to progress unchecked. There had been a great strain in the war. There had been a serious rebellion and a foreign invasion. The rebellion had been crushed and the invasion repelled, but with attendant circumstances which made it appear possible that a new rebellion and a new invasion might be successful. The spoliation of Turkey was bitter to the Muhammedans. The whole country suffered from an acute commercial crisis owing to the sudden cessation of hostilities. The manner in which the constitution was ulti-

lately conferred was unfortunate and ill-advised. In these circumstances the Reforms were looked on much as a bur, thrown by the fleeing school-ma'am to the pursuing bear, which is gulped indeed, but does not suspend for a moment the ardour of pursuit. The beneficiaries suspected that the intention was to stave off clamour for the moment, and in the interval to rivet the chains more firmly on India, which was to be kept in bondage for many years.

It did not seem good enough to a forward young politician to possess his soul in patience, knowing that with luck his grandson might be granted full dominion over the loaves and fishes of office. There seemed no intention whatever of removing the present possessors of lucrative and responsible posts, and to possess political power without patronage is but a Barmecide feast. For these and other reasons the promised abdication of Britain excited no gratitude, and it was hoped that with a little more pressure some really important concessions might be extorted. Thus the moderate political men, even if they had the will, had not the power to restrain the extreme men of their own party, and they proved both unwilling and unable to check the excesses of fanaticism connected with the names of Gandhi and the Ali Brothers.

In the provinces also the Reforms did not

march as they were intended. The marrow of the Reform Scheme in these areas was the pedantically named Dyarchy. That that part of the Dyarchy which conferred responsible government in respect of the "transferred subjects" on the legislatures should work, it was necessary that there should be parties—but there were no parties, or rather there were as many parties as there were politicians; that there should be money—but there was no money; that there should be popular support—but the system was not even understood. The man in the street thought that Dyarchy had something to do with General Dyer, and would have none of it. The only provinces in which Dyarchy has survived are those in which it has been abolished. In those provinces, that is, where by gerrymandering, influence, the balancing of parties, or the loyalty of the population, the executive government has a permanent majority in the legislature. In such provinces the Ministers (who administer the "transferred subjects," and are responsible to the legislature) are kept in power not by the confidence of the house, but by the power of the executive Government, so that the Ministers and the Councillors (who are not responsible to the legislature) sit together on one board, which thus forms a very large executive council. In provinces where the Government has not

been able to control the legislatures or the electorate, Dyarchy has ceased to work, because no Ministry can retain a majority in the legislature even for a session. In such provinces the "transferred subjects" are either not administered at all, or they have been retransferred to the permanent executive which administers them, without control by the legislature, under its special or extraordinary powers.

This is the effect of the activities of that party which is anxious to wreck the Reforms in order to compel England to grant immediate autonomy to India—the so-called Swaraj Party. Imitating the Magyars of old and the Sinn Feiners of more recent date, their policy is to destroy the constitution of which they disapprove by boycotting it. Thus while willing to wreck a ministry, they will not form one. There is, however, one hope which is perpetually flaunted before us by the panegyrists of the Reforms. It is that the Swarajists may see the error of their ways and deign to take office. True, their avowed intention in that case is to wreck the administration from within, no difficult task for the head of the executive, but the constitutionalist would at least have the pleasure of perishing constitutionally, and, of course, we may always trust "to the sobering effects of responsibility." The alternative is certainly pleasant. It is much as if the

wilder Communists were in a majority in the House of Commons and threw out Budget after Budget. The men of formal law would, no doubt, prefer that the Red Leader should take office so that the necessary measures for the regimentation of labour, the nationalisation of land, capital, credit, and the means of production and transport, the extirpation of the bourgeois and the intelligentzia, and the suppression of Christianity should be effected " by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament assembled," but to other than formalists, it would be but a cheerless task to opt between destruction by anarchy or destruction by law.

In the penumbra which extends from tea to dinner, it has often been my lot, permission first obtained, to sit at the bridge table and to watch one of the players. I find this generally more amusing and far more profitable than myself to cut in. It is often difficult to restrain the groan of anguish which is so close to the throat when I see a noble hand cut to pieces by unskilful play, and when the player, not by reason of the frowns of fortune but by reason of his own incompetence goes down two hundred, instead of making game and rubber.

A similar feeling of vexation is his who has watched the antics of Indian politicians during

the last few years. They had such a good hand and played it so badly. It would have been wise for them perhaps to play the rôle assigned to them by the ingenious authors of the Montford Scheme. They might, that is, have worked with the Government in subordinate co-operation, checking it when it was likely to go wrong, helping it when it was trying to go right, and, in any case, strengthening its hands in dealing with subversive movements in India and with impracticable idealism in Britain. But if this was too tame a part, they might very easily have transferred to their own hands the whole of the executive power and have obtained complete disposal of all patronage. When the date is ripe and the keeper of the garden is asleep, it can only be due to the inefficiency of the thief that the luscious fruit remains on the tree. Had there been a man of the calibre, I do not say of Gokhale or of Parnell, but of the most common old parliamentary hand, concession might have been won after concession until finally, either by the establishment of precedents or by actual grant, the whole substance of power would have passed to the elective assemblies.

Everybody was extremely anxious that the Reforms should work. Government pushed concession to the verge of abdication. At home those who knew were uneasy, but the loyalty

(perhaps the mistaken loyalty) of the press kept the ordinary elector quite unaware of what was going on. There was a most efficient claque both in England and in India. All that was necessary was to go about the business of the transfer of authority from the executive to the assemblies quietly and unostentatiously, and it would have been found that the Imperial representatives were more anxious to concede than the Indian politicians were to demand. As it was, however, the game was played with such unnecessary roughness, and the designs of the party politicians became so very patent, and it became more and more certain that they were unable or unwilling to restrain the fanatics who sought the violent subversion of the State, that even material interests took alarm and the most optimistic politician at home and in India felt it was necessary, in the interests of the Reforms themselves, to interfere with the course of events. With a great rebellion raging in one of the oldest provinces of the Crown in India, with sporadic riots in every quarter, with one party in close connection with a hostile foreign power and making attempts to corrupt the army, with another party teaching that the English connection was a covenant with Satan, with important financial bills summarily rejected by the legislature, with the Heir of the Crown welcomed everywhere with

garlands and buckshot, with the fibres of the local executive so relaxed that any ruffian with a gang of clubmen, or even of schoolboys, could with impunity terrorise great cities, it became difficult for the most hardened mercenary or the most tuneful idealogue to continue to sing the song of praise. It became necessary for the Government to restore some kind of order and to impose some sort of check on fanaticism.

The Government, shortly after its installation, had repealed most of the "repressive laws" on which the old Autocracy had been accustomed to rely in times of acute disorder. The repeal of these laws was boasted as a great proof of the statesmanship of the new legislatures, as if it was ever difficult for the most stupid Government to repeal repressive laws. Government now found itself defenceless, or at least hampered, in the presence of its enemies. It sought for further powers from the legislatures. This application was not regarded with favour by those there in power, and it became necessary for the Government to fall back on its extraordinary or reserve powers, both for the purpose of arming itself, and to overcome the reluctance of the legislature to grant supplies.

The persons responsible for the new constitution had been well aware that a con-

stitution of the kind is exceedingly apt to come to the deadlock. The legislative and executive powers are entrusted to separate bodies which are mutually independent. The legislature is responsible for the provision of funds, and the executive for the direction and enforcement of policy. It always occurs, sooner or later, that some policy which the executive considers vital is distasteful to the legislature. In that case, in extreme cases the legislature will refuse to vote the Budget, thus refusing all means to carry on the administration of the State. In this case, if the matter at issue is so vital that no compromise is possible, then either the State must be dissolved or the executive must make a surrender to the legislature (which surrender can never be retracted), or the executive must provide itself with funds by means unknown to the constitution or, as here, by its constitutional but extraordinary powers.

The framers of the Montford constitution had therefore provided their executives with the power of legislating by decree—*i.e.*, without the approval of the majority of the assemblies. It was in some quarters doubted whether this power extended to financial legislation, and it was hoped that the possession of these powers would render their exercise unnecessary. The Indian politician, it was thought, is a sensible man, and knowing these powers exist, and if

used will make the new constitution a farce, he will not force the Government to use them. The various Governments were instructed not to use these powers except in the very gravest circumstances. Thus it was hoped that they would remain an ornamental part of the constitution, and could be quietly rescinded at the next decennial revision. For some time this policy succeeded. It was only when the legislature refused to endorse a solemn promise binding the Government of India in honour to protect certain important and powerful interests, that the special powers were applied hesitatingly. Next year legislation necessary to balance the Budget was refused, and this weapon of "certification" was again drawn forth amid howls of disapprobation from those who should have known better.

Appetite comes with eating, and the use of these powers has now become part of the ordinary mechanism of the State. Thus it might be said that the constitution of India resembles the constitution of one of the Balkan States—parliamentary government with a *coup-d'état* every six months.

The objections to this form of Government are well known, but may be briefly recapitulated. The principal value of party government is that it makes faction an instrument of dominion. As each faction knows that it in turn

will command the State it will do nothing to overturn the State. It is to the interests of both factions that the Government should be effective and provided with the necessary powers to be and remain so. In opposition I may thunder against a standing army, but my thunder will be rather of the stage variety, and not of the true Olympian brand, when I reflect that in a year or two I shall be in power, that I shall then have to keep the peace and preserve the empire, and that I cannot do that with a militia. If, then, I thunder too long and too loud I shall have lengthy and painful explanations to make to my supporters.

Similarly I may censure an unpopular tax, or an unpopular State prosecution, but I shall always remember that I shall, later on, have to suppress sedition and raise supplies. The most formidable demagogue is thus he who can never be anything else. The tribune who expects some day himself to occupy the curule chair will be careful not to remove a single twig from the rods, or a single particle from the edge of the axe.

But if the legislature is a mere debating club, which it must be if the executive Government can legislate over its head, then the agitator loses all sense of responsibility. Responsible office will, in any case, be denied to him as long as he keeps within the limits of

the constitution. Why not then seek the applause awarded to the pure-minded patriot who thunders against abuses which can never profit him? Why not seek the eversion of a system which must ever exclude him from power? It is not only the ill-wisher of Government who is tempted to play the demagogue. Even men who really wish well to the system may think: "The Government has the power to pass this act whether I consent or not. On it then is the responsibility. I cannot be accused of faction if I vote against Government measures, and I may by doing so consolidate my position in my constituency by posing as a vigilant and incorruptible patriot." It was not only Tories who thanked God for the House of Lords.

The result is that the Government of India is now that dangerous thing, a decrepit Autocracy. It is not easy to tell about any given measure whether it will use its reserve powers or not. This, together with the great size of the executive councils, give to the operations of Government a hesitating and spasmodic march very incompatible with good government anywhere, but particularly in the East. India has, however, been fortunate in that it has had at the head of affairs both at Simla and in the provinces really able men, and that it has not been harassed by overmuch

interference from the India Office. Had there been a masterful and ignorant Secretary of State, a feeble Government, the slave of cranks, at Westminster, and at the same time malignant weaklings in the capitals of India, then the conditions which existed in India during the first months of the Viceroyalty of Lord Reading might have been allowed to continue, and in that case there would by this time have been little to write of constitutional Government in India.

IV.

THE DOMINION.

THUS it would appear that the Government of India, which has ceased to be what it was—namely, the mechanism by which the British people exercised a beneficent sway over the East, has not yet succeeded in becoming an organism. An organic constitution merely defines the powers of those agents whom the active citizens appoint to realise in the political sphere their ideals. It is a condition precedent to the very existence of an organised Government that there should be a body of active citizens, and it is necessary that that body should be large enough, and representative enough, to assure that the realisation of their ideals will be the realisation not of a sectional or particularist ideal, but of one which, broadly speaking, formulates the obscure aspirations of the multitude. No such body yet exists in India. In fact, what is vital to-day in India is reactionary Orientalism, but that finds its

expression in the ashram, in the temple, at the feet of the sage, perhaps in the camp, but not through the estates of the realm, and not in Simla or Bombay. Thus it is that the elected representative either does represent the true Indian, in which case he cannot co-operate long with alien Occidentals, or he does not represent the true Indian, in which case his co-operation is of little value.

Given time and patience and determination it might have been possible to create the political body necessary. That was what was meant in the good old days when people used to talk amiably and vaguely about "fitting India for self-government." Nothing, however, was done except the creation of some rather lamentable local bodies, municipalities, and the like. These gave no practical lessons in civics. Theoretical civics must be taught in colleges no longer seedbeds of sedition, by a press no longer an active agent of corruption, and by the spoken word of the statesman and not of the agitator. Disloyalty would cease to be rewarded and loyalty penalised. On the other hand, the recipient of full citizenship would be required to sacrifice some of his Orientalism. In this way some colourable imitation of Westernism might have been introduced into India and have flourished there for a time. Whether it would have been worth while to take so much

pains to create a hybrid plant of that kind may be doubtful, for the experiences of the Portuguese in India and of the Spaniards in America were not encouraging. In any case nothing of the kind was done or will now be done.

It is true that our present constitution is transitional, and it is supposed that this transitional period will be used to train the rising Indian politician, whether elector or elected, in the way he should go. But this transitional constitution can form no school of citizens for the very reason that it is by definition transitory. All new instruments are uneasy to work. It takes time before the hand of the artisan becomes wedded to the tool. Who will take the trouble to learn the powers and limitations of a large and complicated machine which in a few months must be thrown on the scrap-heap? Thus it has never been worth while for the moderate politician to explore the possibilities of the present constitution. When there is friction, as there always must be before a machine is run in, instead of lubricating and carrying on tenderly till the very friction has done its work, he cries out impatiently that the bearings are so ill-adjusted that the machine is a death-trap. The reformers, therefore, in providing for a periodical revision of the constitution, were doing the one thing certain to make their labours wholly

sterile. They allege the analogy of the East India Company whose charter was periodically revised by Parliament. The analogy in any case between the affairs of a trading company and the affairs of a transoceanic Empire is very weak. Up till 1832, at any rate, the East India Company possessed great political power in England, and in an England full of powerful corporations, no politician was in the least likely unnecessarily to attack the privileges of a powerful corporation. Thus the East India Company was assured that at each such periodical revision no very far-reaching change, and indeed no change which was not demanded by public opinion in England, would be introduced. As for Indian public opinion, it did not exist or was not heard. It was therefore the object of all so to work the existing charter as to stave off changes. But the Indian politician has learned from experience that bluff and agitation and menace can win in the scented darkness of propaganda from inexperience, ambition, and idealism almost any concession which he may choose to demand. It is therefore not to his interest to work a constitution which imposes any limitations on his ambition. It is more profitable for him to say, "This constitution does not work. It must be scrapped. Trust the great heart of India," than to say, "See what

I have made of this excellent constitution, and how smoothly it runs! Would you not be pleased to extend my powers?" He might get the reply, "In that case there seems no need for change." In any case it seems rather the act of an optimist to pierce the dam and to say to the rushing waters, "Now mind. Only so many cusecs."

English politicians will wish to get rid of continual agitation, they also will wish to have a share in the laurels of Montagu and Morley, and to take the centre of the stage as solvers of the Indian Problem. The Tory will fear that the next decennial revision will fall during the incumbency of a Labour Government, the Red will fear Tory reaction. There is thus admittedly not the least chance that the revision of the present constitution, effected slowly and gradually with decennial rests, will be practicable. Some change is urgently called for. What will that be? Not reaction certainly; no responsible politician would recommend that. There is one attractive path down which the destinies of India might have marched to a fair future, but I shall not indicate it, because no one is yet ready to take that way. I apprehend therefore that it will be necessary very much to accelerate the grant of full self-government.

This seems the most logical way out of the

present limbo. It is attractive also. England has surrendered her right to guide the destinies of India directly, and might therefore wisely allow the Indians to try their hand, unembarrassed by occasional intervention. Exhortation, precept, and advice would be as effective then as they are now, that is not at all. To be to some extent responsible, and yet not to have the power to control, is never very satisfactory. It is ungracious always to say "No" to urgent demands, particularly when one is not very certain that the demands are unreasonable. After all, these are now purely Indian problems and why should we interfere? The condition of parties at home is not unfavourable to "a generous concession to the demands of an awakened India." The Conservative Party, both by its merits and defects, is condemned to a sterile opportunism, better no doubt than a sterile reaction, but not capable of great things; Liberalism is dead, and was in any case suspicious of the Indian Empire; Labour is pledged to the "liberation" of India, both as residuary legatee of the Radicals and because it fears that a prosperous and controlled India might be a formidable rival to an industrial system based on doles, strikes, and uneconomic wages.

Thus the grant of Dominion status is nearer than some think, so near indeed that I can

already hear the pæans of praise chanted in chorus by official panegyrists in honour of the politician who may be responsible for this "daring act of constructive statesmanship." But though this act of abdication is an act of necessity, it is not a pleasant necessity. It will be perhaps more than the end of an old song, it may be the beginning of a new threnody.

What does Dominion status mean, or rather what did it mean before that Charter of Dissolution of the British Empire recently exhibited, with which I shall deal later? In the system of Dominion Government the Crown of England, that is to say the Government of Great Britain, is represented by a Governor-General at the Dominion Capital. In some cases there are also Governors representing the Crown in the various provinces of the Dominion, but this is not in accordance with modern ideas. The Governor-General or Governor has all the rights of the British monarch, that is to say none that he can exercise independently of the advice of his Ministers. The independent exercise of the most indubitable Royal prerogatives by the nominal head of the executive is highly resented. The Governor-General has the nominal right to reserve legislation for the consideration of the Crown, that is for the approval of the British Govern-

ment, and also to exercise his constitutional powers, not in accordance with the advice of his Dominion Ministry, but with the orders of the British Ministry. But whatever may have been the case in the past, the exercise of such a right hereafter would be wholly impossible.

Thus the full executive power of the Government is lodged in the Ministry, that is, in a Committee of the Legislature. The constitutions of the Dominions are established in one of two ways, either by an Imperial Statute, nominally not subject to revision by the Dominion Legislature, or by a Statute capable of revision there. In either case, however, the power of the Dominion Legislature is not seriously limited, because if the governing party in, say, the Dominion of Canada wished to change some provision of the Imperial Act constituting the Dominion, such change would be made as a matter of course by the Imperial Parliament. If that body refused so to do the Canadian Ministry would resign, and the Government of the Dominion would lapse. Similarly, though the British Parliament has the right of legislating over the heads of a Dominion Legislature, yet it would not do so, unless with the consent of the local Ministry, because such legislation would be much resented in the Dominion affected, and also because

there would be no means of enforcing the law. It follows then that, at any rate as regards their internal affairs, the Dominions are wholly masters of their own destinies.

Thus it would appear that the Dominion of India would have complete autonomy, and that whatever caveats might be introduced into the Act constituting it would be wholly nugatory. Britain must trust to the good sense, to the political sagacity, and to the administrative ability of the Indian Legislatures to preserve and maintain the Empire of India. Our system of Dominion Government postulates that no responsible statesman would in these days confiscate property, persecute opinion, proscribe individuals or classes, repudiate debts or liabilities, in fact govern badly when he could govern well. On the whole this optimism has been justified as regards the Dominions, and naturally so. They are inhabited by men of our own faith, race, blood, and traditions. Why should Englishmen abroad lose that political ability which they possess at home? Misled by a false analogy, Britain is apt to think that free institutions make free citizens. The converse is the case. This should be obvious on inspection, but if examples are needed the cases of Haiti, China, and Persia may be cited as well as our own colony of Jamaica.

In any case, whether the Government of India wishes to govern well or badly, it will be quite beyond the competence of the British people to interfere. The Viceroy will be there, probably but not necessarily an English statesman, the local Governors will perhaps be there. They will have their instructions breathing the veritable spirit of parental mildness. They may be reluctant to pass Acts or enforce measures which they suppose to be unjust or dangerous. They may represent in private to their Ministry the objections to the course proposed. They may even by a stretch of the prerogative attempt to provide themselves with other "advisers." But ultimately, if their Government stands firm, they must obey, and impress on the legislative or administrative Act in question the sanction of the Crown of England. Resistance to any such Act or measure on the part of a damnified minority will then be crime of rebellion, and will, if necessary, be suppressed by the whole force of the Empire.

There are some who rely on the Chartered High Courts to form a bulwark against any possible intentional or unintentional oppressive legislation of the Government of Dominion India. The protection which the Courts of Justice can give against oppressive legislation is very weak. The Courts must interpret the

law of the land, and though a factious judiciary may embarrass the executive, it cannot long defy him who possesses the legislative power. As under the Dominion form of Government the Executive, as it exists from time to time, has complete control of the legislature, it will be seen that no Court, however powerful, can long control the executive. An exception, no doubt, exists when the Dominion Government is created and limited by an Act of the Imperial Legislature not subject to revision by the Dominion Legislature.

In such a case it may be the duty of the Court to pronounce that a legislative Act is *ultra vires* of the Dominion Legislature, and that consequently executive measures taken thereunder are illegal and null. But, as stated before, this kind of limiting legislature is much out of fashion, and where it exists is merely an invitation to the Dominion Government to press the Imperial Parliament for an amendment to the constituting Act. Moreover, that extreme jealousy of the Executive which, owing to historical reasons, exists in the Indian High Courts, does not exist in the Dominion Courts, and cannot survive where the Judges are appointed on the recommendation of the Dominion Governments. The Privy Council is a strong bulwark of the rights of British citizens in the transoceanic territories, but the Privy

Council can but administer the law as it finds it, and is helpless before a well-drawn statute. Moreover, the jurisdiction of the Privy Council is not likely long to remain as extensive as at present. The Dominions are resentful of its power, and its existence is a reminder to them of the existence of the residuary royal power (not delegated to the Governor-General, and hence not invoked by the advice of the Dominion Ministry) which is supposed to limit the liberties of the Dominions. It is not therefore the Royal Courts which will control the march of the policy of Free India.

I wish to look on the bright side of things and to repel the accusation of pessimism. I will therefore suppose that Dominion self-government is able to establish itself, and continue for a time without coming to ruin. That it will in any case prove to be merely a preliminary stage through which India will pass to a form of government more suited to her needs and traditions is perfectly certain, but we may trust that the transition will not be too abrupt. Let us suppose that India may remain contented with Dominion status at least during our lifetime. In that case it may be worth while to consider a few difficulties with which it will be necessary to contend.

Parliamentary Government is everywhere on the decline, principally for the reason that

parliamentary government requires the existence of two, and not more than two, not over-discrepant factions in the State. The parties must agree in fundamentals, but differ in details. If there is a fundamental difference in principles then there is always the risk that the dominant party, appealing to some mandate or mission higher than the law of the constitution, may refuse to surrender power when the country is tired of it. If there is no difference in details, the factions split up into little bands of plunderers held together not by principle, but by the self-interest of a gang of brigands. Of such a government a country soon gets tired, and is apt to look around it for a saviour of society. There are no true parties in India, hence there are factions no doubt, but as many factions as there are politicians. It would seem very difficult, in these circumstances, for any statesman to form a strong and united cabinet. In that case the executive must needs be very weak, and a weak executive, always pernicious, is particularly pernicious in the East.

Assuming, however, that this difficulty is surmounted in the course of time, and that a series of reasonably strong ministries can be constructed, it is next necessary to consider the subordinate executive. Up till recently the principal subordinate posts in the

administration were reserved for Europeans. Recently a large measure of Indianisation has been effected, and the European element has been reduced in all the services.

It is alleged that the presence of European officials in adequate numbers is still an essential to good government in India. That may be true, but there is not the least likelihood that Dominion India will continue to employ Europeans in any considerable numbers, either in the civil services or in the army. This seems to be almost too clear for argument. Would it be possible to force English officials on Canada or South Africa? The idea is preposterous. Should we in England welcome the statutory monopolisation of all or any of the well-paid administrative posts in England by Japanese young men? Would it much mend matters if it were clearly demonstrated that the Japanese were far more competent than men of our race and blood? But the Indians will recognise the necessity of using, for a time at least, the energy, ability, and impartiality of British youth in the higher administrative posts? Will they? I see no signs of wings about Indian politicians, yet surely such recognition presupposes a prætor-human lack of self-respect and self-seeking. For what base people, humanly speaking, would be those who, holding the supreme dominion

of three hundred millions of the human race, yet frankly admitted that they were incapable of finding in their own ranks men capable of honestly collecting the revenue of a county, of impartially administering justice, or of valiantly combating crime. The debate on the proposals of the Lee Commission shows that Indians are neither so modest nor so saintly as expected.

For these reasons, if Europeans are to be employed in any large numbers in India, they must be forced on her. But it is impossible to force any measure on a Dominion of which that Dominion disapproves, for there is no mechanism whereby a Dominion executive can be compelled to do anything so long as it retains the confidence of the Dominion legislature. But even supposing that it was possible to force Europeans on to Free India, I do not quite see whence these Europeans would be recruited.

> "My son became a slave, though not purchased or bound,
> The hireling of a stranger who begrudged him his hire"

was not a pleasing reflection to the dead Moslem; it would certainly be very disagreeable to the living Christian. Who, except a shameless parasite, would be willing to be forced at the point of the bayonet on unwilling hosts? Who, except a vile mercenary, would promise

in consideration of high wages to do all things? But the wages would be high. Money, though it is much, is not everything. Loyal service loyally accepted by some veritable ruler of men is good, and it is good to receive authority to exercise it untrammelled and to see the fruit of your labour. But to dance in chains, a delight to the juggler, is not a fitting occupation for a free man.

The rôle therefore of the European as an official in India is played out. Doubtless specialists and experts, European and American, may still find lucrative employment there, but these neither by number nor position will be able to influence the character or the policy of the administration. Now, no doubt, India can find among her own sons plenty of honest, capable, and energetic functionaries, but we have already ample materials for judging how much difference exists between a functionary and an administrator.

It is to be noted that there is growing in India a feeling that it is not desirable that young men should be sent to Europe for training. This feeling is partly due to experience of the undoubted inconvenience of exposing young men at an impressionable age to the manifold temptations of a strange land, where they find little control and no moral support; partly there is the feeling (due to

unconscious reaction) that the culture of the West is a dangerous toxin, and that if it must be administered it should be administered in India where it can be diluted and controlled. Partly also there is the jealousy of the man who has not had the advantages of training in Europe when he contemplates the arrogance of the man who has had such training. Thus there is a reasonable or unreasonable objection to the privileges which barristers still enjoy, and a perfectly natural desire to put the pleader on a level with them. In medicine there is the attempt to resuscitate Ayurvedic medicine (though this perhaps should be classed as conscious reaction) and to abolish the Indian Medical Service, that is, to get away from Netley. Even in the Church there is the avowed intention to break away from Lambeth, and to set up an autocephalous Church of India which would not look for a ministry outside its own territorial limits. The example of Ireland shows to what linguistic excesses nationalism can push a people. The Indian nationalistic desire to make Hindi the *Lingua Franca* of India, and to depose English from its position as official language, is not so preposterous as the desire to make Erse the language of the Free State, and may well be accomplished. From these and from similar phenomena it appears that it is at least possible that the process of

Orientalisation of the Indian services may go very much further than that implied in the mere substitution of Indians for Europeans.

Thus the grant of Dominion Government, far from abolishing the bureaucracy, which as a matter of fact was not there to abolish, will for the first time establish in India a genuine bureaucracy,—a body, that is, of devoted officials looking for the reward of zeal, energy, and honesty solely to the favour of their hierarchical superiors, uncorrupt possibly, public-spirited possibly, but regarding the "superior order" as a categorical imperative, and disposing of all questions of faith and morals by reference to files and codes. This form of administration would at once differentiate India from a true Dominion, and would assimilate it to the countries of *Droit Administratif*. In such countries the legislative assembly is little more than a *cour plenière*, where the decrees of the executive are registered, for the executive itself, now the most powerful of electoral machines (for who can resist a canvassing prefect or chief constable?), is not subject to defeat at the polls, and must be removed, if at all, not by public opinion but by force.

India autonomous, uncontrolled by the West, ruled by a caste oligarchy, wielding those powers which are by the current political theories of

the West attributed to the secular government, yet realising the vague ideals of a vast Oriental population, and exercising its sway through a hierarchy of devoted officials in full sympathy with its policy, supported by an army of loyal mercenaries, mistress therefore in her own house, but by no means a daughter in another's, able at a price to draw on the capital, the ability, and the energy of the West, might possibly do great things, but not, I apprehend, the things proper to a Dominion of the British Empire.

But how these things may be in the future it is of little interest to inquire. But for the present, considering how far that may affect the people, there are some who think that Dominion India would at once plunge into a course of reaction. That must not be admitted, because that would probably mean that Dominion Government would at once crash, in which case it is no use discussing the matter further. The danger is, I think, rather the other way. It is an error to suppose that an Indian politician, merely because he is an Indian, has much knowledge of India. A Parsi from Bombay, for instance, would be a very poor guide if you desired to know the peculiar habits and foolish prejudices of a low-caste Hindu living five miles out of the city limits. The organisation of Indian society, which shuts off its members in small water-

tight compartments of caste and creed, so that he who is enclosed in one has no real point of contact with those similarly enclosed elsewhere, is responsible for really surprising examples of ignorance in matters which certainly the ruler should know. Thus there is much danger that in Dominion India social reform may go too fast and too far.

It is always difficult to legislate for Oriental society. The Autocracy was a timorous and hesitant reformer. It could see well enough that certain practices and usages were reprehensible not only if tested by the canons of Western civilisation, but also by those of Humanity itself. It did not feel called on to interfere in the first case, but considered that it was bound to interfere in the second. Thus polygamy was anathema in the West, but is in no way contrary to what used to be called the laws of nature. With polygamy therefore the Autocracy did not interfere. On the other hand, the laws of nature themselves seemed to forbid acts like the burial alive of lepers, the castration of minor boys, the immolation of female children, the burning of widows. Acts like these the Autocracy was bold to prohibit. But there were numerous other practices and usages where the distinction was not so clear. In such cases the Autocracy, remembering the events of 1857 and reluctant

to do anything which might be distorted into an attack on religion, in vain sought for guidance and support from enlightened Indian public opinion. One great advantage which was expected from the reforms was that the legislatures, consisting of men more advanced than the masses, and yet in sympathy with them, might themselves ascertain what was amiss, and cure patent evils with a skilful and patient hand. Enlightened India would, it was hoped, accept reforms which were initiated by men of their own creed and race, which it would have rejected if suggested by foreigners. But what with the influence of reactionary Orientalism, which will never admit that any abuse is an abuse, and what with unpractical idealism which thinks that any evil can be reformed by a statute, these hopes have not been fulfilled, and there is much fear that Free India may gravely err in this respect.

The danger from reactionary Orientalism is more in the sphere of administration than of legislation, the danger from unpractical idealism is in the sphere of legislation, for in their efforts to make it appear that India is a worthy member of the comity of nations, the idealists may well pass an infinity of laws which, admirable in themselves, are not in harmony with the ideas of those for whose benefit they are passed. This policy, which is succinctly described as

Josephism, is a particular vice of illuminated rulers of a backward State. It seems particularly prevalent in the East, and is a bad sign.

Braccio disapproved of the Moorish front idly sketched by Luria on the plan of the Florentine Duomo. In the circumstances his apprehension was justified. But the converse process is equally disquieting. All the awakened Eastern nations are at present erecting a façade of Westernism, but behind this stucco imitation of the Palais Bourbon stand unshaken and immovable the Seraglio and the Seven Towers. It is easy enough to reach out for Code Napoléon or Bentham, and to draft an edict which will excite the admiration of the globe-trotter or the tendencious newsvendor, but the difficulty begins when you seek to enforce it on a reluctant people by agents in sympathy with that reluctance.

We have had, even in the West, examples in ancient and modern times of this sort of legislation, and of its effects, but at least the consumption of alcohol and the commission of sexual irregularities are not sanctioned by our Scriptures, far less made religiously incumbent. In the East it is particularly incumbent on the civil ruler to go warily, for he is but a newcomer in the field of legislation, and will find much of that field already occupied

by the laws of religion. In short, the social reformer who goes too quickly will find his legislation either a dead letter, or a basis for that peculiarly abominable tyranny which results from the capricious and occasional enforcement of law. While, therefore, an admiring world may expect much progressive social legislation in free India, this progress may be a progress merely on paper, and the admiration should be tempered with a certain hesitancy. On the other hand, should the administration fall into the hands of humanitarian fanatics (of which there seems at present small danger), then there is danger of grave oppression followed by a fierce reaction.

Much might be said on this and kindred topics, but I am weary of the gorgeous and unsubstantial fabric of shadow-empires and shadow-constitutions. They rise like exhalations and like exhalations they will vanish. A little while ago and they were not, and again a little while and men will mark out fields in the ruins of Delhi, and the mountain shepherd will pasture his flock on the slopes where Simla stood. Turn from what passes to what endures.

Follow me into the villages and the remote hamlets, into the forests and by the great rivers, through the lonely pasture grounds. There live the peasants. It is there, and not in the places of exalted sovereignty, that the

destinies of India are moulded. These peasants have seen so many dominions pass.

Let us consider then the case of the peasant, and let us ascertain what the Autocracy did for his protection and benefit, thus understanding why there is a good report of the Sirkar from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from the Indus to Assam, and then let us consider what will be his part in the new India, remembering always that life in the villages is hard and laborious and that the peasant does not expect much from life. He does, however, require the things necessary for the subsistence of himself and his children, reasonable security from internal violence, and reasonable protection from the foreign foe. A government which secures these things to him is a good government and will endure. A government which does not is a bad government, and is a mere Garden of Adonis which flourishing to-day is to-morrow forgotten. It is the labour of the peasant that creates that wealth, and the valour of the peasant which fills those armies without which there is no dominion.

V.

THE PEASANT.

THE amiable old Jesuit, who in the days and kingdom of Louis the Magnificent, wrote his 'Georgics Up-to-Date,' praises in common form the felicities of rural life, but nevertheless advises his Alfenus to select a farm lying far from the high road. This prudent advice may be taken in a metaphorical sense, and is then also no less prudent, for few classes have suffered as much as the peasant has suffered from the invasion of his rural fastnesses by well-meaning admirers, by theorists and quacks, by exploiters self-confessed and self-deluded.

There has been in all ages a tendency on the part of town-bred dilettantes to idealise the peasant. All poets were not resident in Arden. As in the court of the Ptolemies, so in the court of Trajan, and so in that of Versailles, ingenious rhetoricians portrayed the peasant as fit only to be a denizen of Shelley's island of Platonic illusion. Then there was a partial

reaction, and Balzac, Zola, and others nearer home paint the man who "uses and lives by the land" as a mere bestial Yahoo. Latterly, under the influence of muzhik-worship so popular with our younger subversives, we are introduced to a new Divinity, Koprotheos, the deity manifest and operative in dung.

The peasant has and has had and will have enough to bear without this mishandling. As soon as men settled on the land they gave hostages that they would serve masters, often cruel, often careless, ever more and more avid, ever less and less inclined to protect and guide. There is an apparent difference between the Highland Chieftain and his tacksmen on the one hand, and the seigneur of the Oeil du Bœuf with his villains dutiable and cessable at discretion on the other, but it is a difference of degree rather than of kind, for one superior is derived from the other by natural evolution. The heresies of the physiocrats and of George are, no doubt, exploded, but to him who considers how in all ages and lands the priest, the noble, the delicate lady of high degree, and a thousand other parasites have found it sweet to season their bread in the sweat of the peasant, orthodoxy becomes longsome.

I myself am a beneficiary of the Indian peasant. Hundreds of men are toiling at this instant in rice swamp and millet field, in sugar

plantations, and betel groves, urging the primitive ploughshare through the stony soil, compelling the reluctant bullock to circumambulate the water wheel, that I may without toil occupy my cold attic in windswept Corinium. "Ha!" eructated the exultant Frenchman after a Khedivial banquet, "I have eaten the patrimony of ten fellahs." But I am bound by ties of bread and salt to the ryot; I will not wrong him by ironic deification, nor do I find him a fit subject for opprobrium. He is ignorant and gullible but shrewd. He fears God and commits sins. He respects women, but the flesh is weak. He is kindly, but under the influence of excitement or fear capable of inhuman savagery. He works hard and is penurious, but will waste the savings of years on a week's display. He is intensely conservative, but may by appropriate means be stirred to revolutionary fury. Is he then so different from all of us? In addition to these qualities common to all races, the Indian peasant is peculiarly respectful to age and is kind to the weak and infirm, and is a fond, perhaps an over-fond, parent.

To the Indian peasant the Government is, and always will be, an extraneous thing. Like the Slav, he considers the village the superior and inferior limit of social organisation. The Kingdom exists, no doubt, because it

manifests its existence in ways ofttimes unpleasing. It was the King who exacted the tenths. It was the King who drove off the *vulsa*. It was the King whose soldiers ravaged the fields, insulted the women, raided the cattle, and pulled down the thatch for fuel and fodder. It is he who pressed the young men for forced labour. The present Government does not do these things and holds itself out as benign, but there is probably some deep artifice behind this apparent generosity, for the ways of the King are like the ways of God, and inscrutable. Wise is he who does not try to understand but placates by obedience and offerings. Wiser and more enviable is he who can delude and evade. For the King also is God's creature. The God that decreed the alternation of the seasons, sending now the rain in due season and now the famine, bidding now healthful breezes cleanse the heavy air and now loosing the arrows of the pestilence, He who is Master of Birth and of Death, He who has willed that men should congregate into villages and cities, the same God has also decreed Sovereignty, whether the sovereignty of Nushirwan or of Al Walid, of the Hindu or of the Turk, of the indweller or of the Frank. But the village is older than all these, and will endure when the Exalted Government is with the Kingdom of Vikram and the Kingdom of Bajirao.

It is supposed that we in the West are very solicitous as to the legitimacy of our governments. Indeed it is perhaps natural that a man, asserting himself to be a moral animal, should inquire of those who claim his obedience under penalty "By what authority?" In the West the sources of legitimate authority have from time to time varied. The Lex Regia, Sol Invictus, primogeniture, the lottery, divine right, election, the laws and statutes of the realm, the social contract, and now the popular voice—all these have from time to time been invoked to hallow those men who have taken on themselves to coerce their brethren. The axes and the rods, that is, remain the axes and the rods, but the wreaths are now of laurel, now of roses, now of violets, and now of red tape. But in the East men are very indifferent as to the origin of sovereignty, and the peasant is not astute to inquire into the title of his lords. Who inquires of the rain or the hail by what right they do their work beneficent or malignant? The question here is not whence derived but how used—

> "Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?
> Is the King dead? the empire unpossessed?"

was Richard's answer to one who brought him news of Richmond on the seas. That would still be a valid answer to any adventurous

interrogator of some turbaned Lord of the World. This *Nemorense* title, the title that is of

> "The King who slew the slayer,
> And shall himself be slain,"

is as good a title as that conferred by the sacring of Rheims. Thus the prætor would protect the actual occupant of vacant lands against all trespassers except the rightful owner. Now in this case the rightful owner is God, and God will assuredly cut short the dominion of the tyrant. Thus the King must be obeyed while he reigns, title or no title. If he falls regret him not, for it is the smooth exercise of unquestioned power in accordance with justice and equity that legitimatises the possession of power, that is the Kingship. Woe then to the ruler who is weak and from whom the blessing is departed! We will serve no Ishbosheth, though his fathers had sat for a hundred generations between lion and lion. The success of the Reforms therefore will be judged by the peasants according to their material results. If there be good government, the villagers will be satisfied. If there be bad government to them the Reforms will seem a failure, however much the system may seem broad-based on the people's will, and however clearly the Estates of England may have

pronounced their benediction on the Pythagorean wedlock of Principate and Liberty.

It is clear that whether the Government under the Reforms be good or bad, the peasant will have little to say to it. Democratic theorists think that it is sufficient to give the people the vote, and that the people are then both able and willing to render the Government its mere mandatory. That is not true even in the most enlightened countries, and is wholly false in countries not used to free institutions. In my judgment the effect of representative Government, in countries where it prospers, is merely to ensure that the general policy of the Government will be in harmony with the views of the more enlightened of the electors. The electors have no direct control whatever over the details of the administration, and even far-reaching general policies may be adopted and enforced by our temporary rulers without any preliminary sanction. What did the man in the street, for instance, know about the foreign policy of Asquith and Grey ? or the Lichnovsky negotiations ? or the conduct of the war ? or the peace settlement ? or the "Treaty" with Ireland ? or these very Indian Reforms ? or the Transfer of Property Acts ? or University Reform ? or the Locarno Agreement ? Even very intelligent men are still very hazy about these things,

and certainly knew nothing about them before they were completed facts. Yet these are but a few instances of how the popular government of a democratic State (where the electors are well educated and deeply interested in politics) can, without any special mandate or shadow of mandate, make momentous decisions affecting the lives and fortunes of us all. I do not regard this as a defect in representative government. I should be sorry to see representatives degraded into mere mandatories. The present system of Government in England, which places power in the hands of an oligarchy limited in power, acting in harmony with the people, and thus in emergency able to appeal to the mass of the nation for support, seems, on the whole, the best form of Government yet devised, but it is not truly democratic. The people therefore are not to be blamed if their agents sometimes deliberately or sometimes by pardonable error damnify their true interests. That is the risk of all those who employ agents. The responsibility of the principal is merely this, that he is bound to select an agent whom he believes, after due inquiry, to be honest and competent. Having done so, the best thing the principal can do is to give his agent a very free hand, but to audit his accounts carefully. Under the representative system this is the true and only possible democratic

control. In both advanced and backward States the constituents give their representatives a blank cheque, but in the first case it is short-dated and drawn on a small account, in the latter case it is unlimited.

The democratic system is really a very complicated machine. The enthusiast says to the voter, "Observe this slot. Put a vote in here, and this funnel will deliver good government." Experience has shown that the matter is not so simple as all that. To use the machine needs some intelligence, otherwise you may insert your penny and get instead of the cigarette for which your soul yearns, a bottle of scent possessed of provocative properties, or perhaps nothing but a mere sterile metallic clanking. What will the peasants of India put in, and what will they get out?

It is true that the Indian sometimes displays a remarkable ability in manipulating the mechanical devices of the West. Thus you will see the veritable anti-type of Abraham speeding from ghat to temple on a high-geared bicycle; the secular pipals quiver to the cheerful strains of "It aint gonna rain no more" as interpreted by a gramophone; the whirr of the Singer is heard in the shady verandah; the iron cane-mill has, despite the anathemas of defrauded priests, entirely ousted the thunderous wooden contraption, a foe to the sleep

of our fathers. But these can be worked though not understood. A dab of red paint will placate the demon within them. Temporary repairs can be made with a bit of string. Beyond this a breakdown for the principle is not understood. Thus with the machinery of elections. Any one who presided over the first popular elections ever held, must have been cheered to see how the very latest electoral abuses conceived by the Americans of the South, had sprung into instantaneous and vigorous life. Fraud, corruption, and intimidation, the elusion of the ballot, the substitution of urns, the false ballot paper, the double vote, personation, the nobbled returning officer—all this seemed to show that the candidates indeed had well divined the sacred mysteries of dominion. But the electors? It was beyond them.

No, the Indian peasant will never make a good and prudent elector. Where there is a landlord he will vote (if at all) for him or his nominee, if the landlord is wise enough to bestir himself; where the priests have influence the elector will vote the black ticket; if Government chose to run their candidate he would vote for him. These being absent, and corruption and fraud set aside, he will not vote at all if he can help it. If he does vote he will vote for that candidate who appears with the most attractive slogan.

So far we might be dealing with some countries of modern Europe or modern America. But there is this difference, that in those countries there are well-defined parties whose policy is known. Thus the elector is not voting wholly in the dark. In India there are no parties, or rather for the present there is only one party. It is not possible for any intelligence, however nimble, to follow the strange and Protean metamorphoses of Swarajists into Co-operators and Non-co-operators, of these into Revisionists and Saboteurs from within or without, of these into Congressmen and National Liberals and the Lord knows what, nor is it possible, or indeed seemly, to follow the lightning-like leaps with which prominent politicians pass from one side of the fence to the other at the call of petty faction and personal disagreement. But just as in the army of Antiochus there were many troops with splendid names—the Chrysaspides, the Argyraspides, the Phalanx, the Agema, the horse-archers and the foot-archers—yet they were after all only Syrians, so all men of whatsoever party they may be, or whatever label they may stick on their political carpet-bag, are agreed in this one thing that the yielding mood of the British nation in its matutinal reaction from the orgies of despotism, must be used to eliminate British control from Indian public life. Whether it

is possible to do this at once, and if so whether it may best be done by menaces or promises, as regards these things the factions vary, but the policy does not. These after all are agreed that power and the fruits of power wrenched from the hands of aliens are to be preserved as the sacred spoils of the victor, and must be in no way profaned by communication to the vulgar. What has the ploughman to do with the counsels of Kings? It is for intelligence to rule and for brawn to obey.

What then will the ignorant elector do if compelled or induced to vote? He will vote for that candidate who possesses the most attractive slogan. A good cry, as Taper long ago pointed out, is half the battle, and this great truth is confirmed, if confirmation were necessary, by our recent experiences. We have seen the firm foundations of a very ancient kingdom shaken to their base by a miserable jingle. And a jingle not a very good specimen of its deplorable class, for a slogan should be short, and if possible alliterative. It must, so to speak, "pack the punch." It was not to the metaphysical subleties of the Nicene creed that the West, now menaced by the brief and tremendous Kalima, appealed: it was the cry of "Id Deus vult" that carried the Franks over the shattered walls of Zion. It was not the prolix fallacies of the Rights of Man that rolled

back Brunswick from Valmy, it was "France in danger." It will not be "Das Capital" but the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" which may yet plant the red banner in Paris and London. None of these are perfect slogans, but they have served and will serve.

It is evening in the village. The labours of the day are ended. The cattle have already returned from the parched grazing grounds through golden dust-clouds. The distant hills are purple. The acrid smell of smouldering fuel bites the nostrils. The lamps are lighting. The women are busied within the houses. The men gather on the plinth or in the open space before the temple. Normally this is the hour of talk, when reputations are lost and enmities are consolidated. Now there is silence, for there is a menacing stillness in the heavy air. Perhaps the Gods are again athirst? Two candidates approach the village forum. The headman greets them courteously, and begs them to address the village notables. After certain polite formalities, Mr A. says:—

"Loyal and intelligent fellow-citizens! I am a candidate for the seat of this division at the next election for the Legislative Assembly. I have come now to ask for your votes. If you do me the honour to elect me as your representative, I shall always be careful of your interests. While co-operating with the

Government, I shall be vigilant that no encroachment is made on your liberties. I shall press forward those important Reforms for which we have so long waited. I shall support any Bill which may be introduced for the separation of the executive and judicial functions of the local officers. I shall urge the reform of the criminal law, so that we may be quite certain that no innocent man and, what is the same thing, no guilty man who can afford to pay the fees of eminent counsel, shall be in peril of a felon's doom. I shall ever press on the Government the necessity of more generous concessions in the matter of the public services, that indigenous ability may no longer be defrauded by the selfishness of an alien officialdom. I am in favour of widow-remarriage, of the abolition of polygamy and the prohibition of child-marriage, but I quite see that we must move cautiously in these matters. While I do not at present think it possible to reduce taxation—except perhaps the salt tax, yet I hope that in course of time, with the spread of a more genial internationalism among the nations of the earth and the general decline of the imperialistic spirit, we shall be able to make substantial reductions in the military expenditure. Meanwhile, I hope by the establishment of State banks to provide the agriculturists with cheap and abundant capital. I am in

favour of currency reform, and hope thus by throwing open the mints to the free coinage of silver to cause a rise in prices, and thus enhance the value of your products. I am in favour of a high duty both on exports and imports, so neither our wealth nor the valuable products of our soil may become the prey of the foreigner. It will, I fear, be impossible at present to reduce your rents or even make them permanent, but I shall keep this important question constantly in view. I am on the best terms possible with many high Government officers—in fact I am expecting a decoration on the next Birthday. I shall always use my influence to promote your happiness both as a community and as separate individuals."

An attractive programme! The village elders look at one another furtively and perplexedly and scratch—not their heads. The village idiot gives a sudden cackle. The rest is silence.

Mr A. retires and Mr B. comes forward and says :—

"I too ask for your suffrages, or rather I ask for them as a right. Bow to the Mother! Are you the lawful sons of your fathers or are you bastards? The Turk laid sacrilegious hands on the robe of the Mother, therefore your fathers broke his pride and rolled back the King of the World in a torrent of defeat through the Northern Hills. But the Gods

award victory at their will, now to this man and now to that, therefore your fathers knew defeat at the end. They lost battles. They did not lose their honour.

"Bow to the Mother! The Mother was once ennobled and all men did reverence to her, not her sons only but the foreigner. Now she has again and again suffered violence. Her royal ornaments are stripped from her by felon hands. Her royal garments are torn and defiled. She is sitting in the dust. She is lower than the dust. She is calling to her children, 'Raise me from the dust and deck me again with the apparel that befits my majesty! I am athirst, give me to drink! My spirit faints within me, comfort me!' Will you remain deaf to the cries of the Mother? Then rusted is the sword of Shivaji and broken is the spear of Ajmal.

"Bow to the Mother! I call on you to avenge the Mother. Punish those who have wronged her. Protect cows. Protect Brahmins. Make the land a fit habitation for the Mother. Expel the Mleccha. It will be an arduous and bitter struggle, for by violence is the Mother served, by the tears of her enemies is she comforted, by their blood is her thirst slaked. It is only by slaughter that the pollutions of the land may be cleansed. But fear not. The heart of the foreign foe is turned to water

within him, and his arm is relaxed, because the spirit of the Mother has gone out against him. Already he looks anxiously over his shoulder, and sees the battlefield empty behind him. One great effort, my brothers, ye children of the same Mother, and he will be in flight and we shall be freed.

"Vote for me therefore and you will not be, as now, timid peasants, crouching before the tax-gatherer and the usurer, but as your fathers were, lords of land and the inheritors of kingdoms. Follow me, and these things shall be fulfilled within two years. The fire is lighted on the mountains."

I have no doubt which programme would win the day. It would be easy to point out that Mr B. was merely vote hunting, and that he had no intention whatever of risking his precious life by following in the footsteps of the men of the Mawals, that he was, in fact, merely one of the old oppressors anxious to creep back to power, that he might profit by it in ways not always possible under the present régime. That, you would say, is in vain at present, and criticism would fall on deaf ears. The professional politician and the hack framer of constitutions is apt to forget that there are such things as love of country and love of religion and a sense of personal honour, and that expediency is never all, and is often, when

men, particularly simple men, are much moved, but nothing. Yet they have had examples enough from the Clare Election to the last elections in Egypt.

The peasant having thus been used to give to the extremists the semblance of a popular mandate, may very well receive his due reward—neglect. His functions, now the National Party is installed in office, are at an end. Nothing can be easier than for a Government, with the help of electioneering officials and by the interested aid of a few important landholders in each electoral division, to force the peasant to cast his vote exactly as is desired. There is, in the last resource, the truly democratic device of a further lowering of the suffrage. Voters who are illiterate, suspicious, incapable of combination, without leaders, without organisation, awed by authority and so impotent to help themselves, have always and in every land been the instruments of the dominion of the oligarch and the tyrant.

VI.

BONIFICATION.

SENTIMENTAL agrarians look backward to a golden age in the village, when that organisation was self-supporting. The fertile lands (for the rains never fell short) bore sufficient for the needs of the population. There was no storage in barns, or rather silos, for the virtuous husbandman distributed his surplus year by year to the needy, or if these failed burned it, recognising the dangers of nascent capitalism. As there was thus no surplus to export, there was no external trade, for what luxury does the virtuous peasant need, except the presence of Krishna? and raiment and tools were manufactured by the village artificers.

Perhaps there was some such golden age, but as the historian said about the naval power of Crete, "It was a very long time ago, and probably no great thing." This golden age postulates a stationary population, for without capital no intensive cultivation, and without

intensive cultivation no food for growing families. Now the Indian peasant is not a Malthusian, nor has he accepted the gospel according to Marion. Increase and multiply is to him a very good word. Given peace and good seasons the population will double itself in a generation. Every village pullulates with little creatures, brown, fat, dressed in a rupee and a string, confident as are all children well-fed and loved, gathering in clusters to observe the supravenient stranger, dispersing with shrieks of terror to gather again next minute. There is a great grief throughout the Indian lands—namely, that little lives are so fragile, but many of these will come to maturity and have homes and children of their own. What happened in the golden age when Bapu went to the fire and his five sons divided the heritage ?

In that age men relied on predatory warfare, on pestilence and famine, to prevent the operation of the law of diminishing returns. Predatory warfare is for the time laid aside, nor is it, unless prevalent for over a generation, very effective. True, there are some parts of India, as for instance Malwa, once the garden of the world, where the land, wasted by the Maratha and the Pindari, was abandoned and has lain waste to this day. For when the peace was established and the people would have returned, they could not. The jungle

had grown over the fields, which were again the dominion of the bhil and the tiger. So also where agriculture depends on irrigation, and neglect or violence destroys the canals and embankments, then, as in Irak and some parts of South India, the population must necessarily perish. But short of these extremes the peasant soon repairs the ravages of war, and the optimist must sit down to wait for plague and famine, while the wise ruler will devise means to enable the surplus population to earn its bread.

With pestilence the Autocracy could not deal, and its sanitary efforts, detested by the people, were irresolute, unco-ordinated, and inadequate. Indeed it might be said that the pestilence flourished under the Autocracy as never before. Certainly history contains no record of any such scourge as the influenza of 1918, that arrow of the Lord, so swift, so sudden, so deadly. But the pandemia of pestilence is the price paid for rapid and easy communications, and the free and universal commingling of men with men. With famine the Autocracy did cope, and, on the whole, successfully. It may be noted, as an example of the working of the law of compensation, that the very roads and railways which did so much to avert the famine, have done much to spread the pestilence. In any case extreme

fecundity is a certain quality in a race subject to epidemics and to famines.

It is, however, very unsafe to trust to the operations of nature to solve the difficulties of over-population. In general it needs a careful combination of bad Government, bad laws, bad administration, bad seasons, and bad social organisation to make possible the exploits of the Roman Empire in Italy and Greece, and of the United Kingdom in Ireland.

At first the problem was not pressing. The Autocracy succeeded to a waste dominion. For many years there was land and to spare for all. Even now there is land enough in almost all provinces for the cultivating classes properly so-called. It is those castes who, earning their living from the land, are yet not land-holding classes properly so-called, who feel their ancestral ways too strait for them.

The difficulty could be met in part by rendering intensive cultivation possible. This would enable the landless man to remain in his village, for instead of the few baskets of millet or barley that such a man in an unimproved village now received at harvest, he would get good cash wages all the year round from sugar-plantation, lemon-grove, or vineyard. Cotton and wheat also (the great export staples) need much labour, and must pay well for it. This was clearly the best policy, being agreeable

and profitable to all concerned. Or again, the surplus population might be directed from over-populated tracts to lands lying waste either in the same or some adjacent province; or the excess labour force might be directed to distant provinces of the Indian Empire where there was capital and scientific cultivation, but a lack of hands; or the excess labour force might be directed to some industrialised area within the Indian Empire, or to seek new homes across the sea.

Most of our labour in India is negative, so that when the shadows lengthen we doubt whether anything has been accomplished. The soldier may know that if he was not there many cities of men would go up in flames, and that the roads would be encumbered by the corpses of men and women and young children, but these are times of peace. The magistrate does not bear the sword in vain, but he knows that so long as he grasps it firmly there is little need to use it. The legislator and administrator should work for posterity, and may never enter the Canaan to which they have led the people. But the engineer sees the road where there was not even a goat track, the rebellious river yoked by the viaduct, the railway that brings corn to the hungry and unites the separated—things which he has designed and executed. But no servant of

the Sirkar can rejoice more in his labour than he who stores and distributes the waters which would otherwise pour in power to the sterile seas.

To ride in summer across a burning plain where the air is so tremulous with heat that none can tell which things exist in earth and air and which are illusion, where there is no vestige of shade, where it seems as if no green thing had ever grown or could ever grow, and at last to come to a valley murmurous with many little rivulets, deep in shade, green with crops, the good earth redolent of opulent summer, of the season of fruits, would make the most resolute unbeliever halt and praise God, who creates what He wills, and has prepared for His creatures many a green oasis in the desert of existence. Nor is there wonder that in the vision of Muhammad arose the memory of the valley of the Chrysorrhoas, so that Paradise was to him "a garden beneath which rivers of water flow."

The Autocracy, in its later years, did much for irrigation. When it surmounted its financial timorousness, the effect of many lean years of advancing expenditure and stationary revenue, it discovered that irrigation schemes in suitable areas paid, and paid handsomely. Seven per cent on the capital outlay was not uncommon, and Government could borrow at three and a

half. Captious critics are inclined to blame the old Autocracy because it did not do more in this matter. Some of these critics, indeed, remind one not a little of the financial genius in 'Les Facheux,' who tried to induce Fouquet to build ports like Bordeaux and Havre on all the bays of France. Water will not run up a hill. Much of India being a high plateau, is for ever condemned to dependence on the caprice of the clouds. Moreover, it is not enough to supply water. The soil must be of a quality patient of irrigation. The peasant must have sufficient skill, energy, and capital to enable him to utilise it when supplied. Thus it is by no means over the whole of India that the needs of a growing population can be met even temporarily by intensive cultivation, and, of course, intensive cultivation is not a permanent remedy. As the people had increased up to the limits of the thirty-acre millet field, so they would increase up to the limits of the two-acre cane field. But that would concern the men of the next century.

In India there are many fertile but uncultivated tracts. But their very fertility renders them unculturable, for where there is rich soil and copious rains and no population, the land soon becomes a malarious jungle. The Indian peasant is not now a good pioneer. To settle permanently in a new land is abhorrent to

him. Even the fugitive murderer sooner or later returns to his village, for it is better to die by the rope than of home-sickness. A very slight change in "air and water" destroys an Indian's health. The millet-eater cannot live on wheat or rice. Such virgin soils, therefore, cannot be brought under the plough by the migrant. Capitalistic cultivation is here necessary. Wealthy men must take up large grants of land at a low fixed rental, hire and import labourers, clear, plant, and cultivate. But the returns of such cultivation are less than the returns of commerce and usury, and the speculation is by no means safe. Moreover, the Indian capitalist is rarely a man with much knowledge of or love for the land. Thus nothing much has been done, or seems likely to be done, to cover the Terai with smiling homesteads. The private capitalist is shy, and, therefore, those who abuse the Government, yet consider it omnipotent, have pressed it in the past to exploit these virgin lands "departmentally"—*i.e.*, by direct cultivation. This is clearly inexpedient. Agriculture can contend, and not in vain, against the locust, the boll-beetle, the palmer-worm, and the rhinoceros, but not against red tape.

If the British Government has failed in this respect, it is not likely that Free India will make much of these unimproved lands, but

capitalistic enterprise does exist in certain parts. There are remote tracts where the enterprise and capital of British settlers have been applied to the creation of fruit-farms, coffee-plantations, and particularly tea-gardens. Tea and coffee grow best in the hills, on land reclaimed from primæval forest. Such tracts had no resident agricultural population, and the planter must needs import his labour. The Autocracy long watched this form of enterprise with a disapproving eye. It was not anxious that a strong planting interest should spring up in India; white settlers might clamour for representative government, and would in any case need careful handling. They might come into conflict with Indian interests; there might be unpleasant incidents; there might be oppression. The friction caused by the working of the indigo concerns was often severe, and the indigo concerns were in the plains and in full view of the local authorities. The tea-gardens and coffee-plantations were in remote areas, where the vigilant eye of the superior authorities could not reach. In time, however, these industries became too well established to dread the frown of power, and all that remained was to protect the workman. The Government, therefore, framed elaborate rules to prevent enticement of the unwary and unfit, to prevent peonage, to ensure that the hired labourer

received his just dues, was properly fed and housed, and that going and coming was permitted to him. All parties, therefore, as is usual in the case of honest business, profited. Government must always prosper in the prosperity of the subject. The planters obtained labour, the labourer earned good wages and a comfortable existence. Oppression occurred sometimes, for oppression occurs wherever man enters into relation with man; but it was rare, and brought its own punishment with it, for an estate which had a bad name soon found it impossible to engage labour. But with all this the hopes of Government and of the wiser planters that time-expired labourers would settle on the land in great quantities, and thus form a nucleus for an indigenous labour supply, have not been fulfilled. As a general rule the labourer, when he has saved what he considers an adequate sum, prefers to return home and to be a small tenant in his native village, among familiar sights and smells, to becoming a freeholder in a strange land.

There are many indications that troublous times await this capitalist agriculture in Free India. The penal enforcement of contracts is at an end, and perhaps this is not to be regretted. There will, however, be causes in Free India unfavourable to agriculture in general,

and, therefore, to capital invested in agriculture. Apart from this and apart from currency questions, there is the danger to the planting interest that the planters are mostly Europeans. It is not, I suppose, probable that any Indian Government likely to come to power in the near future will formerly proscribe the planting interest merely because it is European. Material interests, the fear of the loss of revenue, would perhaps prevent that if common-sense were not enough. But the general trend of enlightened opinion in India is hostile to this form of capitalistic enterprise. The presence of a large intelligent wealthy British community might obviously give trouble to the new rulers of India. Agricultural wages necessarily rise in those districts from which the plantations draw their labour force; this annoys the local landholders, and in some of the provincial legislatures the local landholders have much power. There might, therefore, be excessive toleration by the local executives of the activities of the extreme Nationalist Party, who do desire the total eradication of foreigners, and regard their industry as a mere plundering of mother India and a diversion of her gifts from her children to aliens. The planter is easily attackable. Intimidation and malicious propaganda in the areas which supply his labour would cut off for a whole season the flow of recruits, and it

is easy to spread a spirit of mutiny or panic on the estate itself. I am by no means interested in the planting industry. The planter is a capitalist, and my Russian friends tell me—what I did not know before, but what seems to be confirmed by some recent speeches of eminent politicians at home—that the best thing to do with a capitalist is to skin him. He was not an enthusiastic admirer of the old régime or its officials, and did much to destroy it. He may now enjoy (as far as I am concerned) the fruits of his labours. He has got powerful allies in England. He can, therefore, look after himself. But a serious dislocation of the planting industry would mean a tightening of the loin-cloth in thousands of homes of the poor and humble.

On the other hand, irrigation will probably be encouraged in Free India. The transition Government has planned and executed some grandiose projects, and if the Sukkur barrage fulfils its promise, thousands of homes will bless the name of Sir George Lloyd long after the name of Back Bay is forgotten. Free India will no doubt, to the best of its abilities, carry on the work. The provision of water to the thirsty is a sacred duty to the Oriental, and the Oriental here may, if he wills, call to his aid the capital, the skill, and energy of the West. The Indian believes that a tank built by a

sinful man will never hold water. However this may be, it is certain that if there is inefficiency and corruption, a barrage may be as crushing a disaster to those to whom it should be a blessing as any tremendous calamity of nature. If a narrow and Swarajist policy is the policy of the new India, if Nepotism prevails with its usual concomitants of inefficiency and corruption, if the administration be such that the peasants are too poor or too discontented to hope to thrive, if capital (which cares nothing for forms of government, and the willing treasurer of many a hard despotism is but a weak and timorous ally when there is no safety) be discouraged, then, however magnificent may be the project in the Secretariat, there will not be one more sheaf on the threshing floor, not one more village in the waste.

VII.

EMIGRATION.

HAD the West Indian planters, when they found that the emancipation of the negro was inevitable, created an artificial scarcity of land, a matter easy enough except in Guiana, things would have gone better with them. In Barbadoes, where a natural scarcity of land already existed, the freed man continued to work on wages, driven on, that is, not by fear of the whip to his back, but of starvation to his belly. In the other colonies he did not, and small blame to him. I myself am strongly in sympathy with one of the doctrines of the Adamites, who hold that to work voluntarily is voluntarily to partake of the curse of Adam. The freed negro, finding that the casual labour of a few hours a week on an acre or two provided him with all that he needed for the moment, saw no advantage in sweating for long hours at the heavy tasks of the plantation.

To stave off ruin the planter imported Asiatic

labour, at first Chinese and then Indian. The Government of India was aware of the danger to its subjects of uncontrolled recruitment. It saw, however, no need to prohibit emigration. Over-paternalism was not then in favour. Enlightened self-interest was to be the new Moses of the human race. Presumably the labourer would not emigrate if he did not stand to profit by it; presumably the planter would see the advantages of securing the health and happiness of his workmen. Nevertheless certain regulations were indubitably necessary, and ultimately the traffic was put under very strict control.

I am not without sympathy for the indentured immigrant into a strange land. I was myself an indentured immigrant into India. My work was harder than the work of the plantation labourer, and there was no "overtime." I got no free rations, free residence, and free passages. I did not return after a few years with a fortune. Still, regulated or not, this assisted emigration was not without its unpleasant features. The labourer had probably a very vague idea of what awaited him, and did not always find the sugar colonies the paradise painted by the recruiting agents. There was a scarcity of women—though the Government of India, with unexpected cynicism, required that 33 per cent of the emigrants

should be women,—a plethora of drink, and, worse still, totally unfamiliar surroundings. The laws, language, and administrative systems of the Crown Colonies were wholly alien. The local Governments were anxious to fulfil their pledges to the Government of India, but knew little about these new settlers and their peculiar prejudices. The immigrant was exposed to the hostility of the local coloured population, who saw in him a dangerous rival. In some colonies sugar was the only staple cultivated, but the production of cane-sugar was for years a dying industry. Hence acute financial catastrophes were not unknown in such colonies, leading to delays in payment of wages to cultivators. Some of the immigrants found their existence intolerable, and it is significant that suicide was not unknown among the indentured Indian population. Suicide is abhorrent to the Indian Muhammadan (who regards it as the unpardonable sin of rebellion against God) and to the male Hindu: its occurrence is clear proof of frantic misery in the perpetrator. That this frantic misery was intellectual and not physical made it all the worse, for laws can protect the body, they are helpless to protect the soul. To the passing observer one Indian village in the same area much resembles another, and none seem very attractive places of residence. Yet the Indian peasant exile

suffers from home-sickness far more acutely than any mother's darling at his first boarding-school. In this the ryot seems to differ from the nomadic muzhik, and hence it was never necessary for any Indian statesman to fetter the peasant to the soil; he is bound to it by far stronger ties than the custom of the manor or the chains of the serf, for he suffers frightfully if torn away from it. Now dying, to remember sweet Argos gives a sentimental touch to a death scene, but to remember and live, that is hell. Still, with all this, emigration conferred great boons both on India and on those parts of the Empire to which emigration was permitted. Thus in the Mauritius the cultivation of the sugar estates has now passed wholly into the hands of peasant proprietors, the descendants of indentured coolies, the rôle of the planter being to extract and market the sugar from the cane sold or supplied to him by the Indian. In Guiana the immigrants introduced the cultivation of rice, previously unknown, and now an important article of export. In short, many a lovely island owes a new age of prosperity to the labours of the Indian. But the Empire is an organism—an organism of a low type, perhaps, but still an organism,—and not a mechanism. What benefits one part, therefore, must necessarily benefit the whole, and if Trinidad is depressed the

prosperity of New Zealand suffers. Moreover, there is no doubt that the vast majority of Indian labourers were happy enough and benefited materially. There was never any difficulty in maintaining a regular flow of recruits, and as time-expired labourers were continually returning to their Indian homes, the reports they spread of conditions in the lands of their exile cannot have been unfavourable. The emigrants were, many of them, members of the degraded classes, the poorest of the poor, men to whom a rupee was as rare a sight as a denarius of Otho. Many returned with accumulated savings, which excited the jealousy of the twice-born. Some settled permanently in the colonies, though always with the intention of returning at some time in the future to their Indian homes. They were reluctant to settle down as farmers, a reluctance due in part to a lack of encouragement from the local authorities, and their failure to grasp that, the Indian civil law being inextricably mixed up with the laws of religion, a permanent Indian population, possessing property, was entitled to the benefit of its own laws in matters of status and property. It is not, for instance, right that the social and jural relations of the large Indian populations of Mauritius and Guiana should be regulated by the Code Napoleon and the Pandects. This obstacle made

the Indian disinclined to commit himself by a permanent occupation of land to a permanent residence in the colony; but, as a matter of fact, many did settle as traders, shopkeepers, mechanics, and the like. Almost all did well. Many became wealthy. Some rose to a position of power and influence.

There was besides this regulated or indentured traffic of migration a great deal of free migration to countries near India, notably to Ceylon, where the tea plantations are dependent on the Tamil workmen, and to the Malay Peninsula, where, in spite of Chinese competition, the Madrasi finds good employment on the rubber estates. Such was the emigration from India to the tropical and subtropical possessions of England. When the tale of the Empire is told, and praise and blame is assigned where praise and blame is due, justice will demand that to the Indian also shall be given that credit which is due to the pioneer and the Empire-builder. In other parts of the Empire his presence was at first welcomed, then tolerated, and then resented. In Australia the Asiatic was never welcomed, and from those lands contract labour has long been excluded. Even so, however, it was the Pathan camel-driver who opened up the desert tracts of the West, and made the exploitation of Coolgardie possible. In Canada the Sikh, a term applied not only to the true

Sikh but also to the Rajput, men of a very different social status to the "coolie" who sought service in Trinidad and Natal, was at first welcomed in the lumber camps.

South Africa was in a peculiar position. Most of this subcontinent is a "white man's country"—that is to say, the Caucasian race can, without peril to its fecundity, settle there and engage in heavy labour. On the other hand, it is a "black man's country," because the Kafir, though perhaps a later comer than the white man, is there thoroughly at home in a climate and under conditions suitable for his rapid increase. White unskilled labour, therefore, though possible, being costly, was exposed to severe competition from the Kafir. This competition did not exist in the case of skilled artisans, but they were now menaced with Indian competition. Indians had flocked into the country, both as indentured labourers for the Natal sugar plantations, and as free immigrants. The country was admirably suited for the Indian, who showed no desire to return to India. In the course of a generation, then, there was a permanent Indian element settled throughout the subcontinent, many of whom had never set foot on Indian soil, and who regarded Africa as their home. The white man now began to feel competition in those trades and occupations of which he had had a mo-

nopoly unchallenged by the Kafir. This competition was proving too strong for him.

Men whose material interests are menaced will always find some ground for resistance which is not purely materialistic. Thus the sacred names of religion, liberty, democracy, divine right, and what not have many a time been mere aliases for Don Danaro. The South African saw in the future his subcontinent populated by an ever-growing depressed and exploited population of Kafirs, an ever-growing and parasitic population of Orientals, by a mass of poor whites and half-breeds, and by an etiolated and dwindling white oligarchy. He did not like the prospect. How far his uneasiness was justified it is not necessary to discuss, for in politics the question is never so much what people ought to think as what they do think. The Indian was the chief danger. The very virtues of the Indian made him a dangerous competitor. His rivals were, therefore, inclined to deny that he had any virtues. His elimination now seemed not only desirable but incumbent. The Governments began to pass laws of ever-increasing severity against the free Indian, whether volunteer immigrant or time-expired contract labourer. This legislation now seems to have become harsh, inequitable, humiliating, and unnecessarily destructive of private rights. It was much resented in India.

It was pre-eminently a matter when wise statesmanship was needed. It was idle to pretend that 'an Indian was an Englishman, because he clearly was not. The Afrikander, and particularly the Dutch Afrikander, who had just fought a most desperate war rather than admit to the suffrage aliens of English origin, turned a deaf ear to arguments based on the inalienable rights of British citizens to settle where they pleased. Democracy or no democracy, rights of man or no rights of man, no one in South Africa was the least likely to admit that five hundred Indian shopkeepers would, in the case of a Kafir rising, be the equivalent of five hundred Boer farmers. The African question was probably insoluble in any favourable sense, but this need not have affected the question of immigration to the tropical colonies where Indians were welcomed and well treated. Sentiment, however, and something worse, came to embroil the affair. The political Indian had long been indifferent to the fate of the coolie. He was, after all, one of the twice-born, and the coolie was, if not a pariah and an animist, yet of so inferior a stock that his grievances, if any, seemed to his exalted fellow-countryman not much more important than the grievances of a dog, and far less important than the grievances of a cow. Did not the twice-born exclude this people or their congeners from the public

roads; was not even their shadow a pollution? Do we not remember when the breasts of their mothers and sisters were subject to amputation as a punishment for impertinent modesty? But the exclusive legislation of Canada and of the subtropical Dominions began to touch the pride and the pocket of the superior castes. That legislation made no difference between the coolie on the one hand, and the merchant, the lawyer, the wealthy tourist, even the man of science, the poet, and the philosopher on the other. This was naturally and properly resented, and resentment is apt to strike at random. Classed in the same category with the coolie, the "respectable" man began to consider the grievances of the coolie, and to wonder if it were not possible to put pressure on the Dominions to modify the anti-Asiatic legislation, and if that were not possible to punish them. Strong parties in England regarded the system of indentured labour with suspicion. The Labour Party (always rather mistrustful of contracts) considered this contract whereby one of the contracting parties agreed to supply labour at fixed rates for a period of years under penalty as a mere contract of slavery. Humanitarians might easily be appalled by the evocation of the ghost of Legree, Liberals by the appearance of race-domination. The Purity brigade, with its strong

nose for carrion, would sniff with eager rapture round the compounds. That the purely tropical colonies might thus suffer for the sins of the subtropical Dominions was very immaterial. That the poor man might be prevented from selling his labour in the best market did not matter; it was, in fact, a thing to be desired. It was found that the returned emigrant returned by no means so docile and deferential to the upper classes as he had been. Even in India wealth is a leveller of social distinctions. These men had often learned in the school where such things are taught the eternal verity that it does not matter so much what a man is as what he has. The continual infiltration of these subversive ideas into the consciousness of the disinherited and oppressed castes might lead to unpleasant subsidences in the existing social structure.

Enlightened public opinion, therefore, was inclined to condemn the whole system of assisted emigration. The agitator saw his chance. Here was a fine opportunity to embarrass the Indian Government, to damnify the interests of the tropical colonies, and thus affect the prosperity of the whole Empire, and to strike a blow at the whole system of tropical colonial exploitation and colonisation. Provocative agitation was, therefore, engineered in the Dominions

and elsewhere. Notables in India, partly popularity hunting, partly moved by genuine if mistaken chivalry, were induced to make some hasty speeches and to take some hasty actions. In the Dominions concerned the agitators were in many cases well-meaning men, who, in fact, had given up much for their cause; but in some cases this was not so, and behind the whole agitation were sinister influences. Sinister or not, the agitation could produce no good result. There was not the least hope that the Dominions would yield to provocative agitation what they had denied to genuine agitation. Agitation by the weak is always futile, except where there are factions among the oppressors; and whatever may have been the state of parties in Canada and Africa, this agitation was the very thing proper to convert all parties to the opinion that the Indian was in any case a danger, and had now become a nuisance. Therefore the policy of exclusion was merely strengthened by incidents like the adventures of the Komagata Maru and recent developments in Fiji and East Africa.

The wise statesman is he who distinguishes between the desirable and the possible. It might be possible to obtain from South Africa the modification of some of the harsher parts of its legislation by tact and diplomacy. Feeble

bluster and the endorsement of fantastic nationalistic claims are here out of place. As regards Canada and Australia, change is at present hopeless. Canada has no need of Oriental immigrants, and Australia will fight many battles before the laws of nature are vindicated. War against geography must in the long-run end in defeat, but such a war may well be protracted over generations. As for the tropical colonies, indentured immigration is gone for ever; but assisted emigration might well take its place, provided that no colony should be permitted to receive immigrants which did not encourage colonisation, and which refused to Indian immigrants the use of their own laws and religious customs. If this were granted we might see a new Mauritius in Trinidad, and a new Bengal in Guiana.

But Free India is not in the least likely to see this. In addition to the sentimental and political difficulties, the question of material interest arises. Landowners and manufacturers will have much power in the new India, and neither of these are at all anxious to see wages rise. The chances, therefore, are that emigration will be wholly forbidden, or if permitted, permitted only under such restrictions as will render it impracticable. Nor, indeed, are the colonies likely to welcome the settlement of

immigrants, who, however desirable in themselves, may easily be made the tools of agitators hostile to the rights and even the existence of the propertied classes. Thus Malaya must go to the Chinese and Trinidad to the negro, while many men starve in India.

VIII.

INDUSTRIALISM.

VERY different will be the attitude of Free India towards urbanisation. It is true that the turbaned Tolstoyans, under the leadership of Mr Gandhi, regard industrialised areas like Bombay, Ahmedabad, Cawnpore, and Calcutta as wens on the fair face of Mother India. They hoped to hear the merry hum of the *charka* in every cottage, and to know that India, poor but pure, was clad in homespun, and not in the accursed tissues of the West. Material interests and the ladies were, as usual, triumphant, and even in Free India a place must be found for the wage-slave. This is the more probable, as Free India will indubitably impose a prohibitive duty on the import of steel, cotton goods, and yarn, and probably on the export of cotton and jute. The material interests of some, the ambitious nationalism of others, and the sentimental racialism of the intelligentsia make this protective policy certain.

This policy will, of course, damnify the peasant. He will get less for his raw products, and have to pay more for his finished goods. The Protectionist replies that the loss is made up to him by bringing large markets to his doors, and enabling those of his own class, who would otherwise be a burden to him, to earn their own living. I am not inclined to express my opinion on the merits of Free Trade or Protection. I am not qualified to do so; I should be a judge in my own cause. An annuitant on a small fixed income must ever find the arguments of the Free Trader conclusive.

The Autocracy was a convinced Free Trader, and naturally so, for here also material interests played their part. Theoretically also, this policy, which was the very marrow of orthodox political economy, was sacred to men brought up at the feet of orthodox political economists. It did genuinely believe that the addition of a penny to the cost of a yard of cloth would be a serious calamity to those who budgeted for farthings—that is to say, to about two hundred and ninety millions of human beings. It did not like large urban areas exceedingly difficult to control. It did not like a denationalised and cosmopolitan population; it feared the influx of foreign capital, backed by powerful interests in England, which might easily be oppressive, and might perhaps fall to logger-

heads with the administration, which had rather a contempt for millionaires. It imposed tariffs, therefore, cautiously and reluctantly, and for revenue purposes only.

A change is now felt. A policy equivalent to one of Protection is now developing. As the State which once enters on the path of Protection can never halt half-way, for protected industries soon become too strong or too weak to endure competition, we may yet see a Dingley Tariff in India. India, being thus industrialised, the labour question, already difficult of solution, may give many sleepless nights to the new rulers.

At one time it appeared possible that this policy might produce a result which would not be very agreeable to the Nationalist Party. It appeared possible that foreign capital, attracted by cheap labour, cheap raw materials, abundant coal, good communications, might migrate from the Western lands and seek investment in India. Manchester might yield to Bombay, Dundee to Calcutta, Sheffield to Jamshedpur. India might thus be exploited for the benefit of foreign capitalists. Economically this might be advantageous, so long as the use of foreign capital did not prevent the accumulation of indigenous capital. Politically and socially it might be a curse or it might be a blessing. In certain circumstances it might

be well if the "City" were interested in the good government of India; in certain circumstances it might be well that unrestrained and ruthless capitalism would make the name of England stink in all the East. But I apprehend there is little likelihood that English capital will seek an investment in Free India. In India local sentiment and local interests will be bitterly hostile to foreign capital. The local conditions will in no case be favourable to business on a large scale. The obstacles which have for long impeded the free flow of capital to India will still exist and become more formidable. Double income tax, double death duties, delays, local incompetence and fraud, the expense and dilatoriness of the law, the red tape, the currency—all that will increase and multiply. Free India will, therefore, be left to develop its own resources by means of its own abilities, and the matters at issue will be between Indian mill-hand and Indian capitalist.

At present the Indian labourer does not seem discontented. His hours were excessive, but he does not work at very high pressure. His accommodation was and is abominable, and he is fleeced by landlords most scandalously. He is, moreover, much oppressed by foremen, deputy managers, and under-strappers in general, who seek not only to make illicit profit out of his ignorance and timidity, but also to keep him

dependent and therefore docile. In addition to these causes of dissatisfaction, there are circumstances which must make him dissatisfied because they make him incapable of happiness. The industrial system breaks up the bonds of family life. The workman leaves his family in the village, or if it accompanies him, wife and children soon find employment in the factories. His ancestral religion helps him little. The Gods of the village are themselves bewildered in great cities, where all is confusion of castes and pollution. The solid framework of society, into which he fitted like a bit in a complicated puzzle, is broken up, and he finds no place in the new Occidental framework, in spite of its Oriental ornamentation. The Indian craftsman is content to be a brother and content to be a slave, but he will never be content to be a hand. The Oriental is accustomed to squalor and accustomed to splendour, but not to this squalor and this splendour where he who is rich has all, and he who is poor has nothing, not even the air and the light. He is accustomed to a stratified society, but not to a society stratified horizontally. He looks on all this, and finds it wonderful and deadly. The West spreads its coarse lures. Drinking shops abound. His wages are high. His life is unnatural. He drinks, therefore, as he never drank before, for he seeks not the

cup that cheers, the cup of good-fellowship, but madness and oblivion. Brothels abound and dancing-halls, which introduce him not to the naikin of his native village, half-prostitute and half-priestess, but to the mechanical and lugubrious strumpet of the West. And the cinemas! I wonder why the Americans should exclude freely from their territories the generous products of Burton and Glenlivet, and yet with impunity flood the habitable universe with the deadly mixture of Holywood—muck and molasses? Surely the Americans are not more vulgar than any other race? Why, then, does this native art vulgarise everything from conception to death? What is this that I see before me? Veritable lords of men, or a corrupt bourgeoisie aping a corrupt noblesse? Fortunately to the untrained Indian eye a picture is meaningless, for it cannot translate a flat surface into a living image, and our perspective is unmeaning to the primitive. Thus he does not haunt the cinema, and is thus deprived of the chance of learning at first-hand of the glories of our civilisation. Much, however, reaches him by oral communication from those who have seen, and the tale loses little in the telling. Thus he must take with him to every remote hamlet and far steading a strange report and tidings of little cheer —*Mamercorum alapas*,—not such a report and

such tidings as the veteran soldier used to bear from the frontier camps.

Such is the people; who, then, are its dividers of bread? The Indian is not an over-good captain of industry. There are numerous exceptions, particularly among the Parsis, but in general the merits and defects of the Indian character are here also to be seen, and here in an exaggerated form. The Indian is blindly loyal to those whom he trusts. Thus the shareholders of a company regard the capital of a company as so much money lent to and staked on the ability of the promoter. Thus the Articles of Association of a company invariably aim at dissociating the shareholders from all control of the company, and delegating the entire management to the promoter, now the "managing agent," the directors being mere dummies. If the managing agent be honest, as many are, and a man of good business ability, which is rarer, and also lucky, which is not always the case with the most spoiled child of fortune, then the company prospers and pays huge dividends. The Indian in success is irresistible, and thinks the Gods are now indeed his vassals. Mushroom companies spring up like vegetation in the rains. Those who have not been behind the scenes have no idea of the recklessness, the fraud and, indeed, madness of some of these managing agents.

Most companies are permitted by their constitution to borrow money on deposit. They pay high interest, and deposits at long call heap up. Often enough the whole of this loaned capital, and much of the share capital, is borrowed by the agent, who has a running account with the company, always in his own name, and often in the name also of various fictitious individuals or companies. With this sum he gambles—sometimes in futures of the commodity worked up in the factory, sometimes in the shares of the company itself, but at any rate in something. If the gamble is successful, the company may profit; if the speculation goes wrong, the loss is shoved off on to the company; if the speculator is ruined, the company can "prove against his assets"—a proceeding more lucrative to the liquidators and company lawyers than to the shareholders.

When fraud is absent, there is often undue optimism and a refusal to contemplate any possible ebb in the flow of fortune. During the war and the fictitious boom which followed it, the shares of many a company stood at a price which, compared to the face value, could be justified only by an assured prospect of a permanent dividend of 400 per cent on the original capital. But India, with its doubtful seasons, its unsatisfactory currency, its formidable rivals, its rudimentary credit system, is pre-eminently

a country where very cautious and conservative principles are incumbent on the wise capitalist. It is not often that these are found, at least where they should be, for caution and conservatism exist no doubt, but in places where they would be better away. The uninstructed Hindu has a deep distrust of machinery, and regards with intense suspicion any proposal to bring plant up to date, or to introduce new methods of production. He is also extremely reluctant to spend any money on invisible assets, such as honesty and ability. Valuable machinery will be entrusted to half-trained mechanics, and the heads of departments will often be young and inexperienced men, relatives or dependents of the managing agents, so anxious to get rich quick that they have no time to spare for the dull details of routine administration.

Thus it is that India, with easy sea communications, good railways, cheap labour, superfluity of raw materials, ample coal, accessible capital, finds herself under-sold in the Far East, and menaced in her own markets by rivals not so equipped. In its efforts to make the profits which it considers reasonable, capital is reduced to whine about unfair competition, to clamour for tariffs, and to press for a tampering with the currency. But no amount of Government interference will restore to it its

supremacy in the overseas markets. Government can, no doubt, and will preserve intact the home markets, but this may in the end be little advantageous.

There are those who tell us that the foreign market may be safely neglected if the home market be "stimulated." It is pleasing to see how old heresies persist, and come forth again from their sepulchres with new and attractive names, and, decked in gaudy and attractive trappings, seduce the innocent. There is always a good deal of truth in a viable heresy, for few believe for long in a patent absurdity. This new theory of the importance of stimulating the home market is now called "consumptionism." This is merely the old paradox of Mandeville's "Private vices, public benefits," and resembles the common idea expressed by the man in the street when he sees in some frightful and devastating disaster like an inundation, an earthquake, a war, or a government of grafters the consolation that it is "good for trade." There is this of truth in it: increase men's desires and you increase their needs; increase their needs, and they must work harder before they can fulfil them. Thus in new lands, under competent supervision, this increased labour force may produce more than is wasted in extravagance. Thus Mamie and Sadie and the department store,

and the wireless set, the Ford, the summer cottage, the hire-purchase system, are the slave-whips which drive ardent youth over the snowy passes of Alaska and the waterless wastes of the south. In new countries excessive consumption may thus in truth add to the sum of wealth, and the home market may thus be all-important. But what about the old country when the margin of subsistence is reached? What happens to a protected country when the foreign market is closed, where stocks accumulate, and the restricted home market, when stimulated, fails to respond? Liquidation of weak businesses on a heroic scale, the slump *sans phrase*. Alternate booms and slumps, such as may well be the history of Indian industry under Protection, are not good for the workman. He is already feverish with his new life and his unnatural surroundings. The fever of the gambler is now to be injected into his veins. In time of prosperity he gets fantastically high wages; in times of depression he cannot understand why he cannot live. Hence he suspects injustice, and an Indian does not like injustice any more than an Englishman. At present this population is kept sweet by the fact that there are no permanent wage-slaves in India. Unskilled operatives are drawn from the country districts, but do not settle permanently in the towns. The "hand's" ambi-

tion is to save one hundred rupees or so, and then to return to his village and live at ease, till the pressure of want or the love of change drives him forth again. There are near the great manufacturing cities purely agricultural districts which import much grain. This means, of course, that there is more population there than the land can feed, and that the people must draw for subsistence on external sources. These districts are the recruiting areas and reserve depots of the factory districts, and it is easy to imagine what would be the fate of the surplus population of these congested areas if the mill industry declined. The effect on village life of the constant going and coming of labourers from the industrialised areas has not been studied, and would be an interesting matter for examination by the sociologist. In Russia labour was of the same fluctuating character as in India, and there the subversives found their account in attacking the villages through the *artels*. In England the mill-hand soon lost all connection with his native village, and the mill operatives thus became a separate order in the State not connected with any other order, or, indeed, with any institution in the State except by the cash-nexus.

Should this be the case in India, a thoroughly industrialised population will be a very grave problem. According to the genius of the Indian

it could not remain as a congeries of isolated individuals; it must crystallise into some sort of organisation. The *jamats* or caste councils are here perhaps out of place, as those are based on a common religion of the members, whereas the factories draw their labour from several castes and religions. On the other hand, the trades union which cuts across religion and caste is here also out of place, among a people which sets up castes in Christianity and Islam. If purely secular unions could establish themselves and last, they would indeed be a revolutionary factor in Indian life, but there is small chance of that. It would seem, then, that a permanent industrialised population must be organised into caste unions, which, indeed, under the name of *misls* exist in certain places, and it will be curious to see whether the conservatism of caste or the subversive influences now generally affecting trades unions will prevail, or whether, what is more likely, some third way will be found. In any case, the time is passing when the factory hand can be treated as negligible, and the Governments within whose limits are situated industrialised areas will have to meet the demands of labour, to some extent organised, and if possible so arrange that that organisation be not a menace to society.

The Autocracy did not do much in this way.

To solve the moral question—namely, how to effect the adaptation of the labourer to society, or of society to the mill-hand—was clearly beyond its competence. By reason of the limits imposed on it by its origin and history, it did not feel called on to interfere in the internal economy of Indian society, except in cases where social arrangements were contrary to the *jus gentium*. It could not set up temples or mosques, or send Christian missionaries among the people. It could not organise *jamats* or unions, and did not organise friendly societies or co-operative organisations. It left, as usual, the people to make their own arrangements and find their own level. As regards material conditions it did little. Even the most convinced admirer of *laissez-faire* cannot but regret that the Autocracy did not foresee the future, and took no measures in the way of scientific town-planning and control in general, till well-nigh the eleventh hour, to prevent the growth of slum cities. All that can be said in excuse is that the same error was committed in England.

As regards the conditions of industry, some Factory Acts were passed in the interests of the workmen, but they were easily evaded, for the workmen were not keen on the protection offered, and the laws were slackly enforced. Under pressure from London and Geneva, more

has now been done as far as legislation is concerned, and an effort has been made strictly to enforce the law. But the present discontents of the workmen are not so much due to long hours and to bad accommodation as to questions of wages. The wages in time of prosperity are fantastically high, in times of depression they are apt to stop altogether. The workman is improvident, and saves nothing. In times of depression he is asked to take a wage which is below a living wage. Naturally he resents this. This is in general the time selected for a strike, when the owners are glad of an opportunity to close down. Needless to say, there is much political manœuvring behind the industrial unrest. Some of the political strike organisers are, no doubt, thoroughly in sympathy with labour, and anxious to prevent what seems unfair treatment by the capitalist. But there was a good deal more than this. In a purely industrial strike, Government would, of course, preserve a benevolent neutrality, merely keeping the peace till the parties had settled their differences. But how if the feelings of the workmen were embittered and they attacked the factories ? Government would then have to interfere, and as their interference must be against the labourers, not as labourers but as rioters, such interference might easily be represented as biassed, and Government could be

depicted as the friend and accomplice of the oppressor. In cases where Europeans were employed on skilled jobs in the factories, the opportunities of stirring up race hatred were too good to miss. Thus Government would become an object of odium to the labourers, and this ill-feeling might permeate back to the villages from which the labourers had come. If this were too evil a thought for the ordinary politician, yet it would clearly be to the advantage of the extremists to win the reputation of being the friends and champions of labour. It would be useful to them in India, and might be extremely useful to them in England and elsewhere. Thus labour shows more and more an unpleasant tendency to come into politics, and that not by way of the ballot-box, but by the way of the bludgeon. It is the National Party which has called forth this spirit to aid it in its struggle with the Indian Government, and they may not find it so easy to lay again when the Government is in their hands.

As far as can be judged, Free India will not be in a very strong position in dealing with labour. Power vests in the hands of the capitalists and urban landlords, the country landlords, and the literates. The first two are the very classes from whom it is necessary to protect the workman, for not all have the benevolence, the intelligence, and the capital of the founders

of Jamshidpur. The last two know and care nothing about the workman except as a political force, more adaptable for use in the streets on a day of riot than at the polls. On the other hand, the latter at least loves a gamble in shares, and has a keen appreciation of the value of being let "on the ground floor of a good thing." I have no doubt that there will be a great deal of excellent labour legislation, but it is possible that it may be of that type which I have called the façade, and will be applied rather to the crushing out of inconvenient rivals than to guaranteeing the privileges of labour in general. To such rulers a large labour force, organised or unorganised, may well be a serious danger; and it might even be the case that in the storms of a desperate conflict between labour and capital, the factory industry of India, by no means in itself very robust, might be so shaken as to perish. In that case it may well be divined what would be the effect on the economic life of the villages, from whose surplus population the urban proletariat is now recruited. Industrialism cannot, therefore, be relied on to solve the difficulties of rural over-population.

IX.

THE CURRENCY.

But the villager who remains in his village has his own problems. The golden age is long since passed when the land, tilled exclusively by peasants holding in common, produced annually no more and no less than was sufficient for the needs of the population, when the village artisans made all that was needed, when, in fine, there were no landlords to exact rent, no usurers to exact interest, and no Government to exact revenue. A golden age indeed! But I suppose the dwellers therein had their own troubles, or they would not have left it. Probably the women wanted to make themselves fine, and clamoured for the delights of shopping. In any case that age is far from us, and primitive as life is in many villages, there is always at least the pedlar and the tax-gatherer, usually the moneylender, and sometimes the landlord.

Up till recently most of the exactions from

the peasant were made in kind, a share of the crop being taken from him at the time of harvest. This sounds a more equitable method than the exaction of cash payments, but is not so in effect. Power will always impose its own terms on weakness, and he who levies his dues in kind will be careful to run no risks that a poor harvest may deprive him of his share of the spoil. He will thus fix his share of the produce at a preposterously high ratio. Thus the average exactions, taken over a period of years, are far lighter if they are estimated in cash than if actually collected in kind.

But when once the principle of cash payment is introduced into a primitive community, all sorts of complications at once arise, and it is not long before the ancient economy of the village is broken up for good and all. The first problem in considering the new relations thus created is—what is cash ? This leads on to a consideration of the currency question.

It is related that shortly after the battle of Gettysburg, Secretary Staunton found Abraham Lincoln sunk in painful meditation. The Secretary comforted his chief, pointing to the evident exhaustion of the South, the effectiveness of the blockade, the enthusiasm of the North, and the like. Lincoln replied: "I am not troubling about the war. It is that appointment of a postmaster at Blogg's Corner which

is killing me." Similarly, I imagine, if the inmost thoughts of the various Indian administrations for the last fifty years were revealed, we should find that what made the nights of honourable members sleepless was not the Russian advance on Herat, not famine or pestilence, not the Hindu or Mussulman reaction, not the Ilbert Bill or the Rowlatt Bill, not the flowing tide of democracy, not Bandemataram or Gandhiji, but the inconsiderate conduct of the rupee.

This repellent-looking coin, of which there are two and a half to the ounce, contains over 90 per cent of silver, and was in the good old days worth about half a crown. That was before the discovery of new mines and of new processes, and while Europe, still pauperised by the Napoleonic wars, unable to afford the luxury of gold coinage, threw open its mints freely to silver. At the rate of eight, ten, or twelve rupees to the pound sterling, the East India Company, and after it the Government of India, contracted much debt, payable in sterling, or, what was at that time the same thing, in gold. This gold debt represented in part the mercantile borrowings and stock of the East India Company; in part the expenses of wars of defence or aggression; in part the cost of constructing works of public utility, which brought in a handsome but a rupee

income to the Government; and in part the construction of useful but unremunerative works. The interest, however, is all payable in sterling. Besides this there is, of course, a large debt contracted locally, and payable in rupee currency; but with that we need not concern ourselves. In addition to this payment of interest in sterling to the holders of sterling Indian bonds, the Indian Government is also obliged to pay large sums in sterling for the home allowances and pensions of its European officers, and for expenses connected with the English garrison. But as the nations of Europe and America ceased to use unlimited silver for the coinage, and as the discovery of rich mines and of improved methods of production sent down the cost of silver at the mine mouth, and improved methods of transport enabled it to be sent speedily and safely to any part of the world, silver poured into India, always the common sewer and barathrum of the precious metals. The result was that the rupee fell in its ratio to the pound sterling till the coin, which had been worth a robust half-crown, was now a doubtful tenpence.

According to pure theory the gradual inflation of the currency of a self-contained country should be immaterial. If the currency be doubled eventually, then eventually every one in the country will have twice as many coins as he

had before, but the things he buys will cost him twice as much. As usual, however, what looks nice and neat on paper, in practice turns out most complicated. Even in the case of a self-contained country inflation of the currency produces far-reaching results. Those who live on fixed incomes, whether derived from savings or hereditary wealth invested in gilt-edged securities, or from pensions or annuities, find their income does not go anything like so far as it did. The old maid must put down her parrot. The Chelsea veteran must give up his filthy habit of snuffing. The retired colonel must take away his son from Rugby and send him into the City. Similarly those reprehensible persons who, anxious to provide for their old age or their dependants, penuriously, through a life of privation, saved money and invested it in long-term securities—mortgagees, debenture holders, and the like,—lose some of their ill-gained wealth. It is a bad time for parasites. Manual labourers, and, indeed, all those remunerated by wages, suffer at first, owing to the rise of prices. Ultimately, however, wages tend to rise, and even in the interval between the general rise in prices and the general rise in wages labour does not suffer so much as might be expected, because an inflated currency at first stimulates production, and thus causes more employment.

The black-coated brigade suffers more, because their salaries are slow to rise. Ultimately, however, private employers, and even the Government, find that just as the price of other things has risen, so also has risen the price of loyalty, energy, and honesty. When this secret has been fully revealed, salaries also will rise. Trade and manufacture will for the moment be stimulated by inflation, at least while the rise in the cash price of commodities exceeds the rise in the cash price of raw materials and of labour. The manufacturer is in the happy position of a draper who should find that some kindly fairy had every night slightly shortened his yard measure. It would be pleasant for the draper till the wholesale house and the customer appreciated the situation.

The Government of India, when the fall of the rupee became serious, was in a very weak position. A Government profits, like all debtors, from inflation in respect of its internal loans. It finds its *pro rata* duties (such as the customs and stamp duties) increase proportionally to the rise in the currency. Its income tax and excise should respond more slowly. Its fixed revenues are depreciated, because in respect of them it is in the position of a creditor. The Indian revenue was largely derived from the land tax. That tax in one wealthy province was fixed permanently, and had become with

the passing of the years little more than an insignificant rent-charge. In all provinces the land tax was fixed for a term of years, not less than ten and not more than thirty; and there was, moreover, a law which prohibited the assessing officers to increase the taxation at the end of the term by more than one-third. Income tax was a mere matter of conjecture, and as on most classes of income the amount exacted bore no relation whatever to the true income of the assessee, it naturally did not rise automatically with that assessee's income, but fluctuated according to the optimism of the assessing officer. Excise was odious, and could not be enhanced. Moreover, the people who paid it were the last to be affected beneficially by the inflation. India was still a Free Trade country, and any wistful glances towards the seductive alleys of Protection were reproved by the vigilant chaperonage of Manchester. On the whole, then, the Indian Government found itself with a heavy gold debt, and an adverse trade balance. Its revenues remained stationary. In the foreground was heard the clamour of innumerable officials—Indian and European, but all alike paid in silver—and the mutterings of the army. In the remote background the Indian workman and annuitant were heard complaining that there was now no blessing on the rupee.

Eventually the Indian Government closed the mints to silver. It no longer allowed any one who had an ounce of silver to take it to a mint, and receive in exchange two and a half rupees. If you now had silver and wanted rupees, you must sell your silver in the open market (and alas! not so very open a market) and buy rupees with the sale price. If rupees appeared necessary for the purpose of trade, then Government itself bought silver and turned it into coin. The price of a rupee was arbitrarily fixed at one shilling and fourpence, and the difference (ultimately about sixpence) between the value of a rupee's weight of silver in the open market and the value of the coined rupee was the profit of the Government. This was earmarked and set aside as a reserve fund, to be used in case of the emergence of some sudden crisis affecting the stability of the rupee. The Government for long, however, had little difficulty in stabilising the rupee. There was a constant and growing demand for the coin, and Government was the only person who could supply it, and thus theoretically the price of the rupee could have been screwed up to a sovereign. It was urged that it would have been more equitable to fix the price of the rupee at a shilling, as being nearer the average price of a "tola" of silver over a period of years, but the serious state of the

finances rendered immediate deflation of the currency or enhanced taxation urgently necessary. It did not seem as if enhanced taxation was possible or likely to be productive. Moreover, taxation is always felt at once and always odious. The devices of the agioteur—if he is moderate—escape notice, and not being understood are not resented. From 1898 the proposed standard was attained.

In fact this transaction was simply the issue of a vast amount of paper money, with this difference, that the inconvertible note was printed not on paper but on silver. This financial operation produced very different effects on different classes of the community. It did not indeed cause a sudden drop in the price of local products, but it materially reduced the cost of foreign products, thus exposing the nascent Indian industries to a competition which they thought unfair.

Those persons, and they were numerous, who had in recent years hoarded rupees found the value of their hoards, if estimated in gold, increased ultimately by about 30 per cent. Those persons who had put their savings not into cash but into silver bullion, found their savings diminished in like proportion. The creditor class found its investments improved, and the debtors their debts increased to a similar extent. It must be noted that this

appreciation was only in respect of gold, and of those products which could only be bought at gold prices, and that the appreciation in respect of local products was by no means so marked. It might indeed be argued that there had been no real appreciation or depreciation, but that the measure of deflation had merely prevented future benefit or future loss to one class or the other.

The peasant lost over this transaction. In so far as he was a grower of produce exported to the gold-using countries he obtained fewer rupees for his crops. He was in general a debtor, and deflation is bad for debtors. He was in the habit of turning his savings, if any, into silver ornaments, melting down rupees and giving the village jeweller a small percentage of cash for his labour. The peasant had always been accustomed to consider that his ornaments and those of his wife could, on emergency, be turned into nearly their weight of coined rupees.

Now when taxgatherer or usurer was hammering at the door, and he, with many glances over his shoulder, furtively dug up the hoard from beneath the family grindstone, he found that what cost him one hundred rupees to make was actually worth sixty. Further, his rent charge was fixed, but his produce was devalued. The deficit, therefore, in the revenues

of Government was filled by something like a capital levy on the property of the peasantry. It is true that there were other points in favour of the peasant. In so far as he was a purchaser of imported goods he profited. Prices of agricultural produce did not fall, they only did not rise as much as they might. This very levy enabled railways and canals to be extended, thus improving the value of the peasant's land. Finally, there is no one who benefits so much by a fixed currency as the peasant.

On the whole, therefore, this great change in the monetary system of India was carried out without causing undue hardship, and in spite of the cavils of the purists, it must be pronounced that the old Autocracy, brought up in the strictest sect of the gold-bug, did the best that any man could do in a most difficult situation. The troubles of Government, however, did not end there. It was hoped that gold would flow into the country and would be presented freely at the mints for coinage. In this way the inconvertibility of the Indian currency would cease to exist, and the volume of the currency would be regulated without Government interference by the operation of the ordinary laws of supply and demand. As things now stood, if the silver currency was redundant, there was no way to reduce its

volume. It could not be exported or sold, as then it would lose one-third of its value. To trust to the operation of hoarding would be a slow business. Further, as Government was the sole person entitled to coin, it could only be according to the conjectures of experts as to whether the currency was likely to be in defect, and not in accordance with the operation of economic laws, that the volume of currency could be increased. But if the currency were gold, then gold, being universally desired, would flow into or out of India as it was deficient or redundant. Gold, however, did not circulate. The sovereign was too large a coin for the transactions of a people whose average cash income is a few shillings a year. Moreover, it was too valuable to the hoarder to circulate freely. Thus it became the duty of the Government to decide, on such data as it possessed, whether the time had come for contracting or expanding the currency.

Nor were the difficulties of Government at an end there. In a highly developed country the provision of credit and the provision of legal tender, though often confused, are yet different functions, and may best be dealt with by distinct bodies. In India, before credits could be opened by the bank, currency must be supplied by the mint. The mass of people knew nothing about bills, cheques, bank

accounts, and other media of exchange. The rice merchant from the Presidency town must go up country with a truck-load of rupees if he wished to make any purchases from the peasants or grain dealers, and it might be months before many of those rupees returned in the course of trade to the business centres. A deficiency of currency then meant a serious obstruction to trade, while a superfluity would mean a fall in the gold value of the rupee. The Finance Department had then a very difficult game to play, and it played it with remarkable success. The rupee remained constant to its artificial gold or sterling standard.

If the transitional Government has not been very successful with its currency, it is not to be blamed, as it was fighting against incalculable forces. The rupee had not varied materially in its exchange value from 1898 till the outbreak of the war. The war brought with it serious dislocation. The rupee had been fettered to the sovereign, but now the sovereign, and indeed gold in general, had disappeared from the face of the earth. The rupee was now fettered to the Bradbury, itself an inconvertible note whose exact relations to its nominal principal the sovereign it was difficult for the plain man to ascertain. Further, the material on which the Indian currency was printed—namely, silver, rose so much in value

owing to the enormous demand for it for war currency, that it became too expensive to use. Further, there was an enormous demand for currency for war-inflated trade, and for the payment of gigantic armies. Silver must be abandoned.

Thus there was substituted for the inconvertible silver currency a paper currency nominally convertible into the non-existent silver currency, actually therefore not convertible at all. The exports of India during the war years expanded to an unheard-of degree, and the imports from the gold-using countries were cut off. Small wonder that when the peace came the old system seemed to have broken down hopelessly.

It was a terrible disaster. The rupee soared to nearly three shillings sterling, and fell again to one shilling and threepence in a very few months. With the usual optimism of the Indian in a boom the merchants, during the times of high exchange, bought wildly in England, and found when the bills were presented for payment that their goods were saleable at about half cost price. Universal bankruptcy was only avoided by the prudent moderation of their British creditors, and the wise complaisance of the banks. As it was, most of the gigantic war fortunes vanished like a bad dream. Government in vain attempted to

fetter the rupee to an imaginary two shillings, first gold and then sterling. It was only by the most determined efforts and the display of much financial ingenuity that the demoralised rupee was held titubating between one shilling and twopence and one shilling and fourpence sterling.

No person is a greater sufferer from a fluctuating currency than the Indian peasant. He does not sell his crop to a factor or in the open market. He is financed from harvest to harvest by the village money-lender, who keeps a running account, showing advances of cash or goods on the one side, and payments in the form of delivery of produce on the other. It is naturally the interest of the money-lender to give the peasant as little as possible for his products. There is not only the obvious direct profit, there is also the advantage that as long as the peasant is in debt, so long is he the bond-slave of the money-lender, and must take such prices as are assigned.

When there is a wildly fluctuating currency, prices vary from day to day, and nothing is easier than for the money-lender, dealing with his rustic clients, to enter commodities sold at the maximum price, and the products bought at the minimum. There was a fine field open to the activities of this kind of middleman in the earlier part of the transitional period,

and the ruin of the peasant was accelerated by the great slump in the prices of some of his commodities (such as wool) which took place when the seas were again open.

Matters are now again settled, and the Government has had little difficulty in fettering the rupee to one shilling and sixpence sterling. As the pound sterling is supposed now to be on a par with gold, this represents a rise of the rupee from the war-time one and fourpence sterling which is much greater than it appears. What the history of the rupee will be in Free India it is difficult to tell.

When one considers what a mighty power is given into the hands of Governments by their power of tampering with the coin, and when one observes how unfit in general men are to possess power which must by the necessity of the case be uncontrolled, when one looks round Europe and sees the fearful effects of war-time finance in most civilised States, when one reflects on the cruel misery caused thereby to those who should be the objects of solicitude and compassion, when one reflects how the sweeping away of the savings of millions of poor people by the mere stroke of a pen must affect the thrift-instinct—that is the very key-stone of capitalistic civilisation—one would be glad, if it were possible, to take away this power from hands manifestly unfit to use it.

But paper barriers are of no avail against the urge of ambition, avarice, and alleged necessity.

The recommendations of the recent Currency Commission are indubitably sound, and may well enough be forced through a reluctant legislature by the power of the Executive Government. They would, however, in inexpert or unscrupulous hands be most dangerous. If there is to be an artificial currency, the creature of the legislature, and at the mercy of the executive, then it is possible that the statesman of Free India may be tempted into the attractive paths of currency manipulation. If that befall, then some time the day of reckoning will come, and again the rupee will fluctuate wildly, sweeping away in its oscillations the fortune and happiness of millions.

However, there is very little chance that the artful scheme now proposed as a solution of the currency problem will be maintained for an instant longer than necessary. About the first thing that Free India would do would be to open the mints to the free coinage of silver. The most powerful interests now controlling politics, and likely to control them in future, are those of the landowners and the manufacturers. The landowners hope for a rise in their cash rents, to pay off the encumbrances on their estates, and to meet the demands of the taxgatherer in a depreciated currency.

The mill-owners hope that a depreciated currency will reduce true wages and penalise foreign imports. The material interests of the third class which is likely to control politics, "the intellectuals," are not affected either by deflation or inflation, and their sentiments are rather inclined to favour inflation, because deflation was the policy of the British.

The question of the home charges will still press on Free India, but the moderates expect that remittances for pensions, home charges, salaries, and military expenses will in the near future greatly diminish. The gold debt will remain, and no very convincing solution of this difficulty is heard from the moderate side of politics.

A solution is proposed from the extremist side, and it is not unlikely that that solution may in time be adopted. The advanced politician points out that there is no moral obligation on India to pay her gold debt. That debt was, they say, contracted without the consent of India, and in part for her exploitation and enslavement. It is a tribute, and an odious tribute, to the foreigner, as is the payment of pensions to her old tyrants. This liability should therefore be repudiated at once, or at least compromised by payments in rupees at eight or ten to the pound. It would be possible then, in time, to transfer the whole of the

public debt to Indian holders. If that were done, there would be no necessity for any export trade at all. The people of India might kill the whole of the foreign trade, both export and import, by tariffs and prohibitions, and India then in no way connected with the foreigner could enjoy in peace and to the full her splendid isolation, banqueting on the products of her soil, so richly endowed by the hands of the Gods. Whence in this case the bullion is to come which is to form the basis for this lavish coinage is not explained, but, I suppose, from the ornaments of the peasant women, for, although the peasant might profit for a short time by a natural currency, he would stand to lose badly by the allied scheme of protection-in-delirium. He would have to sell his produce in a very restricted market, which could not at present usefully absorb anything like the present production, while he would have to purchase his manufactured goods in a market controlled by a very strict monopoly. If I were a peasant I should not be very anxious to vote to the extreme Swaraj ticket, but the peasant is always gullible, or he would not be the peasant.

X.

LANDLORDISM.

ALL property, our modern economists tell us, is theft. It is filched from the community, and should be resumed by the community. This programme does not, however, seem to excite much enthusiasm among the masses, and for political purposes it is presented in the form that all large properties are stolen, and should be distributed among the needy. Fluid property is, however, an evasive prey, and when cornered, wicked in self-defence. The lords of the money-bags form a solid phalanx and can, except in times of open revolution, repel the assailant. It is therefore towards our great landowners that our modern Babœufs turn an appraising eye. As it is desirable to make odious that which you intend to destroy, there has been of late much peering into the origins of titles, and it appears that we shall, ere long, have a fresh application of that archæological equity—

"Which punishes His Grace for Hengist's crimes."

In India such an inquisitor would have a fine scope for his inquiry. It is probably true that over a great part of India the tenure of land was, in ancient days, as in Russia, tenure in common by certain castes. In India, as elsewhere, progress (I do not say whether pejorative or meliorative) tended to cause the land to be divided and held in severalty, whereon the small landlord at once appeared within the community itself. This, I suppose, was bad enough, but worse was to follow. Over the village community, whether holding in common or holding in severalty, from a very early date tended to appear the great landlord, to the idealist indeed a sinister phenomenon. His origin was various. He might be a grantee of the soil from some foreign conqueror or domestic tyrant, he might be a grantee of the regal share of the produce, who by means of his power and in view of the unfixed nature of the royal demand, found it easy to reduce the peasant to the status of a tenant; he might be a revenue-farmer whom lapse of time and convenience erected first into a grantee of the revenue, and ultimately into a proprietor of the soil; or he might be a ruling prince who, while forced to assume the position of a noble in the train of some conqueror, retained his regnal rights as regards those who, once his subjects, were now his tenants. Again,

he might be a speculator who by wise purchase or the practice of usury had obtained from the original proprietors of the land the cession of the freehold. These supravenient landlords are, according to modern theories, all criminals, and their titles, however ancient, being founded in crime are null, but in addition to these devourers of villages there are also *entrepreneurs*—men, that is, who took up waste land and brought it under cultivation, leasing it out on favourable terms to suitable tenants, and also the patriarchal chiefs of clans who, marching at the head of a band of young warriors, drove out the Bhil and the Kŏl from lands of which the savage could make no use, and founded villages based on the system of ownership and subinfeudation by the lord. These landlords are, I suppose, not so morally reprehensible as those of the previous class, and their expropriation is rather a matter of convenience than of justice. In addition to this (the true landlordism) there is another system peculiar to India. There is a class of owners of great interests in lands who have not, however, succeeded in making themselves the actual proprietors of the freehold. Such are the grantees of a fixed share of the royal revenue who, owing to the comparative modernity of the grants, have not been able to extend their rights over more than that share, and

are therefore in no way to be regarded as owners of the soil; and such persons as those to whom peasant proprietors have in times of peril attorned, seeking their protection and granting them in requital a fixed share in the produce, or a fixed cash payment.

It can easily be understood how in a country where conquest has followed conquest as wave upon wave, where there were till recently no complete or trustworthy public records, where the muniment room is apt to be invaded by fire, flood, and white ants, where for centuries the best charter was the sword, where forgery and perjury are still regarded as legitimate means of proving a title known to be true, it was almost impossible for the most patient tribunal or the most laborious revenue officer to ascertain exactly what were the rights which any particular proprietor had in his estate. Above all this confusion were imposed by the Royal Courts two principles, not of substantive law but of evidence which, valid in England, were not so valid in India—namely, that the occupant is presumably the owner, and that a tenant cannot challenge the title of his landlord.

The policy of the British as regards these large holdings varied from time to time. In Bengal, where the old village system seems to have perished very early, and where at the

time of assumption of direct management by the British the new rulers were without any trained officers, ignorant of the language and customs of the country, and much in the hands of a particularly pernicious set of Indian revenue officers, these rulers, finding that the nominal revenue was vastly in excess of what could be actually collected in a country wasted by long misgovernment and now without any market for its commodities or any influx of bullion, gave up in despair any attempt to recover the dues of the State from the actual cultivators, and turned to the old revenue farmers. They did this the more readily because in many cases these revenue farmers were not mere revenue farmers, but had considerable vested interests in certain areas, or were perhaps grantees of the revenue of old standing. It was difficult for foreign merchants to understand the niceties of Indian land tenure, and to divine the true proprietor beneath the tangle of superjacent rights. Thus the Government fixed the land revenue for a term of years with the revenue farmers, and so long as they paid what they had agreed into the coffers of the State, they were permitted to extract what they could from the peasantry. No doubt it was supposed that they would not exact more than the just share of the produce due to the State, but as there were no

efficient revenue courts, and the rulers were totally ignorant of the mutual rights and obligations of landholder and farmer, there can be no doubt that what was extracted from the peasant was the rack rent. Even so, there was irregularity and delay in payment of the contract revenue which had been screwed up by the ignorance of the Government, the avarice and ambition of the farmers, and the continual fall in the price of agricultural produce to a figure which represented a tribute which the contractor could not pay after meeting his charges and leaving himself a reasonable margin. Thus things stood when Pitt's India Act was passed, and the supreme authority in Bengal was now to be exercised by an English nobleman, Lord Cornwallis.

The eighteenth century was in England the golden age of the territorial aristocracy. Used themselves to exercise power, and seeing how mightily England had advanced under their conservative but progressive régime, the great nobles thought that God had obviously intended that the direction of human affairs should be for ever lodged in the hands of a territorial aristocracy. Therefore it was clear that a State which did not possess a landed aristocracy must be for ever governed by despots, and therefore if it was desired to organise a State, a territorial aristocracy must first be

created. Lord Cornwallis found the rent farmers ready to his hand. If these men are given permanent tenures, and know that their taxation can never be raised, they will have every incentive to improve their lands. They will know that their hope of profit lies in making their tenantry contented and prosperous. Being wealthy they will be able to expend money on experiments and the introduction of new crops and processes. Having a stake in the country, they will throw their weight on the side of authority and of good government. Ultimately they will be able to take into their own hands all the miscellaneous work of local administration, now efficiently performed in England by the local justices, but in Bengal then totally neglected. In the meanwhile the regular payment of the revenue will be assured.

All this seemed very sensible, the more so as the British aristocracy had as a matter of fact recently displayed much interest in improved methods of agriculture, and had turned ague-haunted swamps and rabbit-warrens into rich cornfields and deep pastures. The new Bengal aristocracy would no doubt (*mutatis mutandis*) do the same. The Government of the day was so enamoured of this policy that it tried to force this system of great landlords on to provinces like Madras, where it was unheard of.

Actually, this erection of rent-collectors into owners of the soil was about the most sweeping act of confiscation recorded in history, for its effect was to annihilate the numerous and complicated rights of the various peasant proprietors and of those who, though not proprietors, had yet interests in land, and to convert such holders into mere tenants at will, holding at the mercy of the new landlords. It is true that this act of confiscation, though sweeping, was not so ruinous as might appear, because the rights confiscated were actually of little present value. The land tax, as fixed by the old Governments, swept away the whole produce of the land above what was necessary for the bare maintenance of the cultivator, to whom it thus mattered the less whether the demands were called rent or land revenue. As regards fixity of tenure he was now nominally removable at will, but actually had that fixity of tenure which a cultivator must always have where land is in excess. Bengal had been thoroughly depopulated, and if one landlord were harsh, there were a dozen others anxious to welcome the fugitive tenant.

It is needless to say that the effects contemplated by Cornwallis did not follow. The Bengal landlord did not develop into a Coke of Holkham, a Bedford, or even a Lonsdale. Nor did he show any symptoms of a desire to

follow in the footsteps of Squire Allworthy or the Man of Ross. He screwed all he could out of his tenants and paid as little as he could to Government.

In the process of time what had been a heavy rent charge—namely, the land tax, became lighter as population increased, lands were cleared, and the currency grew in volume. The Government was entitled to share in the benefit derived from the increased prosperity of the country, a prosperity due if not to its efforts yet to its presence. But it was precluded from this by a grant of the most solemn of charters. There was thus a growing difference between the amount collected as rent by the landholder and the tax payable to Government. The landholder, now wishing to save himself the trouble of collecting his rents, and anxious to live in some large town instead of in malarious rice-fields, again let out his holdings in great blocks to subordinate contractors. This example was in due time followed by the new mesne lords and so on *ad infinitum*. The consequence is that the tenants in Bengal, as in Ireland of old, are the tenants of the deputies of deputies of deputies.

The evils which existed in Ireland under this system do not now exist in Bengal. For long it did not pay to oppress the tenant, who was therefore not oppressed. Later, indeed

as the country filled up and hardship began to be felt, the Government, which was by the necessity of the case not very well in touch with the peasants, was reluctant to interfere, murmuring something about the sanctity of contracts and enlightened self-interest. Ultimately, however, in Bengal a whole series of Acts was passed which on paper give to the Bengal tenant a full set of tenant rights, and in some measure protect him from the rapacity and fraud of his immediate landlord.

The palmy days of the British territorial aristocracy passed, and the local officers of the East India Company, now trained administrators, permeated (though they probably did not know it) with the doctrines of the physiocrats, of Rousseau and of the Jacobins, reconsidered their land policy. They had perceived in Bengal the worthlessness of an artificial landed aristocracy, and they were perhaps blind to the merits of a natural landed aristocracy. Nothing could be done in Bengal, but for about a generation before the Mutiny the efforts of the revenue officials, as province after province came under the direct rule of the Company, were directed to "eliminating the middleman," and to deal directly with the peasant or the corporation of peasants. In this process many useless parasites were eliminated, but even a parasite is entitled to fair

treatment, and feels pain if it is starved. Moreover, many good titles of the large landholders were summarily extinguished. This process was borne in silence and with patience in many provinces, but an attempt to enforce it in the newly annexed province of Oudh, where the aristocracy was both a genuine aristocracy and exceedingly powerful, led to so dangerous a rebellion that it was clear that something was wrong. A similar warning was also given in the south of Bombay, and ultimately it appeared that current views needed revision.

Since that time it has been the policy of the various provincial Governments to innovate as little as possible. Where peasant proprietors exist they are encouraged, where great landlords exist they are not disturbed, but the policy is to take each village as it stands, and to ascertain who hold what rights over the soil, preserving where possible all such rights intact, and where necessary, or when rights are doubtful, interfering by legislation in favour of the tenant. In some provinces there has been perhaps a leaning towards the cultivator, and in other provinces towards the aristocrat, and in all towards the interests of the fisc, but, on the whole, the balance has been held as level as it is possible to be held.

The consequence is that over the greater

part of India landlordism is unknown. Where it exists the large landlord, unrestrained owner of the fee simple, is very rare. The large landholder, owner of his estates but controlled by the creation of peasant or tenant rights, is more common, and the holder of certain rights over large areas of land, which rights, however, do not extend to the actual possession of land, is found sporadically everywhere. No doubt bad landlords exist wherever there are landlords, and in the eyes of the purist almost every landlord would be considered a bad landlord. However much the law may fix the rent and the conditions of land tenure, irregular exactions will be practised, and the tenant will grumble and pay rather than incur the wrath of the powerful.

The laws of inheritance both of the Hindus and the Moslems know nothing about primogeniture and entails, and attempts to introduce these by statute have failed. Great estates thus tend to be broken down into minute fractions, so that it is impossible to impose on the landlords those duties which in all countries are more or less naturally correlative with the privileges of a rural nobility. In some areas the landlords are so degenerate and depraved that they are incapable of any sort of intelligent management of their estates, which would long since have passed into the

hands of Hindu money-lenders had it not been for the interference of Government. In almost all provinces the landlords are heavily indebted. No heavily indebted landlord can anywhere be a good landlord, and least of all in the East where the temptations to oppress are so strong, and the difficulties in the way of the oppressor are so few. Theoretically one might wish for the abolition of the whole system, and the expropriation of the whole body after due compensation.

Actually such a step would be impossible, and if possible most unpopular among all classes. The landholder has his uses. He is not an absentee residing in some distant city and known to his peasants only by occasional visits and the presence of the rent collector. In the village that he owns, his mud castle, standing up among the mud huts clustering round its base, is a reminder that not so long ago it was in the castle of the lord that the peasant found refuge from the plunderer. His exactions are irregular and capricious, not systematic and mechanical like the exactions of the usurer or the fisc. His presence keeps away the foreigner and the intruder. His feasts give enjoyment to the whole village. His debaucheries and crimes give the villagers something to talk about in the long winter evenings. If he is a man of influence he may

get all sorts of concessions and petty privileges for the benefit of the villagers. He entertains (sometimes perhaps too well) "high Government officers," and can on such occasions bring before these exalted dispensers of favours the needs and grievances of the village. He is another power which in the never-ending game of intrigue can be played off against the Government and its local officials. But most of all he is an old institution, as old perhaps as the village itself, at any rate as old as the old trees that shadow the village meeting-place. One would hate to see them cut down even if they are a little time-worn, and perhaps shelter evil spirits. For an old oppressor is better than a new benefactor. In any case, except in a few areas where difference of caste and religion introduce a sinister element into the relations of landlord and peasant, the peasant would be the last person to wish to see the eradication of the landlord, or to be grateful to those who effected this.

Rulers indeed who expect gratitude from the peasants for removing their oppressors make a great mistake. Over and over again intruding Governments have tried, by humbling the territorial aristocracy and favouring the peasantry, to establish their dominion on the broad basis of popular gratitude. Over and over again they have failed. While alienating

the upper classes they have not won the peasantry. Examples may be found in Ireland, Lombardo-Venetia, Galicia, and Poland. It might be of interest to explore why this is so, but this is not the place or the time. It is merely necessary to observe that, though the peasant is by no means grateful to a system which benefits him, it does not follow that he does not bitterly hate and do his best to overthrow a system which intentionally damnifies him.

The British Government discovered how weak a prop was the supposed gratitude of the peasant at the time of the Mutiny, when the peasant of Oudh turned out and fought most valorously for his oppressive lords against the very Government that was trying to make him a free-holder. In its attempts therefore to protect the actual cultivator it was moved not so much by a desire to find political support, as by a desire to ensure an increased revenue from a prosperous community, and also by a real feeling of compassion for the underdog and a genuine wish to benefit the millions. The peasant has no illusions as to who his friends have been, and in normal times the powerful Government was blessed daily in the homes of millions of those who would never lift a finger in its defence. This, of course, by no means guaranteed that the peasant

would not in times of disorder, under the influence of fanaticism, in one of those panics of madness to which all illiterate communities are subject, turn out and rob and massacre with the best of the town mobs. But, as I have said before, there are elemental passions which are far deeper than the passion for material prosperity, and one does not judge of the utility of the elephant by its behaviour in time of must.

In Free India the balance will be tipped against the peasant and in favour of the landlord. There have not been wanting signs that in certain provinces, where the landlords are powerful and intelligent, these latter have seen the advantages to their class from the institution of the legislative councils. Their votes are valuable, and they are in general inclined to support the Government, but this support must be had at a price, and part of the price is the correlative support by the Government of the landlords. In Free India the power of the landlords, where these exist, cannot but increase. Their local power will not be counter-balanced by the presence of European British officers, for the district officers will, it is to be hoped, be men of their own class and affinities. The other possessors of power will be the pleaders who hope themselves to be landlords, and are necessarily inclined to favour

the wealthy and dispensers of patronage, and the manufacturers who know and care nothing about the peasants. It is not probable that existing Acts will be repealed, but they will certainly not be extended, and their effects will be much diluted by the sympathy of the executive officers and of the courts to those who command the Government.

XI.

USURY.

BUT, after all, it is not over the greater part of India that the exactions of the landlord prevail, whereas the rapacity of the usurer, and the urgent if legitimate demands of the fisc, are universal. Usury is the curse of all primitive communities, and it is for that reason that most of the divine legislators of the past prohibited it under pain of damnation. The ancient Hindu codes contain no such prohibition, which may, I think, be taken as an indication that the usurer of the Heroic age was more conscionable than his descendant in this Kali Yuga.

The peasant needs financing. He has to live from crop to crop. His cattle die and he must replace them. His corn rots, new corn must be bought for seed-time. He must give his daughters in marriage, and bear the expenses of his interminable law-suits.

In the present evil days all this cannot be

done without coined money, and the possessors of coined money are not numerous. Accordingly the peasant must resort to the usurer. The latter keeps a running account in which is entered on the debit side the advances made in cash or kind to the debtor, and on the credit side the payments made by the debtor in cash or kind. The debtor cannot read, and even if he could, could not understand the accounts of the money-lender, which are kept in a foreign language, or in hieroglyphics unintelligible to the debtor, or indeed to any one except an expert. Thus the debtor is unable to check them, and is more or less at the mercy of the lender, who may enter or omit items as he pleases, price articles sold or produce delivered at the rates most favourable to himself, apply payments to barred or liquidated debts, and is generally master of the situation.

Eventually the debit balance, often fictitious and always swollen by heavy demands for compound interest, reaches a figure where some security is necessary. The peasant is now compelled to mortgage his fields, and is thereafter the bond-slave of his creditor. If he shows any sign of independence, or makes any real attempt to free any portion of his lands, there is a demand for the whole principal and interest, the necessary suit is brought, a decree for sale is obtained, and the land is then bought

in for the creditor at a nominal price, leaving most of the decretal debt still outstanding against the person and personal property of the debtor. The lands are then perhaps let out on an annual tenancy at rack-rent to the former proprietor, and the once free peasant is now a spiritless serf.

I do not deny that the money-lender has some temptations to screw to the uttermost those who fall helpless into his clutches. The Indian peasant is pretty shrewd, and by no means the simple swain of the Augustan age. He is honest in a way. He will never deny and will make every effort to pay a debt which he regards as equitably due, but he admits no moral liability to pay a debt, however legally binding, which he considers in any way unfair. He has developed the greatest skill in fighting off the creditor who appears oppressive. He is aided in this strategy by the absence of written title to lands, by his skill in colourable transfers, by his personal law which renders it very hard for the most skilful conveyancer to extinguish all antecedent rights in land, and by the interminable length of civil proceedings. It is argued that a good system of registration of title and of extinguishing obsolete rights, with a simplified legal procedure, would bring down the rate of interest by making the profession of usury less

risky. This is doubtful, and too strict a law of transfer would work hardship among an ignorant population, and would probably be defeated by the ingenuity of the courts and the immobility of a law of inheritance drawn from the religious law.

What adds to the evils of this system of usury is the fact that the usurer is a man of different caste and creed to his debtor. In many parts of India there are no capitalists, and hence no native usurers. Petty capitalists flock to such areas from foreign parts, the more so as the peasants in such areas are generally stupid and backward. As no Indian would think of spending money to benefit any person of a different caste to his own, and as the one idea of the exiled Indian is to make sufficient money to enable him to return to his own town or village before he dies, the result of this exploitation by foreigners is that all the surplus produce is taken out of the areas affected, and goes to fructify the sterile plains of Marwar or the opulent holdings of Guzerat. The Koran prohibits the taking of usury in any shape or form, and the ingenuity of casuists has not, as in the case of Christianity, eluded this peremptory command. No religious Muhammadan can therefore lend money on interest, and this necessarily means that the Muhammadan is always a debtor and the Hindu

always a creditor. It is true that some Muhammadans do lend small sums on interest, and as these must necessarily see the flicker of hell-fire on the not distant horizon, so they naturally seek to compensate themselves in this world for their perils in the next by exacting exorbitant profits extorted by the most inhuman means. But the operations of the Pathans are confined to the landless savages of the hills and forests, or to the disinherited of the great cities, and to deal with them is a matter rather of police than of economics. It remains, then, universally true that in an usury-ridden community the Hindu is the creditor and the Muhammadan the debtor.

This would in any case be bad enough. The habitual creditor class, where, as here, money is borrowed not for economic purposes, but to supplement the deficiency of income, must in time strip the debtor class of all its possessions. Uninterrupted freedom to the usurer and to the debtor would thus, in any case, mean a serious economic crisis, coupled with a serious political crisis. But there is this further danger—namely, that some of the usuring castes push to extreme the indirect rights which creditors can, if they wish, exercise over the persons and family of their insolvent debtors. I shall not expatiate on this topic, which is disagreeable, but observe that while such practices

are often forbidden by the law, yet their detection and punishment are almost impossible. The usuring castes themselves admit the folly and wickedness of these excesses, but are unable to abstain from them. Thus over a large area known to me the worst type of money-lender is not found. "We dare not go there," they say; "if we do we shall certainly harass the people. The village system is very strong there, and the people are very cruel and merciless. We shall certainly be murdered, if not tortured also, and the Government will be unable to protect us."

The Nationalists allege that this evil of usury is a creation of the Autocracy. That is quite true. In the old days, under the best Indian régime, land, unless in the case of a few fields in each village held under special or honorific tenure, was valueless. The land held under special tenure was inalienable. As regards the bulk of agricultural land in India, the royal demands swept off the whole produce above what was necessary to provide a bare subsistence for the cultivator and his oxen. Cultivators also were in defect, there being in every quarter much waste land. It is to be remembered that the Indian peasant does not, as a rule, have his house and farm buildings on his lands. He lives in the "village site," an area of a few square yards in the middle of the agri-

cultural land, and sometimes has to walk three miles to his fields. It is not much therefore to walk a mile north instead of a mile south.

Consequently, within easy historical memory, if Government wanted occupied agricultural land for a public purpose it removed the occupant, paying him compensation for disturbance and for growing crops, and providing him with land elsewhere. The occupancy rights, being valueless, were not a factor in settling the compensation. But now prosperity, security, improvement of communications, increase of population, reduction of the land tax, the suppression of irregular cesses and levies have made the value of an occupancy equal to at least twenty-five years' purchase of the Government demand.

In the old days, therefore, the money-lender would hesitatingly advance up to perhaps half the estimated value of the next year's produce, and the credit of the cultivator was then exhausted. If the debtor could not pay, the only thing for the creditor was patience. No Indian State would grant possession of agricultural land to a money-lender, and if by some means the creditor could have come down on the land it would have been useless to him, there being nothing left (after paying the Government demand and the wages of the

cultivator) to be applied to payments of rent or interest. There was thus no incentive to the money-lender to let his accounts run on till they reached astronomical figures, or to encourage his debtor in extravagance. So true is it that the accumulation of wealth is not always an advantage in a backward community.

When the evils of usury first attracted the notice of the Autocracy, that is to say in the 'forties of the last century, they found Bentham and the orthodox economists strongly entrenched in the secretariats. "Leave matters," said these sages, "to the higgling of the market. Do nothing to discourage the money-lender. Rather make his profession honorific, his gains certain, and his dues easily recoverable. Capitalists will flock into this profitable business. The peasant will be able to pick and choose, and the dishonest and oppressive money-lender will lose all his clients, who will prefer to deal with more respectable bankers. Thus the rate of interest will sink to the economic rate, 1 per cent or so above the rate at which Government borrows in the open market. Meanwhile, we will repeal the usury Acts, and declare the legal rate of interest to be the rate specified in the contract."

None of these results followed. Usury remained the monopoly of a close corporation. There was thus no market in which to higgle.

The rate of interest remained at the old figure—namely, that percentage which the creditor thought he could collect from the debtor, for in usurious contracts the rate of interest was then (as it is now) a "project" rather than an "ultimatum." The creditor stipulates for 20 per cent, hopes for 15, expects 10, and will take 8.

The authority of the standard economists was sadly shaken by the Orissa famine, though that had nothing to do with usury. It did, however, explode the doctrine of the universal efficacy of free contract and higgling, and the danger of interference with the smooth working of economic laws.

Officials in certain districts became aghast at the rapidity with which lands were passing out of the hands of the peasant class into those of the usurers (it being remembered that usurers never improve or encourage others to improve their lands, but remain contented with the rack rent), and foresaw the frightful danger to society and hence to the State which was certainly impending. Communal murders of usurers became common. Finally there were some sporadic risings, and the necessity of intervention became apparent to the most orthodox.

I must pause for a while. It is grievous for a man to lose all that makes life worth living,

the lands of his fathers, the happiness of his home, security, and personal freedom. In such a case even the love of wife and children is poisoned, because for those dear ones also the future holds nothing but misery.

The first day of slavery deprives a man of half his manhood, but the slave has compensations, for between him and his master are mutual human relations, but the bond-slave and his master are bound together by the cash nexus only, the most mechanical and inhuman of ties. This was a great misery, and it was the lot of millions. But this was not the worst. It is piteous to see the bewilderment of an animal chastised unjustly, to see the bewilderment of a child who expects a caress and receives a blow, but what of the bewilderment of a grown man who expects justice and receives law? Multitudes bore this tyranny with the tremendous patience of the Oriental. Thus, before the cataclysmic breaking of the monsoon, there is a deep and menacing silence. But relief was at hand.

It might perhaps have been well by legislative enactment to put the peasant into the condition of the sailor or expectant heir—that is to say, to give very wide discretion (unfettered by the strict rules of law or of technical equity) to set aside bargains which to the court might seem extremely hard, the burden

of proof being in all cases cast on the other party to the bargain to show that the transaction was fair. But the Indian Government (like all centralised Governments) had a great mistrust of its subordinate officers, and preferred therefore to lay down elaborate rules, which it was hoped would guide the courts in their application of the above principles. Much of this code was useless and indeed noxious, but as time went on and experience was gained, the procedure was simplified, and it is now possible for the courts to protect the peasant while assuring the money-lender a reasonable return for his capital. The law is evaded, no doubt, as any law must be which attempts to protect a man against himself, but it has done an enormous amount of good, and has arrested the process of vesting the lands of India in a peculiarly debased form of landlordism, and yet has not diminished the supply of capital seeking investment in rural finance. In some provinces, however, it was found necessary to go further, and to prohibit absolutely the transfer of agricultural lands from the cultivating to the capitalist castes.

In order to augment the stock of loanable capital, the Government itself made loans to the peasants at a low rate of interest for approved purposes. This system was useful, but it was

bound round by technicalities. The inquiries necessary consumed much time, and the corruption of the inferior revenue officials made the actual rate of interest much higher than appeared. Still the only complaint was that the funds set aside annually for the purpose were inadequate.

Recently there has been a great spread of the co-operative movement, originated and fostered by the Government, which movement has met with remarkable success. For the first time there has been put at the disposal of the peasant an almost unlimited supply of cheap capital, loaned to him by a creditor who has no temptation to impose or defraud. On the whole it may be said that the Autocracy, which had indirectly created this evil of usury, did its very best to eradicate it, and to eradicate in such a way that these evils which were anticipated did not, as a matter of fact, flow from this interference with economic laws.

Educated and political India looked on these measures with much disapproval. Interference with the normal course of business and with the free transfer of land was bitterly resented, and was and is fiercely opposed both in the Press and the legislative councils. It is not proper to attribute interested motives to politicians, unless there is no other explanation possible. It is charitable therefore to suppose that the Congress Party were led away by too

great a respect for the great names of the English jurists and economists, and were idealogues supposing that man was made for law and not law for man. This was the more remarkable for the subordinate judiciary, men drawn from the same classes, educated in the same principles, and certainly no less learned in the law than the politicians, showed the greatest readiness in so applying the new law, that it became a protector of the weak, and not, as once, the henchman of the oppressor and accomplice of the fraudulent. It is to be trusted that the passage of time and the sense of the fearful responsibility which will rest on the new rulers of India in this matter will have their full effect. Otherwise the outlook is dark indeed.

It is, however, doubtful whether in any case the co-operative movement will survive the removal of the European officers. This is a movement where personality is all. Here forms, however neatly filled up, and reports, however copious, are useless. I once asked an expert as to the best way of setting up a co-operative society in a certain very usury-ridden township. He answered, "Find Raffeisen," and that is after all the alpha and omega of the system.

In India the co-operative system is liable to peculiar dangers, for it rests on mutual confidence which is here still something of an

exotic, and it is fiercely attacked by those who find in it a dangerous rival, and by those who do not wish to see the people co-operate in anything except sedition and discord. Unless these saboteurs are kept in awe by firmness, and unless confidence is fostered by a sympathetic yet strong and impartial administration, the innate factiousness of the Indian may prevail, and this system which at present offers the fairest hopes of a new and healthier India may perish untimely.

No doubt, given certain contingencies, there might be no further troubles between peasants and money-lenders. We might go back to the eighteenth century where there was no credit and no security, and when, as truly pointed out by the school of Gandhi, the peasant was at least not worried by the importunate clamour of creditors. Such is the happy condition of the lord of the plough in some native States of India at the present day, but he shows no desire to exchange that hell for this paradise. I am vowed, however, in this treatise to be an optimist, and do not therefore anticipate the final breakdown of law and order in India within twenty-five years of its abandonment by Britain, so that the return to club law and universal insolvency may be postponed for that period. There is too great a price to be paid even for financial repose.

XII.

THE FISC.

In modern Europe we regard the extraction of wealth from the pocket of the subject as a thing desirable in itself. Not only do we thus fill the coffers of the State, and enable the rulers to meet the demands of the dole and other nation-building services, but the dispossessed classes are pleased, and perhaps placated, by knowing that the State is avenging them on their despoilers. The same was the policy of the tyrannos of old, but fiscal science was rudimentary in the days of the Pisistrati, and the income tax in those days of fiscal darkness was limited to two shillings in the pound.

In India we have not yet reached the stage of social development when the propertied citizen is looked on as the mere bailee of the State, and where he has learned that he is lucky to escape with his ill-earned wealth after the payment of a moderate ransom.

We have here, indeed, hardly yet outgrown the mediæval idea that the King has a certain fixed income, out of which he is bound to pay all the normal expenses of the State, the balance, if any, being available for his pleasures or some emergency. The idea that the State should ascertain its wants and should then levy taxation from the citizen in order to meet them, nowhere very ancient, established in England perhaps at the Revolution, introduced into France by the Convention, and since then universally adopted, is wholly foreign to the political ideas of the East, and is accordingly hardly yet orthodox in India. This perhaps is as well, as Indian finances are by no means elastic, and should any Government, bitten by the desire to vie with the lavish expenditure of the West, attempt to demand from its subjects unpalatable sacrifices, it would find, like the rulers of Egypt of the old days, that it is easy enough to impose a tax on paper, but the most iron-fisted Pasha is apt to return empty-handed from the fields. There are few things more striking that the remarkable agility with which in the East wealth menaced dives underground, and there evades the most skilful dowser.

Land cannot dive underground, and the land tax has therefore been in all ages and in most countries the most accessible source of revenue

to the State. But though land cannot dive underground, it can go out of cultivation, and where there is nothing the King loses his right. The wise ruler therefore, he that is who remembers that a shepherd should shear and not flay his sheep, has many hours of anxious thought. Naturally he desires to lay on the land all it can bear, but he desires to lay no more, and the fixing of what proportion of the crop can be taken by the royal officers without causing the peasants to flee into the jungles, has perplexed the finance ministers of many a turbaned Asylum of the Universe.

The despot's share in classical times was the tenth, but in the East, where the standard of living is lower, that was found far too small a proportion, and from a half to a quarter of the gross produce of staple crops was the usual royal percentage. In the case of luxury crops the share was lower and was taken in cash. In the India of the good old days of native rule, this standard assessment was, as in the case of the usurer, a maximum demand. The State assessed at 50 per cent, hoped for 30, expected 20, and would take 10 if it could not get more. The balance was, however, not remitted, it stood against the taxation area in the revenue books of the account office as a pending demand, which if wholly irrecoverable would be remitted with a great flourish of

trumpets on some day of national rejoicing, and which if in part recoverable would keep on emerging from the dormant file for the next century.

The State did not in general deal with the individual taxpayer. It divided up the culturable area of the kingdom into revenue units called villages, assessed the taxation on each of the units, and left the landholders in each village to divide up the assessment among themselves. This, in general, meant that the richer and more influential villagers contrived to shoulder off much of the burden on to their poorer neighbours. As under the curial system of the Lower Empire, this mechanism worked admirably for a time, but in the course of time the poorer peasants became insolvent and fled, so that their lands became waste, and the whole burden of taxation fell on the shoulders of the richer men who had hitherto escaped. These in their turn became bankrupt and fled, and the village now became "*be chiragh*" ("lampless"), so that nothing could be recovered. New settlers, or the old inhabitants, would now be invited to colonise by a special and light assessment, and the process would begin anew. In other districts the State leased out the right to recover assessment to short-term revenue farmers, the publicani of old both in character and reputation, or, what was

the most satisfactory of all for all parties, assigned areas, calculated to bring in a certain fixed amount of revenue, to nobles of the court in consideration of their performing certain onerous public services.

Such was the state of affairs when the British became territorial rulers in India. Omitting the story of the Madras cessions, the first area where the new Government found itself called on to collect revenue was Bengal, where the East India Company, now nominally acting as finance minister either of the Emperor of Delhi or of the Nawab of Bengal, found a serious discrepancy between the nominal and the recoverable taxation of the provinces.

The land had not been assessed since the time of Akbar in the sixteenth century, and since then Bengal, though not exposed to the fiery trials of the West and South, had undergone many vicissitudes. In addition to other disturbing factors the East India Company was itself a disturbing factor, for it had a large trade with China, and the Chinese would take practically no imports except silver bullion. It was principally to the bulging treasuries of Bengal—actually well depleted—that the Company looked to finance the China trade. But the most humane Government in the world cannot for years go on taking several millions of dollars annually out of a primitive country

without causing a shortage of the currency, and a rapid fall in the price of produce. The East India Company therefore found the old standards of assessment quite useless as a guide, and had no very obvious means of discovering what the taxable produce of the land was. How it solved the problem, first by letting out great tracts of land to revenue farmers, and ultimately by converting these revenue farmers into permanent lessees holding at a rental fixed and immutable to eternity, I have already related.

This experiment, so unjust to the true proprietors of the land and so damnatory to the State, so pregnant, in fact, with evils of all kinds, was not likely to be repeated when fresh areas came into the hands of the Government, but that body was still without any very clear guide to the correct principles. The Government came into possession of these new areas in one of two ways, either it was the grantee from some native chief of a province calculated to produce a certain rental, which rental was to be applied to the upkeep of a military force nominally at the disposal of the grantor, or it came into possession by right of conquest.

According to the opinions of the best jurists, when a foreigner makes a cession to the English crown he makes a complete dedition, so that in the territory ceded there is nothing left

but "men and mud," all rights whatever being extinguished by the transfer. Theoretically therefore the East India Company (as representing the Crown) could have resumed all lands in the ceded areas, and leased them out afresh at a rack-rent. The East India Company was perhaps unaware of the extent of its powers, and in any case was not likely to use them. It did not wish to begin its career of sovereignty by an act which would make every peasant in the whole of India ready to die rather than to submit to its sway. It wished to come in as the benefactor—at a price—of its new subjects. Moreover, if it had been willing to commit an act of such flagrant tyranny and had that passed unchallenged by the subject, there would still have been the question, "How much rent can the land bear?" Here again total obscurity.

In the assigned districts the East India Company came in not as a conqueror but as grantee or trustee, and in strict law it could not exercise the full rights of sovereignty. Theoretically therefore it could not levy more than the standard assessment, but here again was the old difficulty that the standard assessment was wholly obsolete, even when it was discernible under the mass of irregular exactions and cesses which had from time to time been superimposed on it. Moreover, any fresh

assessment, if fixed, would be merely misleading so long as there was a continual process of exportation of currency, coupled with the ruralisation of vast areas, brought about by the suppression of thousands of petty chieftains with their miniature camps and courts. As late as the 'twenties of the last century you find the officers of the Company, anxious not to be robbed, anxious to collect as much revenue as possible, anxious therefore not to depopulate the villages, anxious to benefit the subject population if that could be done economically, groping amid a mass of theories and experiments in order to find true principles of taxation.

By the 'thirties conditions had become more settled. The opening out of South America and Mexico in consequence of the revolt of the colonies of Spain, had increased the available supply of silver in the world, and there was no longer a continual fall in the volume of Indian currency. On the contrary, there were indications that ere long that currency might become excessive. Ruralisation had reached its maximum. People had forgotten about the old capitals and were now looking to the new cities, or such of the old cities as had adapted themselves to changed conditions. These were now becoming great centres of population and so open markets, which centres were now

becoming linked up with the rural areas by lines of communication, primitive perhaps, but at any rate not liable to interruption by armed parties of raiders.

Rural conditions therefore were becoming static, and it consequently appeared that the cash price of agricultural produce would not vary much in the near future, and would at any rate not be liable to wild temporary fluctuations. Thus one whole set of difficulties had vanished from the path of those who wished to fix over a term of years the estimated cash-rent, and there remained merely the other half of the task—namely, to ascertain what a fair cash-rent would be.

By this time also the revenue officers had had much experience, particularly in those parts of India where predatory war had raged, and where the population had fled in mass, but had still retained the memory and desire of their ancient seats. This population on the establishment of peace had flocked back to its old holdings, and it was easy for the local officers to discover by trial and error what proportion of the produce the new settlers would pay rather than allow the holdings to remain uncultivated.

From the 'thirties on, therefore, begins the history of "land settlement" in India. The details varied from province to province, but

the principle was in general the same. The whole culturable (not merely the cultivated) area was surveyed in each village, and its productiveness was estimated field by field; the cash value of the probable products was then estimated, and the rental fixed at a certain proportion of the cash value so estimated. The actual occupant or group of occupants in the case of land already occupied, was then invited to enter into agreements to pay that rental or assessment for a term of years not less than ten, and not more than thirty. It was in general agreed with the cultivator or landholder that at the expiration of that term his lease would be renewed, subject to a possible increase of his rent, which might not exceed a certain proportion of the rental already fixed. In the case of culturable but uncultivated lands not included in any holding, any cultivator who wished to take them up could easily ascertain what his liabilities would be for the remainder of the lease period, and he also thus obtained a permanent lease, subject to possible moderate increases of rental at long intervals.

This system was certainly a great improvement on anything which had gone before. It led immediately to a great increase of the cultivated area. Up to that time there had been in most of the provinces the unpleasant

phenomenon of a congested agricultural population surrounded by excellent but uncultivated lands. The Indian peasant is, perhaps even more than other peasants, affected by land-hunger, and would far rather occupy and cultivate sketchily thirty acres than ten intensively, yet he had not dared to take up public lands for fear of the inordinate demands of the fisc. This fear was now over, and in a few years in all the districts where there was a dense agricultural population, or to which such a population could conveniently migrate, there was no waste land at all. The process of reoccupation was indeed carried to a dangerous extent because some of the land so reoccupied for the purpose of bringing under the plough was not well suited for permanent cultivation, and would have been better retained as village waste. The abundance of land tempted the peasant to exhaustive cultivation, and he could not command the capital, or indeed the labour necessary if he wished to do his best by the land. This error was likely to cause trouble when the rains next failed, but in the meantime the ease and punctuality with which the revenue demand was paid was the clearest indication of the lightness of its incidence. The value of an occupancy right rose from nil, till it became at least twenty-five years' purchase of the Government demand.

There was, moreover, little scope for the fraud or corruption of the subordinate revenue officers, for the amount payable by each holder was written down in respect of each field in black and white in records accessible to all, and was not liable to arbitrary increase or decrease.

There was no taxation of land values in such urban districts as then existed, but it was provided that if any agricultural land was converted into building land the State should share in the increased profits which, as our Socialists point out, arise not from the merits or efforts of the tenant but from the efficiency of the State, for in a decrepit State no one builds cities or extends old ones.

As regards such waste lands as were not immediately suitable for peasant occupancy—namely, lands in thoroughly ruinated areas where there was no resident population, lands in forests or in mountains, or lands which must be reclaimed from the sea or from inundation, all lands, in fact, where no immediate return from capital expenditure was possible, special long leases on favourable terms were granted, it being provided that ultimately the lands when thoroughly reclaimed, and no longer therefore needing capital expenditure, should be subject to the ordinary system of taxation.

Such are the outlines of the system whereby the Government extracts from the peasant

the materials of dominion. Aurangzeb in the seventeenth century claimed, but probably did not receive, a larger revenue from a smaller area. The peasant is subject to no other direct taxation, and was not till recently exposed to much indirect taxation, thus his contribution to the revenues of the State was, in general, about one-tenth of the gross produce.

The theoretical economist would find himself much puzzled in contemplating this triumph of empiricism. The individualist would blame it as too collectivist. The Government, he would say, is the actual owner of the soil, because it does not matter in effect whether the ruler confiscates the soil or possesses the power to tax the product to extinction. Thus if the income tax in England were twenty shillings in the pound it would not be necessary to confiscate Consols. The individualist would point out that what is called revenue is really rent, and would expect to see the usual concomitants of State ownership—namely, bad farming, land-sucking, evasion, and corruption. The collectivist would point out with disapprobation that, though it was quite true that Government was the universal landlord, yet it had by the system of long leaseholds abdicated the most valuable of its rights, and that it had as a matter of fact created a great number of those abominable creatures,

peasant proprietors. Further, he would note with pain that Government having created these proprietors, left them very much to their own devices, and did not feel called on to supply them with agricultural implements, buildings, or capital, or to superintend their labours. He would, I suppose, recommend the immediate resumption of all leases and the cultivation of each village on the plantation system by means of forced labour, or as a *pis aller* the annual redivision of lands among the peasants according to their needs. I should not care to be the officer entrusted with this duty of redistribution and supervision, and in the meantime the present system works very well.

That is not to say that it is perfect. Thus in some of the provinces the assessment was calculated on an estimate of the average of production taken over thirty years. The assessors were well aware that bad seasons are common in India, and total failure of crops occurs at least once in nineteen years. In such years the assessment, calculated as it was on the average yield, would be a very heavy burden on the land which might indeed be wholly unproductive. It was expected indeed that the good years would make up for the bad. In a good year the assessment would be a very inconsiderable part of the actual produce, and it was hoped that the peasant would save

in the good years and thus without difficulty be able to pay in the bad seasons. This showed the mind of the *a priori* economist. Apart from the fact that in good years the cash price of agricultural produce is apt to be low, a fact which might have been foreseen by the *a priorist*, it is shown by experience that the peasant cannot save if he wanted to, and would not if he could. He has innumerable claims on him which he can fight off in a normal year by the plea of inability, but which he must meet when times are good. He is also lacking in foresight, and is apt to think that good times will last for ever. The rigidity of the revenue demand did then press heavily on the peasants in some parts of India, and was one cause of the dreadful severity of the scourge of usury. In recent years the danger of relying on the providence of the improvident is seen, and the recent assessments make ample provision for suspension in bad years, and the remission in famines of a whole or a part of the land revenue demand. But it is clear that this reform, necessary as it is, introduces the personal element into what was a matter of routine, and throws open a door to corruption and extortion on the part of the subordinate revenue officials. There is danger also of oppression on the part of the superior officers, who perhaps over-anxious to stand well with

their superiors, and knowing that a distant and embarrassed Government will not look with much favour on an officer who is continually recommending the surrender of part of the revenue, may assert that there is no scarcity when famine reigns, and may impute to avarice and recalcitrance what is merely due to inability. On the other hand, there may well be cases of a popularity-hunting official who, at the incitement of sinister agitators, sacrifices with over-lavishness the rights of the State. It is here where, the substitution of Indian for European agency in the higher revenue posts may introduce difficulties, for here the wise use of discretion and the assumption of responsibility are all-important, and it is in respect of discretion and the assumption of responsibility that the Indian official has hitherto shown his defects.

Another fault of the system in certain provinces was that while Government had conferred on the actual occupant at the time of the survey the occupancy right, and had arranged for the substitution in the revenue books as occupant the name of any person into whose hands the holding might pass by alienation or inheritance, yet there was no compulsion on the alienor or alienee to register the transfer, which registration in any case had no legal effect on the title to the property,

nor was the heir who was entered as such in case of a demise always the sole or indeed the true heir. The holding was left subject to the ordinary laws of demise, devise, or alienation. Thus in time an old evil appeared—namely, that the person who was liable to the taxation was not always the beneficial holder of the land. The Government looked only to the person registered in its books for payment, and left it to him to make his own arrangements for collecting it from the actual occupant. The peasant was in general so proud of being entered as an occupant that he did not, as he might have done, take steps to have the entry altered. Thus was introduced a dangerous division between property and responsibility which occasionally led to fraud and hardship. Further, misled by the records of the revenue, the Government were not fully aware of the dangerous rapidity with which lands in some parts of India were passing out of the hands of the cultivating castes, and still less of the dangerous extent to which amorcellement among a prolific people, whose personal law requires division of property among numerous heirs, was being pushed. The extreme sub-division of lands (always a danger among a prolific peasantry) is in some parts of India excessive, and unless remedied must for ever hamper all attempts at agricultural betterment.

In the later years, therefore, the Government has found itself in such parts of India compelled to frame a register of all rights in land. It has therefore committed itself to a never-ending journey, where its way is much darkened by ignorance, negligence, and fraud, and by the mania of the Indian proprietor for colourable and bogus transfers effected not for any particular reasons, but out of the desire of a long oppressed people to conceal the extent of their possessions. The effective preservation of the record of rights therefore needs the employment of a large body of subordinate officials, always a grievance, yet an untrue record is worse than useless.

This leads me to a consideration of another defect of a settlement made direct with the peasant, a defect which has led some to prefer the system of great landlords. The villagers being ignorant and suspicious, the villages not being corporations or capable of incorporation, and the village officers being often men of small influence and intelligence, a great deal of the administrative work, which should be done locally, has to be done by the superior officers of the department or sub-department. This entails a periodical visit to the village of hordes of officials subordinate or superior. In too many cases the subordinate officials and the staff of the superior officers

are harpies ravenous for free quarters, free forage, free rations, and for cash douceurs. The necessity of satisfying these demands requires in some villages a large sum, which is in effect an illegitimate increase of the land tax. Moreover, as is natural, these expenses, though borne in the first instance by the principal men of the village, are, if possible, shuffled off on to the shoulders of the poorer and less powerful men, who thus may well see their land tax doubled.

The Indian politician did not care much or know much about the peasant. He was, however, anxious to embarrass the Autocracy, and was particularly desirous of winning over the peasant to his side. He therefore tried a rudimentary form of agricultural agitation. The peasant, however, had a deep distrust of the politician and was deaf to his voice. Eventually it was found that the peasant, though extremely sceptical of any material advantage likely to accrue to him from the downfall of the British Government, and the substitution of Indians for Europeans in the higher executive posts, was susceptible to an appeal to religion. The attack has therefore been transferred to that side, and has in consequence of causes unnecessary to dwell on been only too successful. For long, however, the grievances of the peasants were the favourite topic of

town-bred agitators. There was complete silence as to usury and the law courts, the two ulcers which eat away the substance of the peasant, but it was urged that the assessment was too high, that it was harshly collected, and that there was much corruption among the inferior staff. This, if true, might have been corrected. But it was difficult to induce any of these politicians to produce any concrete instances.

One of the defects of the Conciliar system of Government, as distinguished from the system of true Parliamentary Government, is that the opposition has little sense of responsibility. Thus we find throughout the records of the council debates in days of the Autocracy, tribunes of the people clamouring for a vastly increased expenditure on all sorts of most laudable objects, and for a simultaneous reduction of taxation. They could do this with impunity, because no one then supposed that the responsibility of balancing a Budget would be theirs. The practice still persists in the present assemblies.

One plank in the Nationalist programme was the extension of the permanent settlement to the whole of India. It was said that the peasant, knowing that his rent could never be raised, would be encouraged to improve his holding. It was idle to point out that under the existing system allowances were

made at the revision of the assessments for improvements made during the currency of the lease, and that where the peasant possessed the capital, the skill, and the market he showed no reluctance to improve his holdings, and that in cases where capital, skill, and markets did not exist, the ultimate reduction of the Government demand to an insignificant rent charge would be merely to encourage the growth of a set of petty landlords, rack renting the actual cultivators, or the speedy expropriation of the peasant class by the usurer. Nor was it very easy to understand why property in land should be immune from that full contribution to the needs of the State to which the earnings of intellect, science, and enterprise are liable.

This fixation of the land revenue is still one of the ideals of the National Party. It is to be trusted that power will give wisdom, for the application of the theory in practice would lead first to financial embarrassment, then to the imposition of heavy indirect taxation (always a burden to the poor, more grievous than direct taxation), and ultimately to the reimposition of the old cesses on land which would again throw all into confusion, would be regarded as a grievous breach of faith on the part of the rulers, and would lead to evasion and corruption.

XIII.

ADMINISTRATION.

Such are the principal questions which interest the peasant as far as routine administration goes. I do not think it necessary to discuss catastrophes like plague and pestilence, because being catastrophes they attract the eye, and have therefore often been described by the pen of the eloquent. Suffice it to say that the Autocracy did, on the whole, successfully protect the people against the worst of the suffering and mortality which must ever be the lot of an agricultural population, where the rains are apt wholly to fail, when this failure does occur. With the pestilence it was unable to contend successfully, because the people were prepared rather to die than endure the prophylactic and sanative measures necessary.

With unessentials I do not propose to deal. It must be admitted that the Autocracy fell very short of the requirements of modern

standards in the matter of those secondary duties which are now so important. But, in the first place, the Government of India was always afraid of too much paternalism. It was forced by the necessities of its position to do much which, according to the views of the early nineteenth century, was not the duty of the Government. It was reluctant to do more, so that when the views of political philosophers at home changed, and the State was encouraged to assume the functions of the guide, philosopher, and friend, of the heavy father, of the maiden aunt, and of the injudicious nursemaid, it found itself unable to forget the teachings of its Liberal ancestors. Moreover, it was sorely embarrassed for lack of funds. Prodigality has never been erected into a virtue east of Suez, where the sordid huckstering desire for solvency of the Government betrays its mercantile origin. Moreover, it is all very well to talk about nation building—but this nation might very well reply that it was already built, and had been built ages before its rulers had emerged from the tribal state. It might therefore reasonably object to see its temples and palaces demolished and the bricks applied to building the Ebenezers and tenements of the West. Thus the peasant had little desire for education, for the cry for free education is, for the most part, a demand

that the State should pay for the education of children whose parents can perfectly well afford to pay for them. Thus while the peasant will often resort to a hospital in case of illness, yet he has small wish to see his village invaded by the myrmidons of sanitation, and is a perfect village Hampden as regards the sacred right of the individual to deal as he likes with his own dunghill. Much of the agitation therefore for extended sanitary services is the *ad captandum* cry of the agitator, who hopes that the refusal to lavish the public money on sorely needed but not wanted reforms may be imputed to the reluctance of the Government to spend a tithe of that wealth which it lavishes on militaristic schemes, and its alien employees, on purifying the homes of the people.

In one very advanced city the houses were built along the bed of a holy river. This river abounded in pools where bathing was incumbent, and from which water drawn was, if drunk, a refreshment to the body and the soul. All the sewage from the town poured down into the bed of the river, and accumulated in these sacred pools awaiting the flushing efforts of the rains. To intercept this pollution an open drain was blasted in the rock parallel to the river-stream and between it and the houses. Thus the sullage water was inter-

cepted, and instead of flowing down into the river was conveyed to a point some distance below the town. This drain had, however, to be abolished, because the people preferred to fill their water-pots from its contents rather than walk a few yards farther to the river. The Autocracy therefore wisely went slowly in this matter, and did not waste public money on schemes which could only have been made effective by a stringent police administration.

Free India will, no doubt, pass many excellent Acts, but it will be a question whether they will not be legislation of that kind which I have called façade legislation. It is, moreover, obvious how useful a weapon may be found here for repressing the insolence of castes or creeds which might perhaps be troublesome. It will be remembered how often legislation intended to secure the humane killing of cattle has been utilised for the purposes of the anti-Semite. In the same way the establishment and control of municipal slaughter-houses can, by a Hinduised municipality, be used to stop the odious slaughter of cattle, and the prohibition of unlicensed schools (with the installation of the idol of Ganpati—a mere ornament—in the licensed school) might serve to prevent a dangerous spread of primary education among classes whose progress was not desired.

Still I am vowed to take an optimistic view of the future, and will not therefore suppose that salutary laws will be perverted in this reprehensible manner. Let us suppose therefore that Free India will be desirous to benefit the peasant and will not be too hasty in discarding the policy of the old Government. Let us suppose also that it will be both able and willing really and verily to provide him with those advantages which the old Government was not able to provide, and which he seemed in no way anxious to obtain. But how far these beneficent intentions of the Government will be capable of realisation must depend very much on the character and abilities of the local executive staff.

I have given my reasons for supposing that that staff will ere long be purely Indian. There does not seem any intention at present of doing away with some sort of corps of permanent officials in the districts. Such an abolition would not be unprecedented, might be called democratic, and would present some very obvious advantages to the temporary holders of power. Why, it might be asked, should the prefects, sub-prefects, and the like be drawn from a civil service at all? Why should not the post of collector of a district be a five-years' appointment bestowed for merit on some lawyer-supporter of the minister or the wire-puller?

A district or subordinate judge who is appointed for life has really no incentive to keep himself up-to-date in his law, or to be punctual and laborious. Moreover, he is apt (as Dr Johnson pointed out) to become wayward and froward, and to forget that he is a judge and not a salaried opponent of the Government. These dangers might well be obviated by making judicial appointments run for a term of years, and the shorter the better, so that the judge compelled periodically to refresh his jurisdiction (by referring it to the source of all sovereignty—the people) might remember that he was a servant not a master of the people. This Jeffersonian reform would have many other advantages. It would enable a minister to feel sure that his subordinates were loyal to his policy and in close personal touch with himself; the people would have the advantage of government by statesmen and not by officials; while the advantage to the collector or judge is apparent on inspection.

But, as I have said, there seems no present intention to reform the bureaucracy in this sense. The local officials will be therefore, I suppose, still officials of career. That they will continue to be appointed by the Secretary of State is perfectly impossible, and I really do think that those responsible should consider the matter more deeply. It seems to

me that there is a very grave responsibility indeed on the shoulders of those who are now inducing young men to take up service in India, when a few minutes' consideration would show that long before their period of service is complete, it will be utterly beyond the competence of the British Government in any way to compel the Government of India to fulfil the contracts of service, or even to guarantee maintenance and life.

I do not say that young Englishmen may not yet find an agreeable, lucrative, and honourable career in India, but if they seek that career they ought to apply to the right quarter—namely, to the Government which will employ them, so that neither they nor their parents may suppose that the Government of Great Britain is in any way responsible for what the future may bring. Thus our descendants may be spared some blushes.

I take it, then, that these officials of career will be appointed in India, and in that case it is more probable that they will be appointed by the local Governments and not by the Government of India, except in the case of the so-called Imperial services such as customs, the treasury, the post-office and the like. This must mean that the superior subordinate staff, those officials that is that have to administer the affairs of the districts, will be appointed

by the local governments. This certainly seems much more in accordance with reason and convenience than to draw such officials from Imperial sources. A Bengali is just as much a foreigner and far more disliked in Bombay or Madras than an Englishman.

If the foreigner is to be eliminated, it would seem more natural that the affairs of the Marathas should be regulated by the Marathas than by the Madrasis and *vice versa*, though no doubt in special cases an officer might seek an exchange of service to some province which was not his. Similarly, if the dreams of visionaries are ever fulfilled and Europe comes under one umbrella, I apprehend that we shall be arrested by a British policeman, handed over to a British inspector, put up before a British magistrate, and fined the usual forty shillings. One may be insular, but it would take away half the pleasure of the thing if one were arrested by a Czecho-Slovak, fined by a Ruthenian, and separated from forty marks. Moreover, there are always numerous excellent provincial officers in all the services. They are reasonably jealous of the privileges and exemptions of the all-India services, and there is no earthly reason why this cause of friction, which does not make for smooth administration, should continue.

It would seem then that each province of

India will appoint its own officials to administer its own local affairs. Presumably some sort of qualification will be required, and the selection will be made (as is most reasonable) by selection and not by competition. It is found that, in the case of Indians, competition by no means assures that the most suitable men will be appointed, and naturally all the men in power will wish to find lucrative and honourable professions for able young men, relations of themselves or of their supporters, in their constituencies. This system, which is the system whereby officers are recruited for the army of the United States, and was the system whereby Nelson and Collingwood were secured for the British Navy, can hardly be wrong in itself. Its abolition in England was due to the efforts of those who wished to weaken the executive, but it is very important not to weaken the executive in India.

Considering which things, some people have dreamed a dream. They saw India governed by a caste oligarchy, through a directorate installed in the capital, exercising its sway through a devoted bureaucracy of its own castemen, unchecked by the courts, themselves occupied in all their degrees by the same caste, uncriticised by the Press whether English or Indian, for this caste, being careful to keep literacy in its own hands, would thereby mono-

polise all organs of publicity, and not subject to expulsion by the electors. Such a caste Government might well, they thought, be an oppressive and corrupt tyranny, disposing at its own will of the lives and fortunes of millions of dull, clumsy, valiant peasants, for the system would be upheld by the mercenary bayonets of the British.

There have been, no doubt, for a time and a season systems of this nature. Thus in the Romagna in the earlier nineteenth century the Pope held the government. Generous youth would rebel against this mild but enervating despotism. The system would collapse. Then the Austrians would come into the country, suppress the rebellion, restore order, flog a few Liberals, and replace the population under the authority of the Pope-King. The Austrians were presumably merely fulfilling their treaty obligations, but to all Italians it seemed that to them the very name of liberty was so odious that they were willing to war it down for the mere love of repression, without expecting any material advantages from this crusade. That was a reputation which no one, and least of all the British, would now wish to earn, nor should we be anxious to see the British soldier appearing in this strange avatar—the Mameluke of a most feeble and degrading tyranny. But that dream is merely a

nightmare and passes through the gate of ivory.

In the first place, the British bayonets will not be there, and the Government will have to depend for support on native arms and native ranks as an independent country should. In the next place, though there is a certain solidarity among the literate castes, yet this solidarity is superficial, a fact which will appear obvious to him who considers the present state of factions in India. When the external pressure of the British is removed, the fissures which permeate the apparently solid substance of political India will lose no time in declaring themselves. In fact, the well-wisher of India is more inclined to fear that these factions may become so embittered that it will be impossible for the supreme Executive Government to constitute itself, than that that Executive Government may be the mandatory of a solid oligarchy of birth and culture. A government of factions must seek support in all quarters, and it would be most important for any faction which desired to retain or obtain power to conciliate the favour of the martial castes. Now there is at least one caste in India which is at once literate and orthodox and possessed of martial traditions. That caste is, in my opinion, clearly marked out for dominion in the New India.

Moreover, the Hindu is not by inclination a tyrant or oppressor. It gives him no pleasure to cause pain to others. He is bound, by the very fact that his own claims rest on birth and position in society, to recognise the claims of others based on their birth and position in society. His religion teaches him humanity. His philosophy, his bodily training, his bodily habits are not those of the tyrant. In fact, if people are on the look-out for a clement master, they might do worse than commend themselves to a high-caste Hindu. I do not say that he is fit to exercise uncontrolled power, but who is ? I do not say that he would not help himself and his relations and friends liberally, but then most people would. He would satisfy his hunger to the full, but having done so he would not trample the remainder into the ground, he would distribute it to the poor.

No ! there will in the New India be rather maladministration than oppressive administration. Executive ability is not very high among the literate Hindus. Give them clear instructions, assure them of support, and keep an eye on them, and they can cope with any foreseen difficulties. They are, in fact, almost perfect subordinates, but in independent command they are apt to become paralysed in an emergency.

Further, their goodness of heart and the

teaching of their philosophers—that while action may be sinful, even if he who acts means well, inaction (being by definition negative) can have no positive results and is therefore incapable of producing wrong — render them extremely unwilling to waken sleeping dogs. But administrators who will not repress, cure, or even acknowledge the existence of grievances as long as things are quiet, will, in general, find that the time comes when these must be acknowledged, and that then they are beyond either cure or repression.

It may be assumed that the traditions of the services will persist and that the Indian officials will be personally uncorrupt (though it must never be forgotten how far more creditable it is to an Indian to be so than to a European), but nepotism is a virtue among Indians, and it would be difficult for the most honourable Indian official to restrain the itching palms of his fortieth cousins, hordes of whom with their wives and dependents quarter themselves in the official residence of the promoted subordinate. Under an easy-going administration, wedded to routine, and not unsusceptible to indirect influence, there is not likely to be much tyranny, or even very much discontent, but such an administration is apt to collapse when the crisis comes.

While therefore one may suppose that the

peasant will not be much worse off under the new régime than he is now, there will certainly be a general letting down of the efficiency of the administration, already not over efficient. There will be a few cases of gross oppression. Some castes and religions may be grievously affected. But there is no reason—assuming the executive power of the Governments to be unaffected—to anticipate any very sudden or catastrophic breakdown of the administration in the districts in quiet times. It is violence that might be the end of the régime, and violence may come from within or without.

XIV.

DEFENCE.

It used to be said that when the English left India they would leave behind them, as vestiges of their Empire, nothing but broken beer-bottles. Even now he who takes two steps off the made road away from the India of railways, canals, ports, factories, latrines, and constitutions, sees at once that these things are transitory and adventitious.

Approach the village. Asoka would be at home there. Yet every village contains at least one monument to the power of the Empire —a ruined wall.

In India the traveller will see no manor-houses, no farm-steadings, no cottages, no byres and barns strung out along the country ways. One may ride for miles through lands cultivated like a garden and see no habitation of man. The whole rural population, with its cattle and reaped harvests, is crowded into the few acres which form the village site, an

area more congested with humanity than the heart of many a populous city. Here therefore epidemics smoulder and factions brood, but here also men find to the full that mutual comfort and support which are the cement of societies. This crowded hive of humanity is surrounded by a wall of sun-dried brick—now ruined.

It was not always ruined. Time was when it was preserved with loving care, a safety and ornament to the whole country. When on the horizon rolling clouds of dust, and amid them the flash of steel, showed that war was in the land, and that the raider was now again riding forth to seek his prey, when fire by night and smoke by day indicated that the destroyer was at work, all living things fled to the shelter of the wall. The gates were closed, the ramparts were impassable to horse and not to be breached except by cannon, parapets and bastions were manned by valorous youth armed with sling, spear, and matchlock, and the people could watch the destruction of their growing crops, knowing that life and honour were safe.

Now, by favour of the Government, these walls are ruined. The gate perhaps hangs sideways, immovable, suspended by one hinge. Here and there stands up a strong bastion, a most secure refuge for the nesting pigeon, but the connecting curtain has fallen. First

the sun and the rains had had their way with it, then the cattle pushed through the ever-widening gaps, then thrifty hands picked out stone by stone the mason-work of the base. Now, except here and there a tottering fragment, there is nothing left. The moat is silted up by the alluvion of a hundred years.

Some one said: "Yes, and with the wall has perished the manliness of the defenders of the wall. Have you not read of the men of your own Borders, how bold they were and delighting in war? Look forward fifty years and see spiritless churls munching pease bannocks and too broken to strike a blow for Crown or Covenant." But I say that is not so here, and I call to witness Tigris and Euphrates. Lawlessness calls for lawlessness, and violence is answered by violence, and all things shall be hereafter as they have been, for none can stay the rotation of the wheel, but protected by walls, which are not of stone or brick but are stronger than they, the poor man did and does for a time and a season enjoy the fruits of his labour in security. Now men are again looking questioningly at the line of the wall. The power of the exalted Government is broken? All things return to their first form? Who can say? But stones and bricks are costly, and the demands of masons exceed all bounds.

Make no mistake. It is the power of the English that prevents the war-cry being raised on Indian lands, for India contains elements of grave disorder within her own bounds. India is, moreover, a tempting prey to the invader. To suppress the one and to repel the other she needs a strong Government or strong extraneous support. England asserts that she has supplied her with the one and promises the other, and this is but justice lest we blush the blush of Honorius. That the Government will not be so strong as we imagine I have already asserted, and that support can long be given is uncertain. India, if wise, therefore, will seek to strengthen her own hand, and look for defence and security to herself and to herself alone.

That India will not eternally, or even for very long (as time is measured in the life of a nation), endure Dominion Government is absolutely certain. Dominion Government will ultimately prove to be of value only as a means whereby a decrepit foreign government was superseded, so that India was free to mould her institutions into a form more in accordance with her traditions and ideals. Not for ever will the Kings of the East masquerade in the cast-off fripperies of the West. But by that time we shall no longer be concerned with the fate of the peoples of India, except in so far as we are men

and they are men, and the concerns of men are the concerns of all men. Though interesting, therefore, it would not be profitable to conjecture what form of Government will arise and how it will deal with external and internal problems. This only need be said, that new Governments in the East are generally very efficient, and peculiarly careful of the interests of the people.

It will, however, make a great difference to the population whether the transfer of power from Dominion Government to the new rulers (whoever they may be) is effected by force, or by slow development, and if by force whether the process is sudden or protracted. Revolutionary change in the East is apt to be accompanied by civil war, and civil war, always devastating, is peculiarly devastating in amorphous States of low organisation. A highly organised State throws off the virus of civil discord by a great effort or perishes. A State of low organisation may go on for centuries hectic with chronic civil war, until what is really a morbid condition is in appearance a condition of health.

Moreover, in these days the collapse of civil Government, and the consequent destruction of life and property, if protracted, is apt to attract the interference of foreigners. It may be possible for a weak Oriental State to

fight off foreign interference for a time by the arts of the diplomatist, and by playing on the mutual jealousies of the would-be saviours of society. But diplomacy without armaments is a weak reed, and jealousies are not eternal. Sooner or later, if anarchy is protracted, there will be foreign interference, and a loss, actual or effective, of independence.

It would be of interest to examine by what dangers external and internal India is menaced, and how far she is able by her unaided strength to resist them. Thus it might be deduced what help she is likely to need from the Empire, and it would then be for consideration whether she is likely to obtain the assistance necessary from the Empire, but I am not able to enter on to that investigation in full for reasons which appear very cogent to me. The necessary information could easily be obtained through private and confidential inquiry by the persons responsible, from experts of which number I am not one.

It is related (how truly I know not) that there was once an energetic young colonel posted on the Indian frontier. He was obsessed with the fear that this year or the next would see the weary but indomitable legions of the Tsar debouching on to the open plains of the Punjab. Therefore he spent all his leisure, which was little, his money, which was less, his long leaves

and his great abilities in exploring every route possible for an invader. He thus acquired a complete knowledge of the permeability of every pass and defile from the Pamirs to Seistan. He studied also the disposition of the tribes who bordered on the various routes, the strengths, artificial and natural, which might bar the way, and how these might best be circumvented or reduced, reckoned the facilities for transport and supplies, and indicated the objective most easily attainable by this gateway or that, considering finally the force which might be assembled in a given time to repel the invaders.

This information he recorded in a book and circulated it to his friends and brother-officers, from whose possession it passed soon into the hands of the public. The Government of India was so pleased with this manifestation of zeal and energy that it transferred the zealous officer to a less arduous post in the Madras Presidency, and bought up, at fabulous prices, as many copies of the book as had passed into the hands of the general public. Just as that colonel, if he ever existed, was unwise in putting into the hands of possible enemies a list of the weak places in the physical fortifications of the Empire, so I think it unwise to publish abroad what there may be of weakness in the moral or spiritual fortifications of the same

Empire. I shall therefore refer to nothing that is not known to every sergeant-major and havildar, the platitudes of the barrack-room.

Avoiding therefore delicate questions, it may be observed that internal tranquillity and external defence are intimately connected. A dangerous foreign foe means a large army, and a large army needs heavy taxation, and taxation means discontent, and discontent means the diversion of part of the army from frontier duties of defence to the preservation of internal peace, thus calling for further taxation and thus more discontent. Moreover, inasmuch as the army is recruited from the civil population, a discontented people means a disaffected army. Thus if there be discontent other than that caused by taxation, sooner or later that discontent of the civil population will be reflected in the discontents of the army, unless that army be a merely mercenary army drawn perhaps from a privileged class, or dissociated wholly from the civil population. That sort of military defence has, however, its own dangers, and even so the internal conditions affect the problem of external defence, for by reason of internal discontents the foreigner may find friends and allies within the realm. There is no need to suppose that there will be any gross and intentional misgovernment of India by the Indian Govern-

ment, but it will be necessary to touch shortly, by way of example, on one or two problems, the solution of which will need much statesmanship. It will be necessary, then, to consider the external relations of India, and to ascertain how her status as a member of the British Empire will affect the question of defence. I again repeat that I am unable to treat these questions exhaustively, but this matters the less, for the public is, in general, most indifferent to all questions of military defence, leaving these, with a most noble confidence, to the wisdom of our statesmen and the capacity of our soldiers.

The problem before the Autocracy was for long simple. It had to keep the peace in India, to impose its will on barbarous States of the third or fourth order conterminous with or not far removed from India, and so to train and equip its troops that in the event of a world struggle they might be useful auxiliaries to the forces of the Empire. It had at its disposal a British garrison of all arms, and a much larger force of Orientals recruited in the main from the warlike races of India, but drawing also on a limited supply of excellent foreign mercenaries. The strength of this latter Oriental force was in its infantry. Indian cavalry is superb, but in modern warfare the importance of the rôle of cavalry is much diminished,

and in the terrain where the Indian Army was most likely to operate there was little scope for mounted men. Artillery the Indian Army had none. The army, as a whole, was deficient in auxiliary and subsidiary services. The army was generally at peace. Its operations were for the most part confined to petty punitive expeditions. It seemed therefore unnecessary to contemplate and provide for extended operations, for if there were some more serious campaign than dispersing a tribal gathering, or a military demonstration, then it would be easy to improvise the necessary organisation. The army chiefs were, in general, kept in due subordination to the civil power, and with the civil power questions of finance were all-important.

The Indian Army was provided with a double set of officers. Each regiment had a full cadre of British officers from the colonel downwards, but much of the administrative work was delegated to the cadre of Indian officers who formed within the regiment a complete hierarchy, so that if by sudden chance the whole of the British officers had been eliminated, the regiment would still have been able to exist and to operate as a unit. There was no corresponding dualism in the brigades and higher organisation; there the hierarchy was purely British. The advantages and defects

of this system had been seen in the Mutiny, where each rebellious regiment retained its identity and, in fact, fought very well in minor operations, but where the chiefs of the rebellion found it wholly impossible to unite the rebellious units into any sort of solid organisations, so that complicated operations were out of the question. The Indian officers, fine men, good leaders, and respected by all, were contented with their position, and did not grudge their exclusion from those higher posts from which they seemed precluded both by the lessons of experience and by their lack of military education. Such an army was efficient for its purposes, and given careful handling (which it did not always receive) was no real danger to internal order.

In future the Indian Army will be called on to perform much more arduous duties. To begin with, it will not be supported by the presence of European troops. It is not customary for the Empire to keep Imperial troops in a Dominion. The objections to this course are patent, and in the case of India the objections are completely insuperable. The Indian Army will therefore necessarily be so organised that it may by its own strength be able to bear at least the first brunt of an attack by an enemy instructed in the arts and equipped by the science of the West. In modern war-

fare time is all-important. There will be for the armies of independent India no leisurely period between declaration of war and the moment of crisis, when the deficiencies of peace can be remedied by happy improvisation or frantic expenditure. That army must indeed be ready, and not only to the last gaiter-button, but to the last Marconi valve.

This Indian Army, much increased in numbers, will not be officered by European officers. There will no doubt here, as in the civil administration, be room for the mercenary officer, but there will be no regular hierarchy of Europeans. As a matter of fact it was becoming clear in the days of the Autocracy that unless the Indian could be trained to fill the highest commissioned ranks, the only rôle that could be assigned to the Indian Army in the future was that of a police force, or at best a militia, for the wastage of officers in modern warfare is so great that in view of the very restricted sources from which European officers fit for command in Indian regiments could be drawn, there would soon be a total impossibility of filling the cadres. Further, all the objections that apply to the employment of Europeans in the civil administration, and all the objections that apply to the entertainment of European troops as mercenaries of the Swaraj Government, apply with tenfold vigour to the

employment in Indian battalions of European officers.

Thus, on the whole, Free India will find itself forced to create a large army, to equip it with the most modern weapons and subsidiary services, gradually to eliminate the white officer and supply the vacancy with trained men of its own, and gradually to substitute for the European Staff an indigenous agency. It is clear that several difficulties will be found, and that the secret councils of the Government of Free India will be perplexed with almost insoluble dilemmas.

A modern army needs not only a great number of men under arms, that is in training, but considerable reserves. This implies a short-term army and conscription. The martial races of India are few, and seek the army as a profession. A voluntary short-term army with reserves is here out of place. On the other hand, there is in India a great deal of valueless military material which it would be useless to conscribe, yet partial conscription is naturally always felt as an intolerable grievance. It was bad enough in the Great War when the youth of Great Britain was conscribed and the youth of Ireland went free, but how if the conscription had been limited to Wales and the Highlands of Scotland ?

The provision of officers also for so large a

force, active and in reserve, will be most difficult. There is a very unfortunate division of labour between the learned and the fighting castes, so that up to the present the educated classes have thought it beneath their dignity to partake of the rough labours of the soldier, whereas the fighting man thinks with contempt of the triumphs of the scholar. True, there are some castes which are at once warlike and educated, but these are few. Similarly there have been in the history of India fighting Brahmins and fighting grocers and fighting clerks, but not many. There is also a reluctance among the literate classes to extend their knowledge to the fighting classes. But modern warfare requires a certain amount of education in the officer, if only because trained intelligence is needed in the staff, and a staff wholly divorced from the regimental officer is unthinkable. There is equal inconvenience in officering an army with unwarlike literates or with rough centurions. It will be a matter of time, patience, and tact to find officers for the armies of Free India.

It is said that the days of war are over. I hope so. In that case a large military organisation of the kind which I have described would be unnecessary, but it would still be necessary to keep up an army in order to keep the peace of the country, and to repel the sudden raids

or more serious enterprises of benighted populations who had never heard of Geneva. Such an army could not well be less in numbers than the present army of the Indian Government, which all admit is by no means too large for the efficient performance of those subsidiary duties to which it is confined by the present relations of India to the Empire. That force might be, as now, a long-service professional army, recruited from the fighting classes and from foreign mercenaries, officered, however, by Indians and white mercenaries. Such were the disciplined armies of the Princes of India which played such a great part in history for about three generations from Panipat to Sobraon. Such an army is, however, a difficult weapon. The experiment of a small highly-trained professional army, officered not by nobles or citizens but by professional soldiers, and employed not by a monarch but by a committee of lawyers, has never been tried in the East, but if one may judge by what has happened when such an army was employed by a weak personal Oriental ruler, the omens are ill. Sooner or later the civil government and the army chiefs fall to dispute, diplomacy and intrigue fail, and the civil government perishes. This was the case of the very first regular army that India ever saw, that of Hyder Ali in Mysore, this was the case of the

army of Indore under a degenerate Holkar, and of the army of the Punjab under the rule of the degenerate successors of Ranjit Singh. The events of 1857 may be cited as in part corroboratory evidence of the truth of the general proposition. Leaving India, we have the case of Arabi in Egypt and of the Salonica officers in Turkey. In the latter two cases it is important to remember that the mutineers did not allege only the common grievances of the mercenary, inadequate pay and unfair promotion, but also grievances which affected the mutineer not only as a soldier but also as a citizen, insults to the national and religious honour. But the danger of a professional army is a commonplace, and it is only necessary to dwell on it because peculiar reasons (which do not exist in the armies of the East) made the professional armies of Europe not a danger but a prop to the civil governments of the time. Nevertheless, it remains true that an army is always a danger to an incompetent civil government, though the danger is less in proportion as the soldier is more of a citizen and less of a soldier.

Weak civil governments often hope by rendering an army inefficient to render it innocuous. But this is a childish hope. An inefficient army is terrible to one foe only, that is to its own Government. An army is

never so inefficient that it cannot rebel, and its very inefficiency, which holds out to the ambitious no career in the path of duty, points to the path of rebellion as that by which a daring soldier alone can come to his desires. It is hardly necessary to range through history to prove so evident a proposition, but if an example is needed, it is but needful to consider the present case of China.

Such are some of the very grave problems which must be solved by the Government of Free India. I pass on to consider some few of the enemies, external and internal, of the peace of the country.

XV.

CRIME.

In the East crime has not alone that interest which it has for the penologist of the West. It comes also within the purview of the political philosopher. In the West, with our solid State systems, it is not conceivable that society should be subverted by criminals. If I remember right, one of the Thirty Tyrants of Rome belonged to a respectable family of Riviera brigands, but, with this exception, I do not know of any civil ruler in the West who escaped the gibbet by attaining the crown. In the East, however, where, as I have previously explained, the ruler holds by a precarious title, and where the merits of candidates for rule are judged of by their practical ability, it is clear that practical ability in crime also may well qualify for the diadem. It is alleged that Timur began life as a robber and outlaw, and Sivaji certainly commended himself to the men of the mountains, and accumulated

wealth and supporters, by the interception of wealthy caravans painfully threading their way through the tangled defiles of the ghats. In our time also the example of Shivaji has not been forgotten, and those who sought to destroy the British Dominion by the dagger and bomb prepared themselves for these severe toils by dabbling in dacoity. But with this kind of crime I do not intend to deal at present. I am considering the ordinary unambitious criminal, but not so much as an offender against society as an unconscious troubler of the social order.

It is impossible to approve fully of the inscription on the Old Bailey. I think that it is just as much the duty of the State to defend the children of the rich as those of the poor. But perhaps the persons responsible for the inscription were speaking proleptically or in a prophetic sense, looking forward, that is, to a time when we shall all be beggared. Still it is no doubt true that, as regards crimes against property at any rate, the citizen most in need of protection is the poor man, and particularly the peasant. It is annoying for the duchess when she finds that the turret has been scaled and that the tiara is gone, but she has the satisfaction of buying another. It is rarely possible for the most ingenious thief—unless he be a politician—to ruin en-

tirely the opulent; but the poor peasant who loses his plough-bullocks just at the time of cultivation, or the petty trader whose whole stock goes up in flames because his neighbour decides to cash in on his fire insurance, loses all.

There are, besides the risks attaching to property in all countries, risks peculiar to India which affect pre-eminently the peasant. These are the activities of the criminal castes and of the gang-robbers. There are numerous castes the members of which have honest professions, but who commit crimes of a particular nature as a side-line. There are others who have no profession except the commission of crime. Crime is indeed their hereditary profession, and has been for countless generations, so that even their physical construction has undergone modification, evolution obviously aiming at the production of the perfect pickpocket or perfect burglar. They consider it a virtue to excel in their profession, and would despise themselves as deaf to the call of honour and religion if they took up any other line of business. Some use fraud only, some violence, some dexterity. Few encroach on the criminal province of the other. Of late, owing to the spread of railways, these classes, once confined each to its own corner of India, have taken to operating in areas hundreds of miles

from their native seats. This is advantageous in two ways. They can work among an unsuspecting population to which their methods are wholly unfamiliar, and they can retire easily and speedily to remote and inaccessible fastnesses, where they have the reputation of meritorious persons excessively addicted to going on pilgrimage to distant shrines.

Gang-robbery, or dacoity, by a party of men often armed and mounted, who make nocturnal raids on villages and carry off plunder by the strong hand, has always been common in India, and particularly so on the borders of native States. I have known British villages islanded in the midst of foreign territory where every adult was a gang-robber. The inhabitants had entered into a working arrangement with the police and magistracy of the native State concerned, and were practically assured of immunity.

The villages were naturally extremely prosperous, and such as would have delighted the heart of Henri IV., because the inhabitants were a shrewd and saving race, and applied the rewards of their skill and daring to the improvement of their lands. Similarly there are alien villages enclosed in British territory, in some cases close to a great city, which are the merest Alsatias. Gang-robbers were not generally professionals. Life in the villages

is very dull. There are no papers, no cinemas, no sport. Flirting is dangerous. The public-house is unknown. High-spirited lads, tired of monotony, take the path of dacoity for the same reason that a young lad of the village with us enlists, emigrates, or bets on the two-thirty. The risks were not very heavy, the reward might be considerable, and as the person robbed was, in general, the village usurer, there did not seem much sin in the foray. Arms were not easily procurable, so the robbers were not very formidable except by numbers. Violence to the inhabitants of the raided villages was rare, and serious injury unknown, except when there was real animosity, as where a very oppressive usurer or landlord was robbed by his victims.

Of late, however, the gang robberies have become more serious. The gangs resemble small military detachments. They are better armed than they were, and are sometimes disciplined. They march across country for several days and fall on some very remote and unprepared township, which they plunder thoroughly and at leisure, often using torture to force the revelation of hidden wealth. To deal with these is a matter rather for the military than for the police.

In addition to these two peculiar forms of crime the Indian, and particularly the peasant,

has to contend with the activities of the ordinary criminal, professional or amateur, who is common to all countries and states of society. All these activities must be checked, or the people will not be happy, and the State may be imperilled.

Crime may be checked in one of three ways. The potential criminal may be caught young and his moral improved, or at least he may be taught that honesty pays better than crime. Or, again, the person about to commit a crime, particularly a calculated crime of violence, may be stopped before he is able to carry out his intentions; or, again, the intending criminal may be deterred by a knowledge that almost certain punishment awaits him. In the latter case if (in so far as his intelligence permits) he, calculating the profit and the risk, comes to the conclusion that crime does not pay, he will possibly abstain. To apply the first check is the duty of the educator, to apply the second is that of the police, to apply the third in the form of warning is the duty of the police and the tribunals. To set all these engines in motion is the duty of the executive Government.

The Autocracy was able, and just able, to keep crime in normal times within bounds. It had enormous difficulties in its way. Take, for instance, the case of the criminal tribes.

Some of the members of some of the tribes have been settled in colonies under watchful supervision. Attempts have been made to teach the elder men trades or handicrafts, and to bring up the new generation in ignorance of tribal lore. These efforts have had some slight success, mainly mechanical, but they are nothing like extensive enough to eradicate the evil. Suitable officers are hard to find, suitable places of internment are not many, and the expense is great. But the most fatal objection to State reformation is that reformation must be a moral process. It does not really improve Messalina to shut her up in a tower of brass watched by eunuch guards,—she is still in her heart Messalina. They did not shut up Mary of Magdala in any tower. The latter, however, in the days of her splendour was, no doubt, religious and feared a God who punished vice. The Kaikadi and Phansepardi are also religious, but to them the sin would be not to commit a crime. Their Gods are not only clement and swift to forgive sin, they assist and preside. Thus, if these criminals are to be reformed, there must be effected a total demolition and re-edification of the moral nature. That cannot be done by a Government whose moral instruction must necessarily be confined to the recital of a few platitudes. It cannot be done by salaried officers. It must be done, if at all,

by selfless men who are willing to compass sea and land if they can thereby save one soul. But that means at present that it must be done by Christian missionaries. True it is that certain virtuous Mussulmans have, from time to time, carried out a work of evangelisation among the wild forest tribes, but these are not criminal tribes in the real sense of the word, though they may occasionally rob and murder. Moreover, Islam is apt, in India, to take a strange and perverted form, unless along with conversion the memory of the original tribe is effaced. Thus many of these criminal tribes are Mussulmans and devout Mussulmans, except when it is necessary to placate the tribal deity. Thus, for instance, the Thugs were mostly Muhammadans, alleging that Allah had commissioned the Hindu goddess Kali to guide and guard her votaries. True it is also that in late years some young Hindus have displayed much interest in the "Untouchables," among whom most of the criminal tribes may be reckoned, but this interest is largely factitious, and is due to the fear among the educated Hindus that the low-caste, in accepting Christianity or Islam, may shake off their old chains and stand out as competitors with their ancient oppressors. This work of reformation, where it is done at all, is done by Christian missionaries, and notably

by the Salvation Army, but if any one supposes that the Government of India would dare to salary missionaries and send them among these people, or if any one supposes that in Free India the missionary will be permitted to carry on his activities without check, he must be singularly ignorant of the real reasons of Indian unrest.

As regards the check to crime by education the Autocracy could do little. For prophylaxis the State is nowadays dependent on a police force, for detection and punishment on the police force, as also on the public tribunals and the criminal law of the land. The idea of the Indian police force was one of the very few constructive ideas which the Empire owes to Ireland. The Indian village system with its rudimentary police force was unknown to Sindh. When Sir Charles Napier "had Sindh," he was much blamed by the pious for imposing a permanent burden on the finances of India for the upkeep of this remote and unproductive province. It was therefore necessary to reduce expenses. In other provinces the Indian sepoy of the regular army had been used to perform many of the duties of civil guards, but the Indian sepoy stationed in a remote death-trap needed high allowances to keep him loyal. In the interests of economy, therefore, Sir Charles Napier raised an armed force, on

the model of the police force which he had known in Ireland, to perform the multifarious duties ultimately thrown on any body of civil guards. This was the germ of the Indian police.

The Indian police is badly treated. It was underpaid. Its European officers were few, and these few—now chosen by competitive examination—were, in days gone by, selected rather according to the claims of family than in consideration of probable efficiency. The force is the favourite object of libellous attack by the patriotic politician, harshly treated by the law courts, not over-well supported by its departmental chiefs. It has to contend against active antagonists, while its limbs are bound in anaconda-like coils of red tape and statute law. Nevertheless, in times of civil disorder, it has generally been most loyal, in spite of great temptation and the appeals of a common religion and common blood. Similarly there is no slackness in repelling the violent and armed civil malefactor. I say nothing in derogation of the valour of the soldier, but, speaking for myself, I should find it easier to be brave on the open field with my comrades, under the eye of my officers, fighting a foreign foe, knowing that the very existence of the kingdom depended perhaps on me alone, than while creeping in the dark night alone, perhaps

unarmed, in the thick forest to surprise some tiger of crime. Rarely, however, is there a case of shirking, even where shirking may be excused or undetected. It is otherwise sometimes in the case of epidemics, but with the unseen and ghostly forces of the pestilence not all may contend unpanoplied. In any case, the villager (who is represented by the politicians as groaning under a police tyranny) is always most anxious to be within reach of a police station, and no more unpopular reform could be imagined than the suggested abolition of the police force and the substitution of village guards. The Indian Government finding the pecuniary burden of the war heavy on it, menaced by the fluctuations of the rupee, seeing its revenue diminished by the financial disasters of the early 'twenties, needing also money for a vastly more expensive civil administration, spurred on on all sides by example and precept to spend money lavishly on schemes of material and moral betterment, was forced to find money somehow, and what more popular economy than to reduce the forces of the Crown? It was easy to cut down the police force, particularly in those districts where there had not been for years any signs of disorder and crime was well in hand. The result, however, proved that it is a poor economy to poison the watch-dog. The State lost more

in riots and the subject in robberies than would have paid even for Back Bay. As regards civil disorders you, on Monday, may stop that with a few police which, if unchecked, will call for a brigade of all arms on Thursday. As regards gang-robbery, one great and successful foray will set agape the mouths of all wild youths from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. I believe the lesson is learned. I do not think the Government of Free India will scrap the police force, or indeed much modify its constitution, except by the ultimate elimination of its European officers. That Government will be the organ of the wealthy unmilitary classes, fearing the dispossessed and fearing the regular army. Naturally therefore the police force—the alguazils and sbirri of oligarchical sway—will be valued. Moreover, the superior appointments will naturally be the reward of devoted political service, and few politicians are pleased to have their patronage diminished. As for the sister organisation the C.I.D., the history of the Okhrana may be studied by the earnest young political student.

The deterioration of the police is likely to be the result of secondary causes, the consideration of which leads to the third head of this disquisition. To punish him who has committed a crime is the duty of the police and the tribunals. The police are to detect

and arrest the culprit and to prosecute him before the courts, the courts are to decide on the guilt or innocence of the accused in consideration of the law and of the evidence, and then to award punishment, if due. The tribunals in India have, however, justly or unjustly, a radical distrust of the police. It is averred that police investigators fall roughly into one of three classes. Some police officers, it is said, ascertain the guilt of the suspect, and send him up for trial on true evidence. In this case, when the matter is at all complicated, there is rarely a conviction, and the officers concerned are too often censured. Other officers, it is alleged, ascertain the guilt of the accused, and send him up on evidence doctored to suit the tastes of the trying judge, as men flavour a millet-cake to suit the taste of a particular elephant. Others, it is said, finding a crime difficult to detect, arrest the first bad character available and send him up on evidence so palpably false that an acquittal is sure to follow. It is not uncommon, of course, that influence, corrupt or otherwise, is employed to secure immunity for a wealthy or high-placed offender; the converse of this, the prosecution to conviction of a man known to be innocent in order to gratify private animosities, has occurred. There is, however, a great deal of exaggeration in all these charges,

and in India the choice is not between a perfect system of police and the present system, but between the present system and one even worse. The police is the service in India in which the principle of Indianisation was from the first very vital, and the force therefore displays the merits and defects of the Indian.

Be they what they may, the police are sadly hampered in their duty of detection by the limitations which, in order to prevent oppression, the law imposes on them. Thus, for example, a suspected person can walk into a police station and can make a full confession of his crime to all the police officers he finds there, but hardly a word of his statement can be put in as evidence against him at the trial. Moreover, the public does not help the police as the public does in England. A villager has no desire to be taken away from his fields for weeks at a time to give evidence when the matter is merely one of public duty. The crime is done. To punish the guilty man will not wipe away the result of the crime; on the contrary, the punishment of the criminal will merely increase the sum of suffering in the world. And why incur enmity, or indeed mix in affairs which do not concern me? It is otherwise when the witness has been injured, or thinks himself injured, by the party accused. Then he is ready enough to give information

and to bear evidence, but the evidence in that case is not above reproach. Thus it is probable that even a judiciary in harmony with the executive would learn to mistrust police evidence. Still more so is this the case in India, where some judges forget that the duty of the judiciary is to suppress crime by punishing those who according to the evidence have offended against the law, and not to show its independence of spirit by seeking out subtle means to absolve the most notorious offender.

This departmental spirit is strong in India, and its excesses are aided by the substantive penal law which, admirable in many ways, is yet overdrafted, by a law of evidence suitable perhaps for a country where men have a high sense of citizenship, but not perhaps so well suited to India, and by a law of procedure, based on a deep distrust of the tribunals, and consequently exceedingly favourable to an accused person. Thus the delays, even in a simple case, provided the accused knows how to take advantage of the laws, are truly scandalous. Years sometimes elapse before final judgment is given in some really petty riot case. But in criminal justice also, justice delayed is justice denied. Also it may be quite true that it is better that a thousand guilty persons should escape than that one innocent person should suffer, for, I suppose,

human justice must always be a rude instrument, but it is a symptom of a profound evil when crime, especially crime committed by the rich and powerful, goes unpunished and notorious offenders can laugh in the face of their victims. I hope to deal with the matter at length hereafter, and I have no desire to scandalise any tribunals. I shall therefore give no details here, but I merely say that it is notorious that there have been in recent years many acquittals which have astounded the public, and that, on the other hand, the provisions of the Code as to retrials have been used to harass persons against whom no crime could be proved, but whose repeated prosecutions seemed likely to gratify certain sections of public opinion, or certain powerful individuals.

If Free India were likely to remedy this state of things, the poor man would have reason to be grateful. But I see small chance of much improvement. In Free India the wealthy man will have much influence, and even at present there have been cases where the power of the legislatures has been applied to protecting persons against whom serious offences were alleged. Lawyers will also have much power, and Indian lawyers are, for the most part, indoctrinated with the idea that the administration of criminal justice ought to be a sort of

round game between the legislature, which forbids acts which it regards as wrong; the executive, whose business it is to arrest and to prosecute persons whom the executive imagines to have infringed the law; and the judiciary, whose duty it is to punish persons so culpable. It is an amusing game, and one in which the judiciary must always win, but the veritable stakes are the blood and tears of the defenceless. Indian lawyers have generally commenced in the courts of inferior magistrates where the justice is perhaps not always as pure as it should be, in their studies they have learned to abhor (as who has not ?) the courts of the England of the Restoration, their prestige and their fortune depend on their reputation for securing acquittals, they have no horror for many crimes as being moral offences, for their morality is not that of the framers of the Codes, they are not infected with that doctrine of atonement which, passing into the West from Greek and Hebrew sources, lies entrenched, though we know it not, behind the most modern penology. For these and other reasons they have always used their influence to make the path of the felon more pleasant. They have recently brought matters to such a pitch, that in some provinces it is hardly worth while for the authorities to arrest a criminal accused of a

serious offence, unless that offence be one against some "respectable person," for in the case of invasions of the person and property of the poor, acquittal is certain.

In Free India these difficulties are not likely to decrease. They will, in fact, be aggravated by the removal of Europeans from the bench and the elevation of Indian practitioners to high office. It is unnecessary to praise the integrity and impartiality of Indian judges, and all must regard their learning and industry with admiration. It is true that in the Presidency towns a seat on the bench is no longer much of a prize, and might not therefore be expected to attract as a permanency the flower of the Bar. All honour therefore to those who sacrifice a splendid practice for a position of the highest public utility which, though of great prestige, is unremunerative. Still, with all this the Indian judge excels rather on the civil than on the criminal side. His acute mind sees difficulties not apparent to a less trenchant intelligence. His meticulous conscientiousness leads him to adjust the scales of justice to a degree where only the weights of the jeweller would be of use. Any one who is familiar with criminal courts in India is surprised on reading reports of criminal trials in England.

Very few of the notorious malefactors of

recent years, rightly brought to justice by our system, would have been in any serious peril if tried by a judge of an Indian court. Nor is it true that the Indian judge is particularly well versed in the habits and customs of the people most likely to appear in the dock or the witness-box. Indian society is divided off into very water-tight compartments, and a thorough knowledge of the habits and prejudices of his own caste is apt to mislead an Indian judge, when he is dealing with the habits and prejudices of some other caste. In the same way a man with a good knowledge of Latin might make a ludicrous mistake in construing a passage of Dante, which mistake would be avoided by him who had learned Italian as a wholly strange language from the beginning.

Thus I do not regard the Indianisation of the judiciary as likely to strengthen the power of the executive in dealing with crime. Moreover, in certain areas the judge has by no means the last say in the matter, powerful though he may be. Where juries exist, though the Indian judge has more power to control the verdict of the jury than an English judge, yet he is liable to a considerable check. One of the chief points of the nationalistic programme in India is the general introduction of juries into criminal trials. This is a step which would

be quite fatal to any sort of regular, punitive, or deterrent action of the courts. All judges will agree that (except in a very few areas) the Indian jury system is an unmitigated evil.

I anticipate, therefore, that in Free India the ordinary courts of justice will be remarkably ineffective as a check on crime. What, then, will be done? The courts will not be abolished or radically changed, because the present system is supposed to be progressive and in accordance with the best democratic traditions. As a matter of parade, therefore, they must be retained. But I suppose that no responsible statesman (whatever may be his creed or politics) will wish to see the country relapse into anarchy, or to leave it to lynch law and the vendetta to keep the peace. Side by side with the regular courts will grow up special commissions and extraordinary tribunals, legacies of the Autocracy. These "engines of repression" were swept away with great applause by the reformed councils, but they have in many cases been set up again and sometimes by executive decree. These will become not extraordinary but routine institutions when India is free. It will be remembered what was the history of Code Napoleon in Egypt in the days of Nubar, and how it was necessary for the Egyptian Government to

set up side by side with regular tribunals which never convicted, extraordinary tribunals which never acquitted.

The result of all this on the efficiency of the police, and hence on the security of the peasants and tranquillity of the country, may be well divined. Police will not trouble to arrest malefactors whose acquittal is certain. They will prefer to tract time and wait till matters reach such a pitch that special tribunals are erected. Crimes will cease to be notified, or if notified, will be written off as false. One can observe in any district where there has been for long a series of "acquitting judges" a great falling-off in the efficiency of the police, even when they have European officers in command and while the general executive power is not relaxed. The process will be universal and intensified in the new India.

This demoralisation of the punitive agency will be felt in several ways. The police, finding that honest work is unappreciated and their attempts to suppress crime continually baffled, may themselves become the oppressors. Ordinary crime will increase. The blood feud, extinct in several provinces though much alive in others, will start into fresh life. Meanwhile, the courts will be hanging men spasmodically, and therefore in appearance capriciously. The

courts will thus be hated as partial. Violence will be repelled by violence, and again the buffalo will be his who has the bamboo. It will be an exciting life, and no one will be able to complain that there is not a career open to talents of a kind.

XVI.

RELIGION.

But the evils of a bad system of criminal justice extend to spheres other than those of the life of the citizen considered as a private individual. The expert penologist is inclined to blame the bloody English Code of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as both criminal and stupid. It was indeed a blot on the civilisation of a Christian State, but its severity had at least this good effect, that though it hanged thousands of people whose offences were not worthy of death, yet by reason of this very excess of severity it spared none of the guilty. Thus it did eliminate the temperamental criminal in the flower of his age. Thus it prevented in England the growth of that terrible class of congenital criminals which pullulates in the great cities of the Continent.

Thus, for instance, the Gordon riots, destructive as they were, were not accompanied with those diabolical concomitants of riots in other

countries, which occurred also when the forces of anarchy were mobilised and the executive collapsed. The manes of nó De Launay, no Lamballe, with us clamoured for atonement. But where the criminal is not eliminated this class of congenital enemies of society will abound, and, in times of order crouching in its dens will, if authority waver for a moment, pour forth avid for pillage, rape, and slaughter.

Riots are common in India. The Indian populace is excitable and gullible, prone to believe the wildest of rumours, susceptible therefore to propaganda, liable to gusts of emotion, not therefore in any way likely to regard the consequences. The climate, the social habits of the people, the absence of heavy-wheeled traffic encourages the collection of large crowds. In ordinary times nothing could be more quiet and well-behaved than an Indian crowd. Go to the bed of some great and holy river on a day of festival and watch the gay and light-hearted multitudes of men, women, and children conversing and gesticulating in orderly thousands under the benevolent and otiose inspection of a dozen policemen—what can be dreaded from these slight, gay, kindly people ? But let an evil wind blow and this light-hearted throng of good and peaceable citizens will be converted into a howling mass of demons, burning to kill and kill and kill. There are many evil

winds in India, and there are not lacking those who are able and willing to throw open the caves of Æolus. But at present the most common cause of popular tumult is religion, and a study of this question will obviate the construction of a catalogue of all the causes which may lead to the disturbance of public tranquillity.

The Hindu peasant is a devout worshipper of the Gods, and for very good reason. He is a man of superior caste claiming descent from the Kshatriyas, or the warriors of heroic days. Shall he not serve the Gods who gave him this pre-eminence? The sport of wayward forces, he is all his life exposed to fearful risks of the body and of the soul. It is the duty of the priests, no doubt, to avert evil, but the priest is helpless if the Gods are displeased and their worship is neglected. Every act, therefore, of the peasant's life must be associated with religious ceremonial, and this ceremonial must be directed by the priest. Further, the peasant is much under the influence of his women-folk. He is the vassal first of his mother and grandmother, and then of his wife when she has borne him a son and has released herself of her thraldom to her mother-in-law. Women are always the devout sex, and with reason in the East, where it is in the picturesque ceremonies of religion, and more particularly in the pil-

grimages, that an emotional creature can alone find outlet for her emotions.

The sentimental moderns depict Hinduism as a pantheism, defining what is nebulous in pantheism under symbols of idolatry. That is always the idolater's plea, and it is probably a good plea in the case of the urban or philosophical idolater—and not in Benares only. The peasant knows nothing of these refinements. He worships the crude stone image proposed for his adoration, and his Hinduism is a nature worship, gross according to our ideas, inoffensive according to his own. The peasant, for the most part, worships the Bright Gods or the Dark Gods in their more pleasing manifestations, but he is careful also to placate the extraliminal Gods—those Gods, that is, whose temples are not permitted within the village walls, such as the demons and the evil spirits of the low-castes. Particularly is this the case when some emergency arises which is rather beneath the regard of the greater Gods, and which falls within the special province of the latter.

In one village the peasants had wronged some low-caste men, the scavengers. Accordingly the cattle of the peasants began to die. The village elders met and decided to ask the low-castes to consult their Gods and ascertain the cause of this affliction. The chief of the

scavengers, on being interrogated, answered boldly that it was by his intercession that the Gods had sent this scourge to avenge his people. Accordingly it was determined to placate the Gods of the scavengers. The oblation which would be most pleasing to the Gods would be clearly the blood of one of his votaries. Three schools of thought at once appeared among the villagers. The elder and more conservative minority insisted that there must be the actual sacrifice of one of the low-castes; a small and sceptical minority asserted that it would be sufficient to pour some red water on to the symbol and say, "This is blood." The opinion that carried the day was a compromise, and expressed the opinion of the moderate but conservative majority. It was necessary and sufficient to shed the blood of one of the scavengers, but it was not necessary to do more than inflict a superficial wound. Readers of Plutarch may remember a somewhat similar dispute among the Thebans before Leuctra.

The rural Muhammadan, not very numerous outside a very few provinces, is by no means a very strict Unitarian, or very well observant of the ordinances of the faith. Nor is he, in general, a very good cultivator. Thus rural Islam is neither very strong nor very fanatical. The Mussulman peasant often remembers the

caste of his Hindu forefathers. He sees his pagan neighbours prosper with no visible or special curse of Allah descending on them. He can hardly believe in very truth that his fellow-villagers, men bound to him in the closest ties of common interest, and clearly worthy men according to their lights, are indeed doomed to be fuel to hell. Allah, moreover, was far off and his will could not be bent by prayer. He had no need of sacrifices. He was thus too remote and stern a God that weak men should cling to Him to the exclusion of all others. Men reverence the King, and know that with a word he can break the most powerful of his deputies. But meanwhile the King is far off, and his deputies are here. It would be unreasonable to expect us to be uncivil to those whose powers may be limited, but who are actually present and show very clearly that they will punish neglect and disrespect. Thus the rural Mussulman adored the local saint, nominally some holy man of old days, actually a Hindu God, and did not disdain furtively to placate the very Gods of the pagans. In the same way the Hindus knew that Allah was a great God, and that to worship Him had its advantages temporal and spiritual. In the same way the pagans of Alexandria, while hating Judaism and Christianity, were untiring in their search for the unutterable

name of God, and used the name of the deity in its common form in their demon-compelling incantations and charms.

The Hindu respected and adored Muhammadan saints (who for some reason have a particular reputation for enabling barren women to conceive), and took a willing part in certain Muhammadan festivals. The most striking of the Mussulman festivities, the Muharram, is Hindu in essentials, and was celebrated by both communities indifferently. So also Muhammadans often joined in the licentious Hindu spring festival, the Holi. There were faiths and sects which attempted with some small measure of success to combine the two religions into one. Conversely the reforming—*i.e.*, reactionary—teachings of Abd-ul-Wahhab and Ahmad found few followers in India. Thus, except in tracts like Eastern Bengal and Malabar, where religious differences coincided with social or economic lines of cleavage, rural Islam was not fanatical, and no one dreamed that it could become so.

It was otherwise in the towns. There the water-tight compartment system, which is the advantage and defect of Indian society, was not modified by proximity and community of profession and interests. The urban Moslems were either the descendants of foreign immigrants, or if of Hindu blood, had forgotten

their origin. Many of them, originally the followers of some invading army, retained vague martial memories. They occupied many of the hardy professions. They were mill-hands, butchers, boatmen, masons and the like. Those of them who followed sedentary occupations, like the handloom weavers, were often originally from the north. Their diet and habits make them hardy; economically their position is unsatisfactory, for they are improvident and prolific. They were not very rigorous in the practice of their faith, prayer was not common except on Fridays, too many drank prohibited liquors, the fast was not very strictly observed. Though not infected with paganism to the same extent as their rural kin, the strict Moslem from beyond the seas saw much to reprobate in them, and was heard to mutter something about a *kafir kalima-go.* Among numbers a strict caste-system obtained, the worship of saints was universal, reprehensible practices, if not actually idolatrous, yet at least magical, were common, latitude objectionable to the precise in the matter of dress and amusement was tolerated. But it does not require that a man should be very strict in his religious practices to make him riot or even die for his faith. He may strike in the name of religion when what impel him are race hatred, thirst for domination, personal pride, or mere love of

a shindy. Even when these things were absent, there was the symbol.

We in England have rather forgotten that men will die for a symbol. To do so is an act probably of criminal folly, certainly of quixotry, and quixotry does not pay. The Dutchman who in order to enter Japan was compelled to trample on the crucifix, if blamed for this by some fanatical Dominican, might well have replied: "To trample on the crucifix in no way injures Christ, who is now in heaven. I myself regard the crucifix as an idolatrous symbol, and my ancestors broke thousands of them and the power of Spain with them. No one who knows me believes me to be an infidel. I do this merely as a symbol that I intend to keep my promise that I will not proselytise while in Japan. Meanwhile this simple act of compliance is worth at least five thousand a year to myself, and much more to my masters." This is plain common-sense which will commend itself to many. Yet we have had the wars of the Roses, the Dutch wars, and the Blessed Bill Berringer. There is nothing democratic about our tolerance of insult to the national emblems. You may trample on the Union Jack with impunity (it is merely a piece of bunting), but cross over to France and trample on the Tricolour, and, when you come out, pass over the Atlantic

and insult Old Glory. Perhaps it might be as well for the Englishman to lay aside his cold arrogance and false bonhomie and show a little generous pride; thus generous men might feel it less galling to be ruled by him, and less difficult to be his friend. Moreover, it would perhaps pay better. Burke's rustic squire must be well-nigh bankrupt by lavish expenditure on pantaloons, so many have been worn out by the multitudinous and polychromatic kicks inflicted by so many feet for so many ages on his seat of honour. Still it is quite true that pride is a deadly sin, and it is certain that he who feels no pride in the achievements of his ancestors will never give an occasion to sin to his children.

Still, the Moslem is in good company when he resents insults to his religion. I have elsewhere related how the Hindu reactionaries, at the beginning of the revolutionary movement, attempted by a series of insults and encroachments to induce the Moslems to commit unlawful acts, so that the Government might be forced to punish them, and that thus the Muhammadans might be alienated from the existing system. On the whole, however, the Autocracy was able without much difficulty to keep within bounds the jarring religions even in the towns. In the country trouble was unknown. It was able to do this because

its officers were in general respected, and because the prestige of the Government stood high and few dared to offend it. But the principal reason for this immunity was that the Government and its officers were neutral. Whether it was a Hindu mob which stoned a Muharram procession, or a Mussulman mob which violated a temple, transgressors were certain of condign punishment. Criminals might now and then escape in the courts, but actual violence would be put down with a strong hand, whether that violence was committed in the name of Ram or Rahim. People of all castes looked up to the European officers as impartial arbitrators. The Government was doubtless in the hands of Mlechhas or Kafirs, but that very fact made it indifferent between creed and creed, and thus an appropriate umpire. Nor is it true that the balance was in any way unfairly weighted by reason of the personal inclinations of the officers responsible for keeping the peace. Thus tact and diplomacy did much. But diplomacy to be of any avail must be backed with the tacit menace of force, and where force was needed force was applied. For the best way to teach a fanatic that God does not favour that method of service is to teach him "that every perverse rebellious person shall not thrive." When he has learned that lesson thoroughly, then is the time for

the sweet voices and the wise counsels. I do not know what a Roman mob may have been like, but I am sure that a man heavy with piety would stand a poor chance in a Muharram riot if he was backed by no more than personal influence. *Faces* if not *fæces* would be the lot of the intervener.

Under the present system the passions of the two religions have been excited to the highest point, and the consequent disorder, loss of life, and loss of property is shocking. Moreover, the present crop is merely the first pickings of the grapes of wrath. The reasons for this are many. First, there was the general debilitation of authority in the critical years after the war; next, the Hindu reaction called forth a corresponding Moslem reaction; next, neither party is certain that the neutral policy of the Government can now long persist, each fears that the Government may decide or be compelled to betray it. The Hindus wish to make it clear that as long as there are communal electorates, so long will there never be peace; finally, each party has an obvious interest in numbering under its banners as many persons as possible. Hence proselytes are sought and ill-will arises. These causes, it will be seen on inspection, are universal and not local, general and not special. Hence it is not a matter for surprise that religious ani-

mosity has spread to the villages. But faction is always bitterest when the combatants are pent up within the narrow limits of locality and a common occupation. There is no enemy so deadly as a friend who has become an enemy. Factions, though not religious, were always common in the villages. Often they led to bloodshed, now they aim at excision.

The unnatural combination of Hindu and Mussulman is now at an end. This does not, however, mean that Mussulman opinion is reconciled to the British, it merely means that the Hindu is now and for the present the more pressing danger. It is true that many of the causes which seemed to make England stand forth as the avowed enemy of God no longer exist. The shadow King of the Hejaz is gone like one of his own drifting sandhills. It is difficult to be a Khilafatist when there is no Khalifa. The palace of the Sons of Othman is a gambling hell, and the Voltairean reigns at Angora. "Crusades Limited" is now a bear stock. Nevertheless the affairs of Islam are not prospering. The ruling clique in Turkey has eradicated the very vestiges of the divine law along with the Khilafat. The English are in Mosul. Peaceful penetration is in full force in Syria. The Riffs are broken. The Holy Places are defiled. England is not indeed responsible for most of these

calamities, but they are the work, direct or indirect, of the Franks, and England as a leading Frankish power must share the blame. Dark night rests over the realms of the Faithful. It seems we are back again in the thirteenth century. Then the dawn broke once more. Will there be a second dawn? Or is this the end? All men from the Philippines to Tangiers are straining their eyes to catch the first gleams. Thus, though the intense and bitter agitation of the Khilafatist is over, yet the evil passions called forth cannot be allayed. The intention was to excite Muslim fanaticism, that mighty force. The Hindu leaders might use that force to break the power of the English—and then? Muslim and Hindu would fight it out, and let the best man win. So plotted the leaders. But the event was other than they had purported; they had evoked a demon too powerful to be laid. The Minotaur is maddened, and though the destined victim is out of reach there are others who may be trampled down, a prey to hoofs and horns. Thus the old impartial umpire is gone and there is none to take his place.

Nor is it surprising that the Hindus, themselves the subject of a Hindu reaction, themselves injured and insulted by Muhammadan mobs, should retaliate in a way certain to embitter feeling. This retaliation is felt all

the more keenly because it is artfully effected so as not to break the law. Take, for instance, the question of music before mosques. "Everybody," says the law, "has the right, subject to police regulations, to move through the streets on their lawful occasions, so they do not commit a nuisance. To play music is not a nuisance, except when it disturbs people unduly. Similarly it is no nuisance to carry in procession the images of the Gods." Thus, except at the stated times of prayer, Hindu processions carrying idols and playing music may lawfully march in front of the mosques. Moreover, a mosque is in no way holy or dedicated as is a Christian church or a Hindu temple. A mosque is a "place where one bows down," as a maktab is a place where children write. Except then in the case of three peculiarly sacred mosques, no place of prayer is to be preferred to another. Thus no Muhammadan prince would hesitate for a moment to demolish a mosque which was inconveniently situated, provided equally good accommodation could be provided elsewhere. Thus it would seem at first sight irrational on the part of the Moslems to object to the parade of processions past their places of worship. But this is to leave out of account that powerful passion of sentiment. Thus the Cenotaph is not a place consecrated to everlasting hatred, but it would

not be a very appropriate place at which to hold pro-German meetings. According to Oriental ideas, to march past the residence of another with bands playing and ensigns displayed is a sign of superiority. Intentionally therefore to lead an idol in solemn procession before a mosque is to claim that the idol so carried is superior to God. This is intended to insult and does insult the Mussulmans, wnether the procession take place at the time of prayer or not.

The Mussulmans are not very well equipped for the purposes of retaliatory insult, because processions form, in general, no part of Muslim ritual. They have, however, the Bakr Id, where in memory of the sacrifice and escape, not of Isaac but of Ishmael, cows are taken to the place of sacrifice. Here again the law says that there is nothing unlawful in killing a cow, so long as the municipal regulations are not infringed. But to consecrate and adorn a cow as a victim, and to lead it in procession through the Hindu quarters to the place of slaughter, is intended to, and does, insult and injure the feelings of the Hindus. Never was there a time when the presence of local executive officers in whom both parties could trust was more essential.

A new cause of religious unrest is the direct consequence of the Reforms. There have been

constituted communal electorates, that abomination to the pedants. As the Hindu leaders at least understand that a strong and disciplined party in the provincial councils are masters, and that a strong party in the Assembly can exercise enormous pressure on the executive, it is important to abolish these electorates. Thus none but Hindus could be elected, and the voices of the minority would be totally disregarded. Abolition of communal representation can be hastened by reducing the number of favoured electors. Thus there has been the movement for reclaiming the Muhammadan converts.

The Indian Mussulman was not generally a persecutor, and the Moslem has, in general, no love for converts. According to him the total number of Moslems from the beginning to the end of the world is numbered and registered in the books of Fate. To convert a pagan therefore is merely to prevent one child from being born in a Moslem family. Moreover, there is the reluctance of an arrogant caste to share its privileges with those whom it regards as its inferiors. Thus the purebred Arab of Spain had no name for the Beni Angelinos of Seville, or the Beni Tadmirs of Murcia, other than slaves and sons of slaves, though these were the noblest of the Spaniards, fervent in their Islam, and saturated with

Arab culture. Still, in the long history of India there has been occasionally a persecuting or proselytising Sultan. Moreover, even without pressure men extruded from some Hindu caste might accept the religion of the rulers. Some might hope thus to escape taxation, some might be ambitious, some might be genuinely attracted by the faith. Yet these new converts were not whole-hearted Moslems, and retained with the memory of their old castes many of their old customs. Recently there has been a great movement to reclaim these deserters to the banners of Hinduism. They can never be wholly reclaimed, but they can be sufficiently reclaimed to pass as Hindus of some sort of theistic denomination, and the rest may follow in time. This movement has had a certain amount of success, and any striking instance of reconversion is advertised in a manner calculated to wound Muhammadan opinion to the utmost, for by the religious law a *murtadd* (that is, one who having once been a Moslem rejects the faith) must die the death.

In the like manner some of the Mussulmans, seeing a vast number of outcastes, nominally Hindus, but treated with scorn and contumely by any Hindu of decent descent, think that it would be possible to augment their own numbers by inducing these not very hopeful

recruits to join their levy. In fact, both parties have grasped that every convert counts two on a division, and take their measures accordingly. Now it is particularly in the rural areas where the low-castes and caste Muhammadans abound. Thus the acrimony of religious controversy is spread into the remotest villages.

Free India will, no doubt, attempt to solve the problem of the two religions, but this very attempt may well lead to other and more formidable problems. The legislature will, no doubt, prohibit the slaughter of cows and unlicensed processions. The educational system of the country will be so manipulated as to render it impossible for any Mussulman without great expense to qualify for any learned profession, or for any superior Government post. Hence the administration will be filled exclusively with Hindus. Riots will be put down with perfect impartiality, but somehow it will always be the Mussulmans who are the rioters. Islam, thus a blind Samson, will toil in the mills of Gaza. The rest may be left to the usurer and the laws of succession.

Let us hope for better things, for "if ye go that way, lost ye are." It must be remembered that India needs an army, and that many of her soldiers are Mussulmans. In case of an invasion by land the enemy which that army must encounter would come forth as the leader

and champion of the Mussulmans. Under European officers, under the fortunate auspices of the Sirkar, infidel but tolerant, and not pagan, the Mussulman sepoy has again and again broken the pride of the Mussulman princes both of India and of the limitary lands. Take the Mussulman out of the Indian Army and the year would indeed have lost its spring. Leave him in, oppress him, deny him promotion, expose him so discontented to solicitation and propaganda, and all sorts of interesting events might occur.

XVII.

THE PRINCES.

ALL India is not under the direct sway of the British. Large areas are what is known as foreign territory, ruled by princes. With the exception of Nepal, however, these territories are so intimately connected with British India, both by local situation, historical antecedents, community of race and faith, language, and intellectual affinities, that the whole subcontinent may be considered as a political entity. True, some of the problems confronting British India do not exist in foreign territory. There is, for instance, no overpopulation question, little industrialism, and no expropriation of the rural population. On the other hand, the vagaries of the rupee do not leave even these primitive areas unaffected, and, seeing that no important State has any access to the sea, recent developments in the direction of protection of the fiscal policy of India must in foreign India also produce far-reaching effects.

Foreign India is governed by princes of various religions, and the religion of the subject is not necessarily that of the ruler. Hence the acute religious discord now prevalent in British India has necessarily repercussions in the territories of the princes. The princes are tolerant. Hindu rulers might prohibit the slaughter of cattle, but employed Mussulmans freely in those capacities for which they are best fitted. Mussulman rulers valued the Hindu as a taxpayer and a civil administrator, were often therefore little more than figureheads of a dominant Hindu oligarchy, and in some cases pushed the policy of non-interference and religious tolerance to the point of forbidding voluntary conversion. Even now the two religions get on better in foreign territory than they do with us, but there are not lacking signs that disorder in British India is spreading into these territories. It is necessary therefore to turn our attention to the princes.

India abounds in princes. Some are rulers of great kingdoms, others of a share in a few villages. Some of them boast the blood of Gods and heroes transmitted from father to son through mighty ancestors who were reigning before the Turk came through the northern passes; others trace back to the feudatories of some perished empire; others to successful adventurers who in the great struggle between

British, Moslem, and Maratha had the wit to back the right horse, or to surrender while surrender could still command a price.

It is a mistake to call these princes "feudatories of the Empire" or vassals, for these expressions connote the feudal law which is wholly inapplicable to foreign India, and a loose use of legal terms never fails to lead to disaster. The relations between these princes and the Government of India varies in origin. In some cases there was originally a treaty as between independent powers of equal rank, in others a pact between strength and weakness, in some cases there was a surrender and regrant, in some creation by a mere act of beneficence. Reading the official compilation of treaties, the uninstructed reader would suppose that the princes of India varied as regards their relationship to the Government of India from independence to tenure at will. But this is not so in fact. They vary in dignity and power, but are all alike subordinate allies.

The reason for this is plain to him who considers more than the written word. If it is true that subjection calls for protection, it is no less true that protection calls for subjection. In the East the constitutional method of securing a good ruler is to depose the bad ruler. A bad ruler (that is not so much a tyrannical ruler as a ruler who fails, either

by his vices or by his virtues, to protect the subject, and to do justice between man and man) is deposed and his deposition is regarded with approval by all, even though he be the descendant of a hundred princes. The process differs, there may be a palace conspiracy, there may be the gradual assumption of power by some race of competent vazirs, there may be a rebellion, there may be a foreign invasion, but the end is certain. It takes about two hundred years for an Oriental ruling family to become wholly effete, and it must then either resort to adoption or give way to its betters.

The Government of India could not allow this constitutional method of securing good government to continue. It was too slow and capricious. The Oriental will stand a great deal of misgovernment before he rebels, and would never dream of rebelling against an efficient ruler, however tyrannical. Thus, if the British had waited till discontent brought redress, they might have waited for a very long time. In the meanwhile events shocking to humanity might have been occurring at their very doors. Trade would have languished, and the conterminous British districts must have suffered from violation of the frontiers by disorderly elements. Further, when the certain revolt did come, who could tell in what

form it would come and when? It might put into power some faction or creed bitterly hostile to the British. It might come at some time when the Paramount Power was fighting for its life, and had need of all its allies. There might be protracted fighting between rival claimants. Intriguers might wish to push their rivals into conflict with the British, hoping that such a conflict could have but one end. It is merely necessary to refer to the cases of Coorg, Oudh, and the Punjab to exemplify the reasonableness of this apprehension.

Such a primitive manner of ensuring good government could not be tolerated. The British therefore either expressly or impliedly guaranteed to each of its allies or friends that they, the Paramount Power as they may be called, would secure the succession according to the family-law of each prince to his descendants, and that they would by force of arms interfere, if necessary, to protect their friends and allies from foreign invasion and domestic rebellion. The subjects of the native princes have thus lost a valuable right, which they possessed from time immemorial—the right that is of removing by assassination or rebellion a bad prince. Some other means must therefore be devised to prevent frantic misgovernment.

In parenthesis it may be remarked that according to the State Law of both Hindus

and Mussulmans the ruler is not a corporation sole, and therefore does not wholly represent the State. His laws and constitutions do not (unless adopted by his successor) possess any validity after his death. Similarly in strict law his treaties do not bind his successors unless renewed by them. In the early days of British Dominion in India much misunderstanding was caused, and many really baseless accusations of fraud were made by reason of the reluctance of the newly installed Raja, or Nawwab, to consider himself bound by the treaties of his predecessor. It was not long, however, before the Oriental ruler learned to appreciate the advantages of a permanent treaty with the British Government, and to scan its clauses with the minuteness of a chancery lawyer. Thus many a dotard and a dastard has profited by the merits of his valiant and able ancestor.

Thus it was necessary for the British Government in concluding a treaty, whether of equal alliance or of superiority with some prince, able himself and competent, to consider that this treaty would be equally binding with his great-grandson who might be malignant or degenerate. It was not indeed seemly to enter in the treaty a specific stipulation that the British Government had the power to intervene in the internal affairs of the State

by giving "advice," and in case of the disregard of such friendly counsel by removing the prince and by appointing a more suitable incumbent, but this was by the nature of the case understood.

This is clear from the consideration that all treaties are broken by unfriendly acts of one of the contracting parties, and may, after due warning in certain circumstances, be denounced. In case of protracted misgovernment in an Indian State, it was hardly possible that no unfriendly acts would be committed either by the prince himself, or by some one for whom he was responsible. Thus in the case of misgovernment the British Government would have a legitimate ground for war with the peccant State. But the victor in war may justly annex the conquered domain and incorporate it with his own dominions. *A fortiori*, therefore, the victor has the right to remove an offending prince and instal a friendly ruler. But if this could be done by war, as it most certainly could, it could be done justly by a threat of war, or mere diplomatic pressure. The alternative therefore before the peccant ally of the British Government was either to resign or bear the brunt of war. The ally naturally preferred the former alternative, and thus by use and wont and precedent it became established that the British Government had

the right to advise and expostulate, or if necessary and for good reasons, to remove any prince who had accepted the British Alliance. Nepal was an exception, but Nepal was outside the limits of India.

Naturally the theory was not at once perceived in all its implications. Thus the Government of the day actually declared formal war on the small and powerless State of Coorg, in circumstances where nowadays the necessary change would be effected by a resolution and a letter. So for years the most frantic misgovernment was tolerated in Oudh, owing to the historical importance of that State, its long friendship with the British Government, and the fact that its ruling house had always been an effusively loyal ally. But whatever doubts there may have been in the past, it is now well established that any prince, however powerful he may be, and however much it may be the case that his predecessors negotiated on equal terms with the British Government, is subject to control by the British Government and, if necessary, to removal.

The amount of misdoing which will justify the interference of the British Government is not well ascertained. For long there was a growing tendency on the part of the local representatives of the British Government to interfere in the most domestic concerns of each

State. All Oriental courts are full of intriguers, and the influence of the resident was continually invoked by one party or the other on the most plausible grounds, but with sinister intentions. Thus it might well happen that a misled resident might mislead his principal, the Government of India, and that interference might be threatened when there was no good cause. This might excite alarm among the other princes, who were naturally extremely jealous of their independence, and do not like to see any brother prince, however sinful, subjected to this extraordinary coercive power of the Government of India. Moreover, interference, apparently unjustified, might easily lead to rumours of corruption, and finally the State Government having no real liberty, and being subject to control in very minor matters, might easily lose all initiative, and the wish or indeed power to govern well and wisely. The pendulum accordingly swung the other way, and no interference by the local representatives of the supreme power is now permitted in the domestic affairs of a State, unless where very powerful interests are affected, or where oppression amounts to a public scandal.

It is argued, and indeed arguable, that this principle of non-interference is carried to a point where the subjects of native States have

been denied that protection from the supreme power to which they are entitled, from the fact that it is under the shadow of that power, and secure in its protection, that the ruler ventures to misgovern. For though many of the princes are model rulers, yet some are not, and a few are oppressive to a degree. In hardly a single State is the administration on the level of the most neglected British district.

It is true that the system of building a façade is prevalent. Many States are equipped with the most up-to-date apparatus of Western sway, a bureaucracy, legislative and executive councils, separation of judicial and executive functions, free-press, free and compulsory education and what not, but behind it all is the Oriental court with its eunuchs and concubines, and its parasites and the poisoner, the sorcerer and the sworder, and, in short, its odour of blood and musk. All honour therefore to the princes who have risen above this miasma. The difficulties of interference are aggravated by the fact that many of the princes, charming, refined, and noble gentlemen, are assiduous in courts. The record of the old régime in France, however, shows that it is possible that the seigneur may be a polished and agreeable gentleman in Versailles and Marly, and a cruel oppressor in his fiefs.

That party, which it would be improper to

call the party of sedition, and which may therefore be called proleptically the Swaraj Party, which sought to free India from the foreigner, found little support in the territories of the princes. Blackmail of a peccant ruler by lawyers and journalists intimately connected with the libertarian party was indeed not unknown, but the tribunes of the people knew better than to thunder against misgovernment in those regions, and few princes desired to see their territories turned into a political Alsatia. There were occasional appeals from the very extreme parties to the princes to come forth as champions of the Mother or of Islam, coupled with menaces as to what would be the fate of the laggard when the Paramount Power was overthrown, and one or two princes toyed for a moment with the fancy of becoming the Victor Emmanuel of India. But the princes knew that the Swaraj Party could not hope to overthrow the Government by force of arms, and therefore even if they had been inclined to throw all into disorder, they were not in the least likely to move as long as the contest was between rhetoricians and armies. They left out of sight the question of moral force, and did not foresee that the Paramount Power would make an act of contrition, and by a voluntary abdication transfer power into the hands of its enemies. During

this transitional period is visible a certain perplexity as to what will be the outcome of it all, the natural effect of contemplating the irregular and spasmodic outbursts of energy on the part of the Paramount Power alternating with long periods of inertia. Thus David who never knew whether a psalm would be rewarded by a purse of gold or a javelin cast, must have walked full warily in the tents of Saul. No doubt they feel that if the British people is giving up its control over India, it is not unreasonable to expect that it will give up its control over foreign India also. There is thus a desire to advance claims which, if unchallenged, would form a good basis for establishing a real independency of the succession Government as soon as opportunity arose. The transitional Government has, however, been no less firm in asserting the strict constitutional doctrine that a protected State is a dependent State than its predecessors. Whether it has been equally rigorous in applying this doctrine is another question, and is really immaterial. The Oriental, in dealing with Europeans, is capable of building the most monstrous superstructure of claims on a very trivial encroachment, and the ruler is wise who opposes trespass at the outset. The consequence is, however, that the States are nervous, excited, and alarmed as to the future.

Their old superior is gone, and it is by no means certain who the successor will be.

In Dominion India, at any rate, the suzerain will be as now the Government of India. This Government will, however, be the Cabinet—that is, an executive committee selected from the lawyers, landholders, and manufacturers of British India. The Viceroy will be there, and will represent the Crown, but will have less legal power to control the executive than the bailiff of a county court. It is with the Cabinet that the States must accommodate themselves, reserving perhaps the power to transact business with the Government in Whitehall, if that is worth while, and with individual members of the Cabinet of India and perhaps with knots of politicians in the Assembly.

Now, being vowed to optimism, I must suppose that the Cabinet, the secretaries, and the members of the Assemblies, as also the residents, will all be pure-minded patriots, and the States will be models of good government, "with a sort of old-world charm as of feudal India." In that case there can be no reason for any virtuous prince to feel apprehension. But if the case be other, and should boodling and graft (to use the vigorous vernacular of the enlightened West) become once more the seccotine of the democracy, then the princes would indeed be in an enviable position.

They command the services of the most skilled intriguers that the world has ever seen, men who make the Florentines of the cinque cento look like a convention of Sunday School teachers. They are rich with the accumulations of a century of peace. If they are reluctant to break into their family hoards, it is only a few jewels less to a dancing-girl, a few cars less in the garage, one trip less to Paris, or perhaps another shilling on the land tax. Something must, no doubt, be sacrificed to appearances. The façade must be erected, but provided it be painted in the most fashionable colours no one will trouble much of what materials it is composed, or what lies behind it, and that executive council, legislative assembly, or High Court could seriously embarrass a determined prince, supported from headquarters, is an idea fit for a child. Thus with a very trifling expense and some small sacrifice of personal dignity, an ambitious and talented prince could do much as he wished. He could eliminate all rivals, dispose of inconvenient members of his family, crush out any hated religion or order of men, and in fact be again a real lord on his own lands. He might even extend his domains at the expense of States less fortunate and opulent, and here and there over districts once British to which he may have some sort of sentimental claim. Thus it would seem that the princes have no cause for apprehension, and

would on the contrary have flung open to them a career suited to their talents.

It is possible that some high-spirited and haughty men may get sick of wading in the sewers of diplomacy amid the stink of corruption, and become weary of complying with the demands of lawyers and journalists, but the East is the country of patience. Comply, be silent, count the days, and look to your arms. The last sun has not set. The princes of India cannot therefore be wholly disregarded by him who wishes to consider the possible disturbers of tranquillity in India. Many of them have armies considerable in numbers, lacking in training—but that can be supplied; deficient in officers—but these can be hired; unprovided with arms—but these can be stored. The Government of India does not regard with a favourable eye a prince who tries to make his troops efficient for more than police work and parades, but toleration in these matters could in the future be obtained in certain contingencies by diplomacy. There is also the consideration that some of these princes are by origin the chiefs of certain martial races, and in a serious upheaval they might find themselves forced to stand forth as national leaders. Such was the fate of Muzaffar Shah, such was perhaps the fate of Holkar, such might well have been the fate of Sindhia in the great but partial upheaval of 1857.

XVIII.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

I AM vowed to be an optimist, but I am afraid I cannot force myself to be an optimist to that degree that I can confidently believe that there will be no more wars. No man of the present age is likely to desire any more wars. We have had our fill of military glory, and even those who have no dear ones to sacrifice may well dread a ten-shilling in the pound income tax, and eternities spent crouching in coal-cellars and culverts. Until, however, Europe is federated under some central power, which will abolish the municipal armies, fleets, and foreign offices, so long will there be between the municipal States of Europe those jealousies, fears, hatreds, and economic rivalries which have been in the past the causes of war, and which may well again in the future be the causes of the same disaster. Moreover, should war be wholly laid aside, it would be necessary to devise some means, equally efficacious, whereby

ramshackle empires, corrupt democracies, and anarchical governments can be eliminated. No such means has yet been devised, and the federation of Europe is not yet a matter of practical politics. Therefore it may well prove that this period of peace is after all what periods of peace have ever been in the past—namely, a short breathing-space during which the nations exhausted with one war were accumulating men and money for the next. It would be unsafe therefore for the British Empire, and particularly for India, to consider the question of foreign war as a matter of historical interest only, and one which need not be considered by such statesmen as are responsible for Imperial and Indian defence.

India in or out of the Empire will always need good defence. Certain powers consider that they have a historical or geographical claim to an Indian Empire. Though the country is not a very rich country, yet there is a sort of legend current in the West as to the great wealth which the master of India could extract from it, and there is certainly a great field for extensive exploitation. Moreover, there is a widespread admiration for the religion, art, and philosophy of India, and with men, to admire and to desire to possess are not so far apart. Great wars have been waged in the past for the ownership of countries

possessed of not one tithe of the attractiveness of this country. Innocence and inoffensiveness are a very poor protection to the unarmed against determined cupidity, for those who desire to pick a quarrel will always find a legitimate excuse. The case of China may be quoted as showing that an unarmed power may preserve its independence, but that case is not truly apposite. The independence of China is preserved for a time not by its innocuousness, but by the number of States of equal power which desire to end that independence. There would in the case of India be no such equilibrium of egoisms.

It is unnecessary for the purposes of this book to discuss possible invasions by sea. So long as India is connected with the British Empire in such a way that the British Fleet is at her disposal for the purposes of defence, nothing is to be feared from a transmarine enemy, except occasional raids and razzias. It is not therefore necessary to consider the so-called Indian navy, for the power of a navy is not local. Strong anywhere, it is strong everywhere, and the fate of India has been decided before now by naval battles in the Mediterranean and Caribbean. On the other hand, should the British Navy be broken in war, then, amid the general calamities of the world, the fate of India might pass unnoticed.

While then it would be unwise for those who will manage the affairs of India, mistress of her own destinies, wholly to disregard the transmarine enemy, yet for the present it would be sufficient to confine our attention to the land frontiers.

It is not likely that Burma will follow the fates and fortunes of India, and thus the Indian statesman will be relieved of much responsibility, for the frontiers of Burma, though protected by nature, are not wholly impermeable to an invader from the north or the east. Similarly 'Irak may be disregarded. Irak is the merest outwork, and must necessarily be abandoned when the fortress itself is seriously menaced.

The frontier of India is strong. True, there are along that frontier powers of varying strength. Thibet, nominally a dependency of China; Nepal, recently in circumstances not well-explained freed from its dependence on the Indian system; Turkestan (Russian and Chinese), and others which have access to the plains of India. These might well in proper hands be used as sources of irritation, or as a means of causing frontier incidents, or even as theatres for tertiary operations, but at present they are incapable of forming bases for major campaigns against a State possessed of any sort of modern military equipment.

While therefore the rulers of India would be well advised to keep a careful eye upon developments in those countries, it is now, as ever, towards the North-West Frontier that the attention of the State must be directed. It is through Afghanistan that all the invaders who have penetrated by land into India in historical times have (with one doubtful exception) advanced, and that is the door which must be well guarded. The route through Persia is capable of easy development, but has not yet been developed.

Between Afghanistan and India is a belt of country inhabited by wild tribes. These vary very much among themselves in race, character, and language. They are all Muhammadans of the same sect, but they are by no means all fanatics. They are not Indians, and have a great contempt for the Indians, both pagan and Moslem. Their country is for the most part sterile, and in spite of some rude natural checks the population increases. Some of them penetrate into India and even farther afield as traders and labourers, but they have the nostalgia of the hillman for his mountains, and rarely settle. From some of these tribes the Indian Army draws excellent soldiers, but others would be wisely excluded from the sphere of recruitment on account of their hatred of discipline and their notorious treachery. A war-

like population pent up in the narrow limits of a barren mountainous country, looking out over fertile plains inhabited by a race whom they consider as their predestined prey, must always be a serious annoyance to the civilised rulers of the lands on which they border. A weak Government would see an ever-broadening strip of wasted land extending from the foot of the mountains eastward over India. A strong Government is confronted with the unpleasant alternative of conquering and reducing to the form of a province a most difficult country, roadless, full of torrents, abounding in mountains, cursed with extremes of heat and cold, inhabited by a ferocious, recalcitrant, warlike, perfidious, and irreconcilable population — a country, moreover, which when reduced would not bring in a particle of revenue, and would on the contrary consume huge sums for administration and defence.

We do not read that the old rulers of India had much trouble with these tribes. The Pathans set up a short-lived dynasty in India in the interval between the fall of the first Turkish power and the coming of that new Turkish stock which we call the Moguls. In the decadence of the Mogul power they set up small kingdoms in India, but during the greater part of the Muhammadan period they were welcomed everywhere as mercenary soldiers;

thus though isolated frontier raids were common, there was no need for any special frontier policy. The Moguls, moreover, during the palmy times of the empire, held Afghanistan, and the frontier tribes, thus isolated in the middle of a great empire, with no retreat in case of emergency, and no possibility of support, were the less likely to desire to attract the attention of the imperial power. The Sikhs, however, the inheritors of the Mogul power in the Punjab, soon came into conflict with the inhabitants of the mountains, to whom they were abominable, both as infidels and as possible conquerors. Ranjit Singh was too wise to thrust his hand unnecessarily into a hornet's nest. He seized Peshawur, and was careful to preserve his communications with that important frontier post, but for the rest he was in general contented with guarding his own territories. His methods (which were not as ours) were, on the whole, effective. Small parties of raiders might well avoid districts whose land revenue was commuted for the delivery of so many Afridi heads, and with larger bodies the formidable Avitabile was ready and able to cope.

The policy of the British Government as regards these tribes varied from time to time. The experience of the daring, energetic, and resourceful Napier seemed to show that regular

operations against the enemies of the border were certain to be dangerous, and likely to be futile. The British Government, therefore, over the greater part of the frontier adopted the policy of watch and ward. A large force of picked troops was cantoned in fortresses along the boundaries of the debatable land to repel raids and invasions, and if necessary to advance into tribal territory to arrest some daring brigand chief, to disperse some gathering of outlaws, or to break up a threatening tribal confederacy. In addition to the usual elements of disorder, which always exist where the civilised and the barbarian come into contact, fanaticism came to add its quota. The crusading spirit of the Wahhabis consecrated the promptings of restlessness and cupidity, and it was discovered that these enemies of India were receiving support, both in money and men, from brother Moslems in Hindustan and Bengal. In spite, however, of much provocation, the British remained constant to their policy for over fifty years.

The results were not very satisfactory. The frontier was not safe. Small expeditions marched into the country, fought a few skirmishes, and blew up a few towers. Meanwhile the population moved up to the hills. Presently some nominal sort of temporary submission would be accepted, and the British would move out

of the country heavily attacked and fighting "brilliant rearguard actions." This policy of "butcher and bolt" (as it was called by its home critics) was a mere palliative, and in fact rather encouraged the enemy. Consequently it was impossible to say when some tribal rising on a great scale might take place which would require all the forces of the Empire to suppress. There was always the fear that foreign intriguers might find their account in stirring up unrest on the frontier, and the task of the wardens of the marches became ever more and more difficult as the progress of science and the triumphs of commerce placed better and better weapons in the hands of those who, when armed with matchlocks and knives only, had many a time made the victory doubtful.

In the meantime the tribes in the extreme south-west had been brought under direct control. These were of a different race and character to the Pathan, and their organisation, though tribal, was yet more solid than his. The British here had not to deal with a true mountaineering democracy, where the nominal chiefs were little more than embarrassed presidents of a committee of armed men. Here the tribal khans were powerful, though limited, chiefs. It was therefore possible to enter into agreements with these tribes through persons who could guarantee that such agreements

would be kept. By the tact, personality, and ability of the British agents, the Baluch was induced to enter into a sort of federation, which, while preserving tribal autonomy and excluding the British administrative system, guaranteed the peace of the country and the inviolability of the frontier.

The success of this experiment seemed to indicate that it would be possible to "Sandemanise" the Pathan. It would obviously be worth a good deal in hard cash, and yet more in invisible assets, if the Mahsud and Afridi could be induced to police himself and to keep his own young men on his own side of the border. Into the details and results of this experiment I do not propose to enter. Free India will, however, be confronted with the same troubles as those which have ever confronted us, and will be presented with the same dilemma either to reduce the country at vast expense and with little profit, or to guard the frontiers. To do either will require a large military force of all arms, and much power of leadership among the officers. There is a third alternative, which was at one time much in fashion both in English and Indian civil circles, to withdraw across the Indus. The objection to this is that it does not go far enough. It would be simpler and safer to withdraw across the Jumna, if not the Brahmaputra. The god

Terminus is a sluggish god, and reluctant to move, but when he does move he moves very rapidly, and it is not always easy to bid him halt.

Such is the military problem of the frontier tribes. It is a grave problem, but after all one only of the second order. If mishandled, the frontier tribes might cause untold misery to the peaceful inhabitants of the frontier districts; but they could not (unless there was very grave disorder in India, and at the same time the emergence in those regions of one of those rude geniuses who have the gift to bind together in one mighty confederacy a thousand jarring septs) seriously shake the fabric of dominion in India. With Afghanistan it is different, and from Afghanistan might come a danger which it would tax the whole resources of the Empire to end, and which accordingly might well prove fatal to the existence of Free India.

Owing to historical reasons, those who assert that it is necessary for that power which holds India also to control Afghanistan are suspected of Jingoism, a forward policy, medal hunting, imbecility, and doubtful adhesion to the Liberal faith, yet it seems severe to blame the householder who wishes to have uncontrolled dominion over his own front door. History has shown that strong rulers of India have generally held Afghanistan, and conversely that a strong inde-

pendent Government in Inner Asia which controlled the Afghan passes has had little difficulty in doing much what it wished in India. From a very early period, therefore, the efforts of the British rulers of India were devoted to obtaining such an ascendancy in Afghanistan that it would not be pervious to the enemy. The first attempts failed owing to the anarchic condition of the country. Next there was an attempt to conquer the country, in which after many vicissitudes we were badly beaten and foiled. This was followed by a period of neutrality, when the strong Afghan ruler, Dost Muhammad, preferred to rely on the friendship of the British to remembering past grievances. Friendship he had, support he could not win. Anarchy followed his death, and an orientation of Afghan policy away from England and towards Russia. Hence two fresh wars, the intervention of British faction, and a conviction that while the conquest of this difficult country was perhaps not beyond the power of the Empire, yet that its pacification and retention were not matters of practical politics.

The British were therefore compelled to fall back on a far inferior policy, that of keeping up friendly relations with a powerful Afghanistan. This policy was inferior because for its success it depended on two conditions which it was beyond our power to assure. Afghanistan must be powerful, or it would relapse into

anarchy and be a tempting prey to the invader from the north; and it must be friendly, or it might throw in its lot with that invader. These conditions were, however, fulfilled up till near the end of the Great War, when circumstances (to detail which will be the duty of some future historian) permitted and encouraged an unfriendly power to erect and maintain itself in those regions—once wholly within the British sphere.

We must all wish that Amanullah will be protected by God, that he will be faithful to his engagements, and that he will have no need to cry for mercy. Let him be strong and victorious by all means, and keep his mountain kingdom safe from all intruders. Interest would point to a preservation of strict neutrality, for he could hardly wish his kingdom to share the fate of Bukhara, but in the case of an Oriental prince it is never very safe to predict that he will do what it appears would be most advantageous. There is the temptation for a young and ambitious prince to follow the path of the Ghazi. A seaport is a desideratum, and such a bait would be hard to resist. There may be domestic and personal influences brought to bear which may be difficult to oppose. Thus, though we may well pray heartily that the last great independent Muhammadan power may long remain great and independent, we

should also add a petition that that power be not turned against us or any of its neighbours.

If (which God forfend) Amanullah was to disappear, with him would probably disappear the Barukzai dynasty itself, and it is by no means certain that the subsequent whirlpool of confused fighting would throw up a man strong enough to hold together the fragments of the kingdom. Afghanistan also is a geographical expression. There is little connection of race, occupation, history, accessibility, and even religion between the inhabitants of this province and that. There is not even an over-riding, homogeneous, solid aristocracy such as sometimes holds together in a semblance of nationhood an Empire of disparate provinces. The country might therefore dissolve into four or five weak khanates. Such scattered and mutually hostile provinces would necessarily gravitate into one or other of the powerful systems which are in the vicinage. The question therefore would at once arise whether India or Russia is to possess the passes into India.

With the strategical questions which would arise in consequence of an occupation of Afghanistan by a hostile power I do not propose to deal: I merely say that in order to defend, it is necessary sometimes to attack, and that even the garrison of a besieged city finds it advisable sometimes to make sorties. There

is no instance in history in which a merely passive defence was eternally successful against a watchful enemy. The best defence possible is to annihilate your enemy. If he is obliging enough to descend into the terrain selected by you for the purpose so that you can conveniently administer the knock-out blow, well and good. But an enemy is not always so obliging. But these things I leave to the experts.

"But," says the cheery optimist, "why postulate a hostile Russia? The Soviet Republic will in time pass away, and be superseded by some great and enlightened democracy, anxious only to live at peace with all men. Why should we dread to see a Christian and civilised power installed on our frontiers in supercession of a confederation of warlike Muhammadans?

Russia has her own methods of dealing with mountaineers and fanatics, and could establish herself in Afghanistan as firmly as she had established herself in the Caucasus, though the task might take her many years. Suppose this effected. Herat, Ghazni, Kabul, and Kandahar are cantonments. Khorassan is strongly held. Railways run to Kabul and Kandahar. The roads through Balkh are improved so as to carry heavy motor transport. Orthodox churches raise their golden domes above the tombs of Sultan and Pir. The great Khans

are proud to bear Russian names, and are splendid with Russian orders. Their sons are all officers in crack regiments, or seconded for special service. All these things might be done merely as a matter of routine, and not in any way as a preparation against India. Nevertheless the establishment of Russia with such solidity at the head of the passes would entail upon India the necessity of keeping up an army of—how many men let the experts say, but something vastly exceeding her present force. The Empire, if India were still attached to it, would now be a continental power, for the master of Afghanistan could force the Empire to contend for its existence on the plains of the Punjab; for though Russia is vulnerable to sea power, she is of all great powers that which is the power best fitted to endure the strangle-grasp of a hostile sea power. She is conterminous with at least fourteen other powers, permeable to her imports and exports, and has no outlying colonies or possessions where she could be forced to action.

Those who are acquainted with the history of our diplomatic relations with the United States for the last hundred years are well aware what difficulties have been caused by the long unguarded frontier of Canada. Yet America is a democracy, not militaristic, not anxious to conquer reluctant populations, not

till recently possessed of interests which conflicted with ours. However friendly Russia may be, she is ever pressed on by obscure forces working within herself to extend her empire, which forces have many times overborne the reluctance of her rulers. She has a great land power, she will never be democratic in the Western sense, and her interests cross and interlace with those of England at a thousand points. Unless England is to abdicate in every part of the world, unless in fact she is to surrender her independence and to be in all things the tame slave of Russia, she cannot allow Russia, however peaceful and amiable, to consolidate her position in Afghanistan so long as India is a valued possession. Should, however, India be freed from the Imperial connection, she must, unless she is prepared to make the most unheard-of sacrifices, sink into the same ignominious position as that of Persia.

The position would be still worse if Russia were not, as the optimist supposes, a friendly and civilised power, and a member of the comity of nations, but, as now, the camp of the enemies of God and Man. The crisis would be then indeed severe, for the enemy to be encountered would be not the corporeal enemy only, but that spiritual foe against which the arms of the flesh are but a weak defence.

XIX.

BOLSHEVISM.

THERE is a star in the East, but it is not the star that led the Gentiles to the cradle of the Redeemer, nor is it the star of the goddess of grievous loves and grievous laughter, but it is the Star of Bitterness which fell on the healthful waters, turning them into a potion of madness and death.

It is the fashion in the West to consider Bolshevism as a system of economics or a system of politics. We think therefore that to confute it, it is enough to demonstrate that the economics are puerile, and the politics those of savages. There are those who know better, but they hide their knowledge. Bolshevism is a religion, and a religion of Hope. It is a false religion, and the hope it gives is a lying hope; but it is a religion for all that, and therefore cannot be confuted by logic or suppressed by the arms of the flesh, for, to confute a religion, altar must be set against

altar, and faith against faith. How, then, shall those who have no faith and no altar contend against this false faith and this unlawful sacrifice? It is safer to say: "This is an error. It will pass of itself. Leave it alone. Combat it not. It will perish of its own inanity."

Inane or not, it is revelling over the East. It has laid its hands on Constantinople to possess it. From Persia the British have been expelled with ignominy. Central Asia and Mongolia are fiefs of the Empire of Deicide. In China, the country of warring ideals, the rest are fleeting shades, the only living this. In Japan the apostles are not idle. In Indo-China they are not unknown. In Java the disciples have passed from faith to works. Is India likely to escape contagion?

A priori, one would say that the methods of this new congregation *de propaganda fide* are not such as are very likely to succeed. Bureaucracy, the besetting vice of the barbarian who has now descended from his horse and who wishes to govern and be governed, the anaconda which has crippled Communist activities in the sphere of economics, is here rampant. Neither Islam nor Christianity were spread by bureaucrats. The evangelists of those faiths were simple men, who thought they had seen the truth face to face, and could not rest till others had seen it too. True . . . but behind the

bureaucracy of the Comintern are found those things which are not so often found in bureaux, enduring faith and a demoniacal power of work, and these may even in this sphere work miracles.

Religions other than mere nature-worship on the one hand, and cold systems of ethics on the other—revealed religions, in fact—are recognisable by certain common tokens. There is the "substance of things hoped for," the declaration, that is, of the method of satisfying some strong though perhaps obscure desire of the heart, whether that desire be for purification from sin, or for the visible protection of a monarchical God, or for justice. There is the subjective feeling that the revelation does in fact diagnose with precision the need and indicate the remedy; there is the conviction of the intellect, either by means of the emotions or by some method of proof not known to formal logic; there is in general a change in the moral standards, so that what once appeared right now appears wrong, and things once loved are now contemned; there is the confirmation by signs and wonders; and there is the passion for spreading the Evangel. All these signs may be observed in Bolshevism.

No race is so hard-headed, so logical, so unemotional, so unimaginative that it can be certain that it will always repel the heralds of these spiritual contests from its boundaries.

Even in this twentieth-century England there are not lacking those who would slay and be slain for this faith of theirs. It is no wonder then that in the East, ever the nidus of religions, the faith should spread.

To certain religions the East has indeed proved unreceptive. Christianity, for instance, was rejected; but that was because Christianity was more than a religion. Christianity, when it was first revealed, was indeed a revelation to a people conscious and weary of sin, and anxious for purification. It indicated what sin was, and how the sinner could be made clean and how fortified in his regeneration. Had that been all, Christianity would have found a ready welcome wherever those conditions precedent existed—namely, wherever there was a people conscious of pollution and desirous to be cleansed. But it was not in that form that Christianity was preached to the East.

The Roman soldiers robed Him whose Kingdom was not of this world in the purple robe of the Imperator. They supposed they were doing this in mockery, but this was not so. It was, in fact, a symbol that Calvary was not so far from the Milvian Bridge, and that the labarum was a sign not so much that Rome was Christianised as that Christianity was

Romanised. To the East, therefore, Christ came not as the Guide, the Friend, the Sacrifice, but as the conquering Imperator. Latin Christianity brought not so much healing to the sick spirit as the secular policy of Rome. It brought with it the severe command, and in case of disobedience the severe punishment. It brought with it among other things monogamy, with all its implications from perpetual virginity to the lock hospital, and the harsh and crafty law of contract. It meant, in fact, a dissolution of the social and political system endeared to the people by a user of many thousands of years.

The result of certain missionary endeavours in South India and China seemed to show that without these accretions the faith might have been accepted. As it was it was rejected, and its rejection in countries so distant and so unconnected as Abyssinia and Japan—countries, moreover, where it was not opposed by any strong and hostile religion,—shows clearly that the Latin Christianity was rejected not as a religion but as a political danger. The mere fact therefore that Bolshevism may properly be classed as a religion is not against its propagation in India.

Certainly as a system of economics and as one of Government, Bolshevism, in the form

which it has now assumed in Russia, would not be acceptable. Nor would blatant atheism be welcomed. All these things are, however, heretical accretions to the original Gospel, and would no doubt be suppressed in propaganda in Eastern lands. This original Gospel is simply that it is both just and expedient that wealth should vest in the producers, a doctrine not abhorrent from any Eastern religion. In Islam, at any rate, there have from time to time emerged sects which went far farther on the path of Communism than the heroes of Russia have gone. These heresiarchs, attracted by the jingle of Ahlullah Malullah, proposed to nationalise not only wealth but women. The hard rule of a small committee, co-opting its members from a minute oligarchical fraction of the population and governing by terror through a parasitic bureaucracy, would perhaps be inadmissible; but the original idea of Soviet rule (if for Soviet is substituted caste council) is in no way dissonant with the ideas of the Indian Moslem or Hindu. I do not say that such a constitution would last for long without accommodating itself to this age, but then neither the Christian nor the Moslem theocracy was long able to subsist in its pristine purity.

Nor is what may be called the theogony of Bolshevism wholly abhorrent to the Eastern

mind. It is in vain that its professors hymn the majesty of atheism. The whole movement is meaningless unless it be referred to a religion, and a very ancient religion. The moderate Communist looks towards evolution to lead him to the Canaan which he knows to be the true goal of the much-wandering, much-tormented, human race. But to the majority of men evolution postulates a purpose still operating, and a purpose postulates an intelligence and a will. False Communism, impatient of evolution and seeking to come to its ends by force, is allied to that debased Manichæanism which sees in the actual Lord of the world an evil spirit, and in Him, whom the followers of the Lord of the world abjure and defy, the dethroned Spirit of God. But the leaders abjure and defy all gods? So did some of the spiritual ancestors of the men of the mountain. But here and now indeed Hollbach, there and hereafter the Prometheus Unbound. But Manichæanism is assuredly an Oriental faith. Many of the heretical sects of Islam are and were deeply tinged with this theogony, and there is nothing abhorrent from Hinduism in the hypothesis of an Evil Creator of the Phenomenal Universe. On the whole, therefore, it is not very safe to suppose that India is immune to intensive Bolshevistic propaganda.

The fact that India will soon be free is not

in the very least likely to prevent the Comintern from making great efforts to spread the light in that Empire. Although India will not be dependent on England, except perhaps in name, and "political exploitation" as it is called will therefore be at an end, yet "capitalist exploitation" will continue. This means, in short, that a good many Englishmen will have their money invested in India, and will expect some return for it. If that money is lost, England will, as a capitalist country, be all the weaker; and if, as in China, a party bitterly hostile to England could be brought into power, an even more serious blow—a blow, that is, to trade—might be inflicted on the hated metropolis of capitalism.

Make no mistake. These people hate bitterly many things, but most of all England. England has many times been hated bitterly, but in old days she minded the less because she was both able and willing to defend herself. Against Philip—the privateer, the pirate, Calvinism, the rack and the quartering-block; against Louis, Marlborough; against the Armed Neutrality—ships, more ships, and Rodney; against the Berlin Decrees—the Orders in Council. Against Bolshevism, what? Homiletics and suppliant posteriors seductive to the foot of insolence. But, as in the past, so in the future, little will be conceded to unarmed and opulent

humility, and we shall again learn the old, old lesson :—

> "Si le baton vous est charmant,
> Vous aurez bientôt contentement."

It is at present in the East where an attack can most easily be made on the wealth of the British Empire, and there is no country in which such an attack if successful would be more deadly than India.

Russia has ever had the nostalgia of Asia. In vain Alexis perished under the paternal knout. "Let us go home," was ever the cry of a race on whom was laid a burden too heavy to be borne. All that was vital in the race yearned back towards Moscow. Petersburg perishes in the cold and squalor of the Arctic marshes. The city of the Kremlin lives. It is right therefore that Asia should for the present look to Russia as her champion against the West, and India must share the common fate of Asia.

It is certainly true that there are few countries in which the naked doctrines of class-hatred are likely to find less acceptance than in India. The Indian is peculiarly devoid of envy and malice towards those whom fortune has favoured beyond himself. This is partly due to his religion, which teaches him that material prosperity is not all, partly to his caste system,

which organises the population in such a way that society is not stratified according to wealth. The labourer, whose sole possessions are a copper pot and a loin-cloth, but who would nevertheless die a thousand deaths rather than dine at the table of a Frankish Lord, or give his daughter in marriage to the most opulent of the Moslems, can hardly envy the wealth and power of those whom he in fact despises. With us, too, hatred is often due to fear, and fear is natural among the poor, where the poor man is wholly unprotected. But even in the depressed castes an Indian is not unprotected. He is not, that is, one man against the machine: he is a cog-wheel (small perhaps and invisible owing to situation), but nevertheless essential in a mechanism—and often a very powerful mechanism—of his own. It is difficult to make this clear to the foreigner, but one may take a simile from a state of society more familiar. Every Greek was a Hellene, but he was also the citizen of a city. The citizen of Cleitor or Tomi felt no envy of or hatred for the citizens of Athens and Sparta, because the greatness of Athens and Sparta was not based on injustice to him. He was proud of his own city, and would not for the world have seen it degraded to the status of an outlying township or even of a subordinate ally of those great powers. The danger to the social organisation of Greece

was therefore never from the man of the little city: it came from the townless man and the exile. India does not abound in men without castes. Still the feeling of race is a strong feeling, and that a man does not hate and envy his wealthy and powerful brother is no sign that he will not hate the wealthy and powerful intruder. It is possible therefore that in India the clarion not of class but of race hatred may not sound in vain.

I have elsewhere explained how much there was of reaction against the West in India, and how it had produced great effects in the political sphere long before the name of Lenin was heard in the land. Certainly this reaction has by no means weakened in recent years. Thus the moral and spiritual influence of Gandhi has grown with the explosion of his claims to dominate politics. Gandhiism is particularly well fitted to be the Court of Proselytes to the Russian Temple, for the system of Gandhi is but the system of Tolstoi corrected to the meridian of Ahmedabad, and Tolstoi, though anathema to the Communists, is pure Russian and the St John of the subversive canon.

What, then, is the message that Russia brings to India? "Who is the ruler of the West? Not now the King, not the warrior, not the sage, but the bunnia. What is the justice of the West? A crafty device whereby the bunnia

preserves his hoards. What is the law of the West? This: that it is just and holy that the bunnia should grow ever richer, and his slaves ever poorer. What is the religion of the West? An opiate that dulls your senses that the bunnia may more conveniently rob you. What is the culture of the West? That which allures and debauches a man to make him fit for slavery, for the prostituted mind is ever servile. You labour hard, and these men live in every delicacy of life. Come with us and we will abate this law of the West whereby men whom God created are made slaves to the creatures of God. Alone the force and fraud of the West may be too strong for you. With us this also may be accomplished."

I apprehend, therefore, that the new rulers of India will be very unfitted to cope with Bolshevism. In so far as the power they will exercise is based on anything real, it is based on reaction against the West, and must therefore naturally be closely allied to that which lies behind Bolshevism. But it is very hard for the ruler, for material ends, to crush a movement with which he is in intellectual sympathy. It can be done—*teste* Lauderdale in Scotland and perhaps Bonaparte in France,—but to do so needs a ruthlessness and cynicism which it is impossible to wish to attribute to any power which rules under the auspices of

Britain. In so far as the new Government is based on Occidental models and principles, it is the merest delusion, and there is this of good about subversion, that it subverts also shams.

Thus it might be said that the abdication of England in India was a sign that the eternal struggle between the man in the turban and the man in the hat is entering on to a new phase. It is possible that the historian may hereafter bracket the year 1917 with the year 53 B.C. as a date on which he can lay his finger, and say definitely that the tide which had long ebbed now began to flow again. Carrhae did more than decide that the East should not be the land of the polis, of the agora, of the gymnasium, of the tribunal, of the publican, and in due course of the Church and the Estates. It was the first skirmish in a war which brought the Arabs to the Loire and the Turks to the Danube. Thus the collapse of the Indian Autocracy is a sure sign that the East is no longer open to the political and economical exploitation of the West. If it means no more than that, it will be well.

Over the mutilated head of the Imperator, for the delight of the Sultan in his hour of triumph, hireling voices recited the masterpiece of Euripides. It was not enough that the West should be defeated with material arms:

its beauty and majesty must subserve and demonstrate the triumph of the barbarian. It is not beauty and majesty that must confirm and adorn this new triumph : it is the achievements of that daring intellect that ever questions and ever denies.

XX.

IMPERIAL RELATIONS.

SURROUNDED by these and other dangers, it will be necessary for India to look well to her own defence. In days gone by the Liberal Party of India dreamed a pleasant dream: India was to be handed over to them as a kingdom, to rule as they willed and to make their profit of it. They were to be guarded against domestic enemies by a mercenary force of British soldiers, and from the foreign foe by the fleets, armies, and wealth of the Empire. This was a pleasing dream, but it came through the gate of ivory.

It must be confessed that the Indian politicians have recently taken a more manly tone. Indian troops are equal to any other troops in the world. Indian officers (when trained) will be worthy leaders of such troops. The Indian Staff (when it exists) will be super-excellent. The Indian Navy only awaits the creative word to rival the exploits of Angria and the

Sidis. In future it will rather be the Empire which in suppliant wise will beseech help from India than India which will accept support from the whites. I trust that these allegations are true, for it is certain that India cannot rely on any assistance from the Empire from the moment when she attains Dominion status.

This seems to follow from the resolutions of the Imperial Conference. In parenthesis one may regard with admiration the constitutional progress which is revealed by the fact that such far-reaching alterations in the status of British citizens can be made (even as a *præ judicium*) by a mere declaration of the Ministers of the Crown; but there is no need to wander up those pleasant bypaths of speculation. These resolutions are in form merely a declaration of the combined law and practice of the Empire as it now stands, but in law to interpret is often to legislate, and their effect is to repeal the old constitution of the British Empire, by destroying a whole menagerie of fictions which did in fact draw Britannia's triumphal car.

It is well perhaps that these secrets of Empire should be revealed. Political fictions have their uses; indeed it is hard to imagine any viable constitution which did not rest on them, but they are, of course, dangerous. Thus the fiction that the Roman Emperor was merely a magistrate of the people, and as such liable

to the control of those laws to which all magistrates were subject, useful as it was, yet made impossible the invention and application of such new controls as were necessary in the case of a life-magistrate of such wide powers, not constitutionally removable, and subject to no audit. Similarly the fiction that the Holy Roman Emperor was King of Germany and King of Italy prevented for too long the development of true nation-building monarchies in those regions. In like way it might well have been the case that if the fiction of the supremacy of the British Parliament over the whole Empire had long been maintained, its real hollowness might have been revealed under some unforeseen and tremendous strain, leading to the collapse of the whole structure. But now the effect of the resolutions of the Imperial Conference being to demonstrate that there is no legal connection between the autonomous members of the British Empire, the way is open (if the people so wish) to frame a constitution (not necessarily in written words) which will again give the Empire a real organisation.

As matters stand at present the Empire is dissolved as a legal entity. There is no person or body who can lawfully speak for it as a whole. It has no common executive or legislature, and may soon have no common judi-

cature. The King of Great Britain is also King of each Dominion, but the August Person who reigns at Whitehall is not to be confused with the August Person who reigns by deputy at the capital of each of the Dominions; for the King in person does not exercise the executive power, which is vested in a committee of the legislature of each Kingdom or Dominion. There is no point of contact between these separate executives, and if established at all, it can be established only under the form of diplomacy.

The mutual relations of the autonomous members of the British Empire are without a parallel. They are not in any way similar to the relations that existed between Scotland and England during the days of the Stewarts, for the King there was effective head of both executives. Nor are they similar to those which existed between England and Hanover when the King of one was Elector of the other. Hanover was wholly a foreign country; and what is more, a foreign country whose ruler was vassal of a powerful foreign Prince, sometimes actually at war with Great Britain. Moreover, the power of the Elector in his German dominions was such that there was in fact no fear of the executives or legislatures of the two countries coming into conflict. The nearest parallel is perhaps the tie

between Great Britain on the one hand and Ireland on the other during the times of Grattan's Parliament—an ill-omened parallel, though the Executive of Great Britain possessed and exercised rights of interference in the affairs of Ireland which were extensive even according to the letter of the law of the constitution, and which as actually exercised were paramount. Probably the closest parallel might be the relations of the small principalities of Italy to their suzerain during the eighteenth century; but there the nominal and obsolete feudal tie was in fact superseded by the relations which must ever subsist between powers of the third rank and a power of the first rank, which is conterminous with such small powers as lie within its sphere of influence. This parallel is here wholly out of place.

The case of Austria-Hungary is not parallel, because by the constitution of both countries the Emperor-King was the effective executive chief of both, and there was, moreover, a permanent committee of the legislature of both States sitting together, and so forming a clearing-house for the liquidation of questions which, arising in one country, might affect the interests of the other. With us no such clearing-house exists, except the informal Imperial Conference, sitting irregularly and for a very short time.

The sole subsisting tie which unites the autonomous members of the British Empire is sentiment, the sentiment of mutual trust and confidence of individuals of common blood and traditions and principles, engaged in the same labours, exposed to the same perils, convinced that in union lies safety and in disunion ruin, the sentiment in fact which makes individuals in time of revolution crystallise into mobs, and mobs into armies.

What the value of this sentiment may be as a principle of unification in the case of the Sinn Feiners, the Doppers, and the Bandematarists I am not to inquire, but no wise man will undervalue sentiment. In matters political much importance will always be attached by the statesman to this spiritual bond, which—

> "Though softness self, is yet the stuff,
> Which holds fast where a steel chain snaps."

But even sentiment will not eternally hold together individuals, unless it is reinforced. Material interests, local patriotism, evolution, even sudden caprice, often prove too strong for it. Sentiment fluctuates: law is eternal. Sentiment is vague; law ascertains precisely rights and duties. The law speaks from an everlasting throne, sentiment from the tripod of the moment. The bonds of sentiment are strong

between man and wife, parent and child, friend and friend, yet none of these relations are safe without the law.

The case of the American States is not perhaps wholly apposite, because it was at first a material bond only which united these very discordant sovereignties. But here at any rate there was a strong political tie, a common language, the memory of common perils and common sacrifices, religions not wholly opposed, similar political ideals, the consciousness of a great future in union, and of great perils in division; yet the Union was on the verge of dissolution at least three times before the Supreme Judge of Nations ruled finally and definitely that secession was prohibited not by sentiment but by law, and that for the law-breaker there was prepared a tremendous chastisement. Moreover, in states it is particularly round institutions that sentiment gathers.

No one would for a moment deny the unifacatory power of the one institution left common to all the autonomous members of the Empire. It is certain that in India at any rate the sense of personal loyalty to the King would be a far stronger bond than the common sentiment arising from devotion to those common ideals of Englishry in which India may perhaps not share. But while not in any way detracting from the radiance of that Central Sun of Sover-

eignty, it is to be observed that there is no medium by which those beneficent rays can be diffused over any part of the system which they should animate and vivify. Personal influence of some sort there may perhaps be outside the strict letter of the constitution, but I must confess that I should wish to see that influence defined and strengthened by the law. Men change, and passions with them.

It would seem then that without some central body, not necessarily a legislature, not an executive body, but something of the nature of an advisory council of delegates from each autonomous State sitting permanently at the capital of the Empire, and in close touch with the various executives, and particularly with the Cabinet of Great Britain, the centrifugal force natural to systems which have no central point of attraction may well prevail, and on some slight pretext the Empire may be dissolved.

It is particularly in the region of foreign politics that that shock might come which would formally dissolve the Empire. There is no person or body that can contract in the name of the whole Empire. Foreign States will not regard our municipal law or our domestic politics. If they consider they have a grievance against any autonomous member of the Empire, they will apply for redress to the nominal head

of the Empire (though through what channel is not quite clear). If redress be denied there they will have a legitimate cause of war with the whole Empire. But if they do not choose to exercise that right, they will consider that they have the right to coerce by arms the peccant Dominion while remaining in amity with the other dominions. There have certainly in the past been systems so organised where it was possible for one of the constituent States to go to war with the foreigner, or even with another State under the same allegiance, whilst the system itself and the unconcerned members looked on with benevolent neutrality; but such systems invariably dissolved or adopted a close federative bond. It might at first be thought that the bonds of sentiment between the Mother Country and the Dominions, or between the Dominions *inter se*, might be so strong that no member of the Empire could possibly look with indifference on warlike operations carried on by the foreigner against any other member; but it is easy to conceive cases where the Dominions would at least feel it a great strain on their mutual loyalty to lavish their blood and treasure in a cause that was none of theirs. Take, for example, a case possible in India. Suppose India, being vexed at some anti-Indian legislation of the United States, took some hasty and ill-advised measures

against the persons and property of citizens of the United States. The United States applies for redress to the British Foreign Office. The British Foreign Office replies that it cannot interfere in the domestic affairs of a Dominion, but will make friendly remonstrances. India disregards the friendly remonstrances. The United States applies to the Foreign Department of the Government of India for redress. The Government of India persists in its policy. The United States sends a naval detachment to Bombay to protect lives and property of American citizens, now seriously threatened by excited mobs. One of the warships is sunk, presumably by a torpedo or a mine. The fleet opens fire on the Bombay forts. Would Canada be very ready to go to war with the United States in such a cause? Would it not be probable that the Governor-General of Canada, as representing the King, would, on the advice of his Ministry, issue a proclamation of the neutrality of His Majesty in respect of his Canadian Dominions?

Belligerent ships, whether under the white ensign or the stars and stripes, are now excluded from Halifax and Vancouver. The Empire is now dissolved. In such a case would it be very probable that any of the Dominions would be anxious to intervene? Nay, is it not possible that Great Britain herself might

say: "Dominion of India, we did not approve of this legislation, yet you carried it. We remonstrated, and you would not listen. We think, on the whole, that the United States are in the right, and you are in the wrong. Fight your own battles. Neither justice nor expedience calls on us to shed our blood in a quarrel which is none of ours. The time for mediation has not yet come." Is it not clear that the knowledge that India could call on the support of the Empire, or of at least Great Britain, in a quarrel, however unjust, might encourage that Government in a foolish and provocative policy towards foreign States which it would otherwise have avoided?

I have taken an imaginary case where the provocation came from India, but such provocation might well come from another Dominion in circumstances where India might not be anxious to support the peccant Dominion. Some Indians are very devoted to Shakespeare and Burke and Wordsworth, and are great admirers of Lord Ripon, Mr Montagu, and the Grand Old Man; but I do not know that that would make them very keen on supporting, say, Australia against Japan in the matter of Oriental immigration, or South Africa in any quarrel whatsoever.

The support of the Empire in war and diplomacy given, therefore, to any individual

Dominion must under the present so-called constitution be given, if at all, as a matter of favour and not of right. It follows, therefore, that each Dominion, if wise, will prepare itself so that it may back its diplomacy with the maximum military and naval power possible to it, for it might well find itself committed to a quarrel where it could expect no support from Great Britain or any other Dominion. I omit the case (not wholly inconceivable) where one Dominion might find itself by the effect of its own treaties, understandings, or informal agreements bound in honour to support some power which was at war with some other member of the Empire.

It would seem then, unless the willingness of the people and the wisdom of the statesmen combine so as to give the Empire a true constitution, that Empire must ere long be dissolved. Nor is it possible wholly to suppress the consideration that the claims of India to Dominion status are precisely the things which would render wholly impossible the unification of the Empire. I do not wish to raise topics of discord, so I shall not expatiate on this matter, but it is clear that the divergence between policies against which it would be necessary to provide is far more likely to be serious in the case of the policies of India on the one hand, and the rest of the Empire on

the other, than it is in the case of the white Dominions and the British Kingdom *inter se*. It seems, then, that the admission of India to Dominion status will render the dissolution of the Empire certain.

That dissolution will be a calamity. It will be a calamity to India; how great no one yet dreams. It will be a calamity to the Empire, the scattered members of which will be a prey to cupidities which hardly conceal themselves. It will be a calamity to Great Britain, never too well provided with friends. It will be a calamity to the human race; for the Empire has, on the whole, always made for peace; and the more independent States, the more probability of wars. It is, for instance, better that Canada and Newfoundland should litigate for the possession of Labrador in the Privy Council than on the field of battle. But serious as will be the material effects of this surrender, the moral effects will be yet more serious. The deserter should be shot, not so much because he has endangered the army, but in kindness to the deserter himself.

XXI.

USE AND APPLICATION.

SUCH seem to me to be the certain consequences of our Indian policy, the rapid severance of the ties which bind us to that country, with far-reaching results both to India and Britain. I could have drawn a far darker picture, but I am vowed to optimism in this matter. Frankly, it is somewhat difficult, for an optimist is one who does not care what happens as long as it does not happen to him; but the fates and fortunes of myself and my dependents are inextricably bound up with the fates and fortunes of the Indian Empire. However, laying aside these sordid considerations (and, after all, they say that the pains of starvation are not extreme after the first four days, and that after the tenth they pass into an agreeable languor), let us look at the bright side of things. First, let us consider the optimism of the 1st of January.

"The British have a genius for muddling

through, and no doubt they will muddle through here. The wise statesman is he who does not consider the future too much, and has therefore more time to devote to the exigencies of the moment. So in war. Did not Wellington attribute the success of his Peninsular campaigns to the happy fluidity of his strategical ideas compared to the cast-iron formalism of those of the marshals of Napoleon? Like Sulla, when we have planned we have failed; where we have left matters to chance, we have been most fortunate. We conquered half the world in a fit of absence of mind. The gods themselves have fought for us. We, like Theodosius, are almost too happy. Did not the very elements range themselves beneath our standards? Did not the enlisted tempests give the enemies of England to shipwreck and the corpse-encumbered sea? Consider how we have come out of the war. We have restored the gold standard, and the Bank rate is at 5 per cent. The General Strike and the Coal Strike are all over now, and if they left behind them a little discontent and a little unrest, that is merely the operation of the same manly spirit that sent Drake round the world and Charles to the scaffold."

Such consolations are at his disposal who is willing to be parted from that same sum of twopence with which the Good Samaritan

staunched the wounds of the traveller who fell among thieves. Hear now a graver and more transcendental optimist.

"No ill can befall us, for we are not such as are condemned. Destruction may fall on others, but not on us. In everything we are sprung from Earth's first blood, and have titles manifold. Is not this kingdom an enduring kingdom, an edifice which has defied the tempests of a thousand years, by such divine builders was it builded, by such immortal warders was it watched? Are we not the inheritors of the championship? Must we not be free who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke? Have we not ever loved liberty, not as a mistress like the giddy Frenchman, not as a grandmother like the stolid German, but as an honourable consort? Let others excel in war, yet on what land have we not shed our blood, what seas have not tossed our corpses from wave to wave? From war with the stranger have we ever returned defeated? Yet always fighting in the cause of justice, we have sought no conquests. Many an empire have we rejected, for we were ambitious of no impious laurel, yet dominion was thrust upon us that we might use it, not for our own profit but for the advantage of the race of man. Have we not devised new and exquisite instruments of dominion such as Rome never knew? Have we not

given freedom to all men? Is not peace established, and are not the rewards of peace communicated to all men? How many cruel rites and unlawful laws have we not made void? But we, too, were skilled to explore the secrets of nature, and to roll back the flaming frontiers of the unknown, till that which was but yesterday undreamed of is now a platitude. On our heads, too, the Muses have bound the bitter garland of the bays. Are we not then demonstrably chosen out and set apart for high destinies, we who hold the faith and morals that Milton held? Are we not, moreover, the apostles of democracy, and was not democracy willed from the beginning?"

It seems deplorable to interrupt this eulogy with a creaking as of a ghostly cricket, but we must look into the precedents.

It is related that when the Lords Above fashioned the archetype of Man, they had it in their serene minds to create a modified and improved baboon. The climate and geologic conditions of the terraqueous globe had changed, and were still changing, and the times seemed to call for an animal whose habits were not wholly arboreal, who might be patient of extremes of heat and cold, and who was not wedded to a restricted diet. Man was therefore designed with feet and hands adapted to a dweller on the plains; tailless, because he was

banished from the protection of the forests, rich in fruit, lest he might be condemned to an eternity of sterile swinging; hairless, that he might devise clothes adaptable for various climates; and with a delicate digestion that he might learn to choose the good and eschew the evil.

So far, so good. The creature was next to be endowed with the two perishable souls: the soul of desire and the soul of anger, situated the one in the liver and the other about the heart. It was thought that this would suffice for him; for what does man or any other animal need more than to fight for his subsistence and to propagate his species? Guided by these two leaders, man would in time learn to adapt himself to the existing environment; and if the environment itself should be changed, then evolution, under the guidance of the Lords Above, would find Man a suitable point of departure for the development of a higher organisation. It was thus that creation had proceeded from the protoplasmic jelly, and who could tell what feats it might not perform in the future?

Prometheus, however, that first of saboteurs, intervened to disturb the divine harmony. He is reputed to have stolen a particle of that sincere fire which is the very substance of the Immortal Gods, and to have confined it (fiercely

reluctant) in this tenement of clay, enthroning it in the pineal gland, and bidding it dominate the two inferior and perishable souls. Thus the divine intentions were frustrated, the predetermined harmony was broken up and turned to discord, and *theopithecus* was neither an adequate god nor an adequate ape.

Now as for Prometheus, it seems to me that it was but just that that punishment befell him which befell. Bound to the sterile crag with ineluctable fetters of iron, he too might know what joys await the immortal bound in mortal circumstance; he too might feel

> "exceed
> The fervent will, fall short the feeble deed."

His strong-winged thought also might range the starry universe, while on his heart also battened those foul-winged vultures ever unappeased. He, too, with all that airy troop of fancies and hopes and ideals, the radiant consolers of his pain and his impotence, might also, clamouring to deaf ears for justice, be hurled into the deep and irrevocable abyss. But his work abides.

On us his daring theft conferred something of divinity. Therefore, by virtue of this our kinship, we have the power to cite the Immortal Gods themselves to our tribunal, that there they may plead their cause as before a just judge,

who will pass on them a definitive sentence; nor do these magnanimous defendants refuse to appear, nay, they deign to justify themselves.

It is principally in respect of justice denied that we complain. It matters not whether it is in small things or in great that justice is denied, for he who is thus wronged will always complain of tyranny. Thus Tommy who has lost his toy, and Molly who has lost her lover, may cite the immortals before them no less than Napoleon who has lost his crown, and Judas who has lost his soul. To each man, therefore, his own grief, his own cause, his own tribunal, and his own censure, but to us the most interesting of these pleas is where the Immortals are called in question concerning the loss of Empires.

The Lord brought on the people of Jerusalem the King of the Chaldees. The King slew the young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and all the vessels of the House of God, and all the treasures, these he brought to Babylon, and he burned the House of God and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and them that escaped the sword he carried away into Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons. Moved by these things, some one, by the waters of Babylon, wrote the Book of Job, which is an attempt to ascertain how far Jehovah was justified in destroying the temporal

Kingdom of the house of David. As a poem this work has excited the admiration of all succeeding generations; as a forensic effort it is not so successful. Certain points might well be taken. Thus there is the materialistic defence. Egypt was closely bound to Judæa by political and commercial interests. What wonder then that the Kings of Jerusalem should throw in their lot with the Pharoahs? No help came from that broken reed Egypt, and the small State, exposed to the furious impact of Babylon, tottered, bowed, and broke. Thus the Kingdom of David was perhaps the most conspicuous victim of that blind impulse which ever urges the man of Inner Asia towards that sea which is ever the cradle and sepulchre of empires. But this seemed inadequate, for there was no place for Jehovah in it; and if Jehovah was not there, how could the Jews be His chosen people? Thus, if there be no strife and no captain, how can we be the inheritors of the championship? Then again there was the obvious explanation that the Kingdom was lost by reason of the sins of Government and people. But that also must be rejected as an exoneration, for all had not sinned, for some, nay, many, were faithful to the Unity; yet the punishment fell on all. Had not the history of the nation been most glorious? This Jerusalem . . . all that had been done and suf-

fered, all that she stood for in the history of the world, all the passions of love and hatred that men had felt for her, were all these things to be wiped out like a schoolboy's work done amiss, because of the errors and follies of a few? Like us now the Jews then had no belief in the survival of the personality of an individual once dead. It was therefore only to the continuity of the race that they, like us, could look for the gratification of that desire for immortality which the lowest savage feels. Defrauded and defeated, lost for ever as it seemed, the miserable troop went on the weary desert-march to a grievous exile; defrauded and defeated, lost for ever as it seems, shall we also look around us in our bewilderment when that has come on us which must come. Job and his companions touch but lightly on all these topics, but the sum of the book is that Jehovah does as He wills, that no promise can bind Him, that He is not subject to the censure of man, that in fact He is a Sultan and we are His slaves. But with that answer the oppressed will never be satisfied.

As a matter of fact, we see now that what seemed to be the end was by no means the end, was not in fact much more than the beginning, and that the spiritual kingdom could be born only when the temporal kingdom was dead.

The next writer for consideration is Demos-

thenes, and he deals with the question shortly and by way of parenthesis. To us who know what was before them, the speeches of the litigants in the matter of the Crown seem like a ghastly agon of condemned souls on the outskirts of hell. The future was mercifully concealed from speakers and audience, yet cheerless indeed was the present. Nevertheless the speaker is of good heart. We have lost all things that made life dear to us. Empire and Allies and the command of the seas are gone. Our independence is conceded, but independence conceded is subjection imposed. Freedom of speech, not only in assembly and tribunal but even in private life, in the portico, in the private chamber, in the meeting of friend with friend, is cut off. True, we have lost everything, but how? Not by our cowardice, not by listening to the sweet words of the flatterers, not by lying to ourselves and others, but on the field of battle. In the past perhaps and in council there may have been indolence and short-sightedness, but when the danger was actually on us we fought and fought manfully, sparing nought that any man may do and dare in the cause of liberty, for in the day of battle we swerved not a hand-breadth from the place of peril. Therefore though the present be the day of our enemies, yet the future is yours.

This encomium on the benefits of fighting

and being beaten is not likely to encourage us, who have not yet been beaten on the field of battle with any ruinous defeat, and who are losing all things by mere lack of statesmanship and constructive ability. As a matter of fact, the rhetor was in error. The future held for him only the temple of Poseidon, and for Athens only Lamia and Demetrius and Sulla and the Kislar Aga. The truth (which was concealed from him) was that the day of the city-state was passed and gone. It had done much for mankind, but could do no more, and was now dead, and in the near future was to be an offence. Mankind had marched up a blind alley, stately indeed and beautiful and delightful, but a blind alley all the same, and had now come to a blank wall which could not be leaped. The wise would retrace their steps. The foolish would dash their heads against the obstacle till they fell crushed to the ground, to perish of cold and hunger. It is possible, therefore, that the day of the great State also is over, that men must again retrace their steps, and wander blindly stumbling among the ruins, till they find some sure guide.

Coming on now to the fall of the Roman Republic, we find no comments save the blasphemies of Lucan, apposite in a way but not illuminating :—

"Year by year the nations of the earth

waged war on you with every arm. The Sun saw your march from Pole to Pole. Little there was to traverse of the East, till for you, and you only, Day and Night and the Heavens should revolve, and all that the stars see in their wanderings should be yours. But that was at an end now, and now we have not even any gods left. Seeing that age follows age, swept on by blind chance, it is a lie to say that God reigns. The gods care nothing for the affairs of men," and he goes on to console himself by reflecting how vexed the Godhead must be by the deification of the Cæsars. After all he was a court poet and a favourite, and died for a conspiracy to substitute a flute-player for a harp-player.

At the fall of the Western Empire we have the sad case of Claudian. Claudian, considering the miseries of the epoch, was getting into a very unhealthy spiritual condition indeed, inclined to the atomic theory of Epicurus and doubting the existence of a personal Devil. From this Slough of Despond he was redeemed by the lynching of Rufinus, on the details of whose evisceration he dwells with a kind of holy rapture, very characteristic of the new convert. This signal act of divine justice (the casting out of Satan by Beelzebub) restored his tottering faith, and "acquitted the gods."

More serious apologists are St Augustine and

Salvian, both of whom, I apprehend, regarded the Roman Empire as a sort of blasphemous parody of the Kingdom of Heaven. For some inscrutable reason this Atellan farce was to be played out to the end—now happily approaching—and the stage would then clear and the true drama begin. Naturally, therefore, they saw no reason to question the justice of God in destroying their country, the only sorrow being that its destruction had not taken place long before. No one, I suppose, except the British Israelite hopes that the downfall of the British Empire will be followed by the millennium, but the idea that lies behind the teachings of Augustine and Salvian is still very vital. It is, in fact, the idea which has brought down the British Empire, and will in turn dissolve the British Kingdom—namely, that all rule is in its nature sinful, unless it be the rule by a majority of a minority situated in the same local area. This is not the same thing as to say that it is difficult for a democracy to rule subject races, and difficult to bind into one body politic scattered provinces, for the proposition is a proposition of morals, and morality is not to be judged by the results. But if to rule, however justly, is sin, then we are well advised to abdicate. Thus there could be no ground for impugning the justice of God merely because we avoided sin, and clove to the right,

even though we were actually in error as to what was wrong and what was right. I certainly do not wish my brethren to be sinful, though I remember what Krishna says as to the duties of rulers in the Gita, and I think it unwise to be righteous overmuch. I should, however, be happier if I saw this spirit of abdication manifested in other relations of life, if, that is, the hatred of tyranny, the hatred of arrogance, the hatred of base gain, gentleness, compassion, loyalty, trust, the absence of malice and envy, were the characteristics of man dealing with man in modern England. Foreigners, who have not the advantage of observing us on the spot, have formed their own conclusions on imperfect information, and, considering the dissolution of the Empire and the partition of the monarchy, talk about "Pecksniff in liquidation." They suppose, that is, that no one gives up dominion unless he is obliged to, and that it is the part of the hypocrite to allege moral causes for an abdication forced on him by his own cowardice and incompetence. Let us hope that the verdict of posterity will be in our favour. Otherwise the human race may feel the same horror of Liberal principles as the men of the eighteenth century felt for Christianity. Forgetting how manfully the Christians of the East fought for Christ and Cæsar, they thought that Christianity was a religion fit only for slaves and dastards.

The awed submission of the Moslem world passed in silence the destruction of the Caliphate of Baghdad, and the submersion of half the world under a sea of savagery. Dante, however, orthodox as he was, is not so reticent about his grievances. Moved by the general decline of the Ghibelline party, and the insecure state of Santa Flor, he was inclined to question the wisdom of—

> "Jove supreme,
> Who was on earth for our sake crucified,"

for the failure of the German Emperor to march into Italy at the head of his northern chivalry, and to reduce the "garden of the Empire" into the form of a German province. The poet attempted to fathom the abysses of the divine will, but failed, so he did not foresee the coming of the Savoy monarchy and of Benito Mussolini.

This case is not of much interest to us. We have been deaf so often that it is not probable that if in India there is any wailing and cursing of the betrayed and oppressed, that will trouble our beautiful calm.

So we descend to Milton, who formally set out to justify the ways of God to Man, nominally in the matter of the apple, actually in the matter of the downfall of the Stewart Monarchy, the reign of the Saints, and Astræa Redux. His justification is no justification as I read it,

because he avoids the problem. From the time when the calm cold Logos appears as Captain-General of the Armies of the Lord, it is clear that the poet is not even a monotheist. His god, that is, is limited in space, time, and function. Such a god is the god of the Manichæans, and there is no need for the god of the Manichæans to justify himself. If things go wrong he can always allege the power of the Adversary.

Milton, however, ends on a note of hope. Adam and Eve had lost the insipid perfection of Eden, but had gained Earth, and how great a gain this was none knew better than the poet of Comus and the friend of Diodati.

I, too, will end on a note of hope. If I am not mistaken there must be a punishment. There is the sin of the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin; there is the sin of him who refuses the toil and takes the wage; there is the sin of him who finds his armour heavy and the sun a torment, and faints by the way; there is the sin of incompetence in the ruler. Sin calls for punishment, but after punishment pardon. Take the worst case. The Empire is gone, the Kingdom is dissolving, the institutions of the Realm totter to ruin, wealth must go and the instruments of wealth, and the bread of all men. Strange things may be done in a narrow island by hungry hordes, walled round by the sterile sea and the malignance of mankind. But

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afterwards to the survivors and their children something will be left—England, no mean possession.

I was riding from Coventry to Gloucester, and my way lay through Warwick and Stratford and Evesham and Tewkesbury. Now Coventry is a city built on a hill, and three tall spires dominate it. But in the valleys are the habitations of the "hands," tenements of a day, the abode of nomads like the tents of the Arab. There was no visible misery, but the factories were turning away men at the rate of a thousand a week. What part or lot had these in Jesse? Men cannot live without something to love, something to strive for beyond the meal and the shelter. What did these men worship, and to what did they aspire? Strange idols and a bloody heaven. Yet when the call came they had turned out and died manfully for the common thing. Their sacrifice was in vain? Sacrifice is never in vain.

But a mile out of the city and you are in the veritable England. He who has passed much of life a dweller in a realm of lion-coloured earth, beneath skies of authentic sapphire, knows what a possession is this land of trees and meadows and green hills and cool waters. It is lovely, and not with that unearthly loveliness of the southern lands, for the loveliness of the South makes one sad, for there is nothing

of humanity in it, and it has therefore no word of solace for the manifold afflictions of the race of man. It is but the drop scene of a theatre, painted well by some unknown artist, and made radiant by a hidden illumination; but when that curtain is raised, who can say what tragedy will step upon the stage? But this English country is beautiful, for this reason above all, that it is made by the sacred labour of man for the purposes of man, and to be a delight to him. Moreover, this beauty is a beauty which abides. There are lands where myriads live and have their being. Relax your efforts for but a generation, and the wild will come in on you like a raging flood, so that the wayfarer will ask amid sandhills or cane-brakes whether man was ever here, for here he could never dwell again. But if the race of man were abolished from England for a thousand years, yet the daring explorer would find the land a land of trees and meadows and green hills and slow waters—a land waiting for man and apt, with but little toil, again to become his habitation. The axis of the earth may shift? Let it shift.

Until then this England, a little kingdom, with no imperial responsibilities, strong in defence, agricultural in the main, but dotted with small clean boroughs, homes of manufacture and trade, possessed again of solid

institutions, the home of a people among whom there was no insolent wealth, no ambitious poverty, no friendless misery, worshipping under whatever names the veritable gods, the gods to whom men cannot lie, the God of the home, of the plough and sea, remembering but not regretting the past, forgetful of the teaching of erroneous sages, free therefore from malice and envy and bitterness, might find for its wearied age a secure and assigned Corinium.

And if cash were somewhat short, there would always be the American tourist traffic.

15*th Jan.* 1927.