OH! YOU INDIANS

A REPLY TO OH ! YOU ENGLISH

By

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FRONTISPIECE

Mr. David Naphtali has the distinction of not having been President of the Oxford Union.

This book is in the nature of a reply to Mr. Karaka's "Oh ! You English."

In this book, Mr. Naphtali, describes in a forthright and uncompromising manner, and with considerable satire, his conception of the weaknesses of Eastern Civilisation, as they strike the visitor to India.

FOR

Happiness, I can ne'er repay,
Loveliness, I can ne'er forget,
Devotion, I can ne'er deserve,

—My wife

FOREWORD

For this little book I claim neither literary distinction nor profundity of thought. It is but the casual reflections of a wanderer abroad. Nor can I claim for it any merit of originality. In fact, familiarity with Mr. D. F. Karaka's "Oh ! You English" must be a condition precedent to a full understanding. To attempt to read it without having read that may present a totally incorrect pifcture. It is in the nature of a reply to him, and makes its entrance in the hope that it will be accepted and read in the same spirit as Mr. Karaka expected for his work.

Neither do I claim for it, or myself, that the opinions expressed are necessarily correct. But they represent the impressions which have crowded into my mind during my short period in India. That there may be other aspects from which to view present-day Indian Civilisation I cannot deny. All that I can state is that in short contacts with Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western

India, I have not been initiated.

There are in this country today many thousands of "emigrants" from the West; many of them will one day return to their homes in England. When they return, they will take to those'who wait their impressions of Indian life and customs. I do not, and cannot, speak for them: but it is to be considered whether there is much that is different between their impressions and mine. Perhaps there is, I do not know; in my opinion, there is not.

It is not to be thought that these lines were prompted by any thought that Mr. Karaka had produced something demanding or justifying an answer. On the contrary, viewing his picture of England and Englishmen at home as dispassionately as I was able, its self-evident perversion of the truth seemed the hall-mark of its unreliability. It seemed that only one of two reasons could account for such a travesty of fact—insincerity or obscured vision. It was neither fair to infer, nor conceivable, that the author had reduced opinions to print which he did not sincerely hold. As a result he had demonstrated that to live in a country is not necessarily to know it. Was it possible, I wondered

that my opinions of India were based on misconceptions of my own. Perhaps I was seeing too many of the wrong scenes and too few of the right. It was unlikely that Mr. Karaka's English acquaintances realised the unfavourable impressions which they were creating in his mind. Could it be that the Indians fail to understand that their visitors may be seeing the wrong scenes? Could it be that I have been standing in the shade, when a short step to the side would have brought me into the light? And if so, would it not be desirable to acquaint them, in all honesty, with the passing impressions of, at least, one observer?

This, therefore, is an exceptional opportunity for a fuller understanding. If the impressions are wrong, the sooner they are corrected the better; that does not rest with me, but with others.

So, with my tongue in my cheek, I set before you this little book. What it lacks in artistic merit it makes up in candour. If it amuses I am satisfied; if it enlightens my satisfaction is twofold.

INDIA, 1943 D. N.

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GENESIS

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GENESIS

"For years the peoples of India have acquiesced in the dumping of Western ideas on their country, which has been steeped in the culture of an ancient civilisation and which has reverberated the finest thought that ever struck the mind of man. They have been tried by standards of a civilisation entirely foreign to them, and to which they have no attachment of race or blood or religion. When they have complied, without any protest, they have been called 'apes'; when they have resisted they have been classified as uncouth barbarians..... What I am venturing to do now, is to tell how, as a barbarian, I reacted to various forms of civilisation—the civilisation of the Englishman of today—as they presented themselves to me."

It has been well said that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." If I thought that the author of those sentiments desired flattery, I should be quite ready to proffer it; I am sure he does not.

If, therefore, I stoop to imitation in presentation or approach it is not simply with a desire to flatter, but because I agree with the writer, that the world could be a better place, if each and everyone would set down his honest and frank reactions to his fellow-men and the conditions in which they live. So, if a "barbarian" may look at the civilised, equally may the civilised gaze on the "barbarian." And what I am venturing to do now, is to tell how, as a "civilised" being dumped on the country of India, I reacted to various forms of civilisation—the civilisation of the Indian of today—as they presented themselves to me.

I know that those who disagree with me, and there will be many, will seize upon my short experience in India as the weakness of my arguments. I have been here only 18 months. For my part, I regard it as the strength. I do not seek to present a learned treatise on the subject, but simply to record the passing impressions of one who, like so many others, was culled from the insularity of an English home, and "dumped" on to distant Indian soil. If England has "tried" the Indians, (though I know nothing of the trial) it is not the handful of Englishmen in India who were the judges. In

the final analysis it was the Englishman in England, and all he had to guide him were such facets of Indian life as the daily press chose to convey to him, and such impressions as his kinsman over here chose to write home. In this connection it is not without importance to note that it is first impressions which are mostly disseminated. Many letters from newly arrived visitors to India contain picturesque descriptions of mud dwellings; after six months few make mention of them. Regrettable and paradoxical as it may be, the longer one looks at a scene the less one sees of it, and our daily impressions of the happenings about us, are largely conditioned by the opinions formed at our first view.

Nor must it be thought that I approached the subject with anything other than an open mind. If any bias existed within me at all, it was a bias towards the Indian—Imperialism finds no favour with me—and I had read just sufficient history not to believe all that they told me at school.

Until I came to India my contact with Indians had been very limited. I had studied with them, and had seen them wandering in the peaceful surroundings of the Inns of Court: my interest in

them was no more tepid nor less intense than that of others who had met them in similar surroundings. I had eaten at an Indian restaurant (to the best of my recollection I had roast beef and Yorkshire pudding) and had seen some Indians there. Occasionally I had seen an Indian lawyer conducting a case in court. And when he was not skating at St. Moritz, I saw photographs in the daily press of Sir Samuel Hoare discussing the Indian problem, or Mr. Ramsey Macdonald at a round-table conference. I believe that my impression of them was much the same as others: that they were a race of potentially able individuals, attaining political consciousness along a hard and stony road, and, receiving very little assistance *en route.* That they might be barbarians never occurred to me until I read Mr. Karaka's book.

One incident, however, stands clearly in my mind: shortly before I left England I had become acquainted with an Indian gentleman of outstanding personality. We had met at a country hotel. I was a Lance Corporal in,the Army in those glorious days when "leave" really had its pleasures. He was a Captain, employed under the War Office to tour England, presenting in its proper perspec-

tive, the story of India and its army. His task was undertaken at the time when a great need existed for Indian Army expansion. He was a forceful, courteous, highly cultured person, with an incisive and quick brain. Many were the interesting hours I spent discussing India with him and, strangely enough, I argued—quite inadequately—for self-government: he against it. He believed the time had not yet arrived. But that is to digress. There was in that hotel, just the collection of English souls as one expects to find in an English hotel. The majority of residents were travellers, representing different commercial firms; a few officers' wives who, before they went into factories, bad gone there to be near their husbands; a smattering of bank managers and their wives, in short, a fairly representative cross section of English middle-class, country life. One character requires special mention. He was a gentleman who had seen service in India for many years. He had always seemed a pleasant enough fellow to me, and a senior officer, who entered into discussions with a Lance Corporal, appeared worthy of honourable mention. Both from my own observations, and from more reliable intelligence secured from my wife, it was apparent

that, with two exceptions, the Indian officer was greatly admired, and liked, by the residents. Of the two exceptions, the one was a bank manager—whom the Indian officer always defeated at chess, the other was the retired Indian Army Officer. One evening the latter gentleman and I were sitting together, and gathering that courage born of the knowledge that "a man who joins the Army does not cease to be a citizen," I questioned this seemingly unjustified dislike of the Indian,

The reply which I received grated upon me: "I have served many years in India. I have lived with Indians. If you had done so you would not like them either. Personally I do not speak with the man," I was shocked, but realised I was just sufficiently short of being a citizen (the Manual of Military law notwithstanding) to debar me from expressing my true thoughts. I contented myself with observing that such a test seemed a poor way of judging an individual. His views may not be those generally held; Europeans who have spent a large number of years in India declare that it draws them back like an irresistible magnet. For all that, we know his frame of mind was no isolated example. Then and now it was apparent that such

an opinion of a very worthy and able person was unfounded and unjustified. Since then I have been to India, and I have asked myself why an otherwise fair-minded and reasonable Englishman should form such an unfavourable impression of a fellow human being, judging him not as a man but as one of a community. Perhaps he saw the wrong people and scenes in India. Regrettably the scenes he saw are those seen by most of us.

As with the "barbarian," so with the "civilised,'" He saw fit to express apologies, to carve out certain exceptions. So must I. In truth, there is more need for me to do so. It is one of the peculiarities of the matter, that under "the heel of British domination" an Indian may freely criticise the Englishman, whereas the Englishman must tread warily in criticising the Indian lest he be accused of exciting dissension. That is not my intention. If 1 do not mention the Indian of "refinement and culture,'" it is because like the "barbarian" Mr. Karaka, they are well able to speak for themselves. Nor do I seek to whitewash the Englishman in India, no^ select upon personalities.

It is not the erudition, ideals or achievements of a few outstanding men which determine the

destinies of a nation, it is the vast mass of the common people. Far less is it the vapourings of so-called "intellectuals" or, at the other extreme, the *bon-viveurs*, who set the standard of a nation's "civilisation." In assessing a nation's claims to be called a civilised society, I assume that one must strike a mean, and whereas in India and England, the "lower" classes greatly outnumber the "higher," it is a far more fruitful source of investigation to seek one's data from amongst the lesser beings.

You may search in vain in Mr. Karaka's work for a studied criticism of these lesser English folk, if "lesser" they be.

* * * *

It was presumably some dissatisfaction with what he found amongst his own people which prompted Mr. Karaka to proceed to England, that "lone island of civilisation, in search of knowledge and culture." Unlike him I was well content with what I found at home. So were the greater part of 42,000,000 other persons. In fact, so satisfied were they with what they had, that they had taken up arms to protect it from the depredations of those who would destroy it.

I was in England when bombs were raining

down on Mayfair, Maida Vale and Oxford, Mr. Karaka. I saw the grim determination on the faces of the people, a determination which had built up something they thought worth enduring agonies to retain. But, Mr. Karaka, we need not dwell upon that here, for you attribute war to the evils of England's civilisation. For you it is "one of the agonies which civilisation has brought,"' Perhaps you subscribe to the creed which looks the other way when a villain arrives to deprive you of all that is dear to you. Perhaps you believe that non-violence (which invariably develops into more blacked eyes than a good defensive scrap at the inception) is the only course. Perhaps, Mr. Karaka, that same lack of assertion at the right moment is one of the greatest faults in the Indian community. That we can investigate at leisure; for the moment, suffice it to say that England in all its decadence withstood that assault, an assault which its worst critics cannot suggest it encouraged.

Shortly after that, I left England. Had it not been for that decision of the English people to defend their so-called civilisation, I might have been in England still; might have been happy with my wife and family, might have continued my pro-

fessional career which has now come to naught, continued it, at least, until the Nazis arrived. But my loss was small compared to some and many before me, many with me and many since I came, have similarly turned their backs on England and made their way to India,

We came in a troop-ship. That is of no small moment in this story, because until you have travelled on a troop-ship you find it hard to believe what inconvenience, discomfort and dirt is. Hidden away in the belly of a large liner, tucked between a cook-house and a row of latrines, queuing for food, for entertainments, yes, even to practise jumping into the sea in an emergency, we slowly but surely approached the shores of India.

We came, and I with them, anxious to learn as much about India as we were able. In the main we would have preferred to stay in England, but recognising the necessity for our journey we were resolved to gain as much experience and understanding from it as circumstances would allow. We had bought books on India, on Gandhi, on Indian States and Federation, in fact, on all the subjects which we felt would help us to understand the Indian outlook. As one walked along the decks,

one saw these books in constant use, one overheard discussions on Indian affairs, one saw men, who had spoken no more than a cockney dialect, writhing in the agonies of Hindustani.

And then, one morning we arrived at Bombay. We were anxious to get ashore, but there were difficulties. We were told that Mr. Gandhi had been arrested. It was said that he had occasioned riots, and that we could only go into the town in pardes. I am afraid, Mr. Karaka, that was rather an unfortunate reception. These lads had just left their homes, wives and families; they had seen them bombed, machine-gunned, and bruised, and they found it difficult to understand, why, however just the cause, the Indians at such a time, permitted it to be raised to the point of rioting. It did not accord with their views on fair-play, and the common folk in England, Mr. Karaka, have very decided views on fair-play. So our arrival in Mother India, was not at a propitious moment. It was rather like starting off a fox-trot in one of those low night-clubs you know so well, Mr. Karaka, on the wrong foot.

And so we arrived, surprisingly enough, still maintaining an open mind.

I was not present on the momentous occasion referred to by you, Mr. Kara ka, when an expedition to Everest hoisted the flag on the wrong peak. Perhaps you were not there either; in which case neither of us is able to vouch for the truth of the assertion, which you state was made by a patriotic lady that "it will show the Indians what stuff we are made of."

For my part, I will wager that whilst those Englishmen were labouring up that peak, at the bottom sat some Indians awaiting the completion of the task, before producing title-deeds to support their claim to it.

It was said that "historians never preface their collection of recorded events with an apology for their point of view." Happily, I am not an historian, so I say, unblushingly, that I do sincerely apologise for my point of view as much as I regret it. It is not a settled opinion, and I hope it will change, but it is my point of view, and the air may be somewhat clarified by expressing it. New, wander with me through that "country steeped in the culture of an ancient civilisation, which has reverberated the finest thought that ever struck the mind of man" and disentangling

ourselves from a mass of leprous beggars, picking our passage amongst the huddled forms sleeping on the pavement, and turning our nose from the appalling odour which emanates from a nearby *nullah* we enter Mother India.

II
CORNUCOPIA

II

CORNUCOPIA

So far as is known there are, in India, some 390,000,000 persons. Upon first inspection those teeming millions comprise 389,999,999 practising lawyers and Mahatma Gandhi. That, however, is an illusion, because there are the contractors.

It might be thought that to be constituted a "contractor," it is necessary to have a contract. That is another illusion. All you require is a pair of sandals, a dirty *dhoti,* a disinclination to shave or wash, an ability to recognise a serving soldier, even disguised in civilian clothes, and you are established.

Now, if "bourgeois mediocrity is the backbone of the English nation," the contractor is the whole osseous system of the Indian people. For, it is the contractor who exemplifies monetary gain, and if a special day is not set apart, as a gazetted holiday, to worship Mammon, it is only because he receives his homage each and every day,

The contractors fall into nice, and compact divisions. The first and, one assumes, the lowest in point of status, if not morality, is to be found in the bazaar. If you doubt the story of the English visitor, who had come to understand why "bazaar" meant "fantastic," a visit to one will soon dispel your 'doubt. You have to leave your bungalow for a trip into the mofussil (you call it "mofussil" after you have been in India three months; prior to that it is always referred fo as the suburbs) you have three-quarters of an hour to catch your train. Surprising as it may seem trains in India do not wait for all passengers. In fact, they find it necessary to display notices disclaiming responsibility should a passenger lose his train, because it has started to time. Just as you leave for the station you discover that you have no tooth-paste. Although you have only three-quarters of an hour, you particularly want some tooth-paste. That, in itself is strange, because the prevailing opinion amongst Indians is that Englishmen never wash their teeth. However, you decide to go to the bazaar.

The bazaar is located in the dirtiest part of the town. That affords no means of direction. There are few towns where one might venture a guess as

to which is the dirtiest part, but, in fullness of time, and with the aid of a taxi-driver (who understands English only when you seek to take a long ride) you arrive there. If you are one of the uninitiated you will look at the crowds which swarm and crawl around the market, and having looked, return despairingly into the inner recesses of the taxi minus the tooth-paste. If you are initiated you will at once recognise the crowds to be, not shoppers, not even contractors but beggars and *chokras.* Now, it is important not to confuse the beggars with the *chokras.* For fear that you might, an endeavour must be made to draw the distinction. The beggars are quickly discovered. One will wave an amputated stump in your face as you pass, another will try and trip you up with a withered leg, and as you proceed various other deformities, horrible and terrifying to behold, will obstruct your view.

At first meeting with the beggars of India, one feels a wave of pity. Particularly does one pity the blind men, who abound in great numbers. But familiarity breeds contempt, and when one awakens to a realisation that the average Indian is lethargic, even uninterested, in this problem of his fellow-

man; when one has discovered that it is part of the Brahmin belief that born into a certain caste they have an inherent right to beg, one becomes satiated with disgust. Too often, we tend to see our own reactions in the eyes of others. Whatever may be said, and there is much, against the sufferings of the poor in England, there exists a large body of workers, who strive endlessly to alleviate their sufferings. It is quite untrue to say that the great mass of persons in England "imagine that a few coppers thrown at a few fellow-creatures in that neighbourhood is sufficient to appease the conscience of the rich and allay the sufferings of the poor." It is untrue because the average Englishman will not throw pennies to beggars; he knows he has provided for some measure of assistance for them in paying his rates, and there are places of refuge to which they can resort. But even were that true of England, it would not excuse the Indian. It is he who believes, if he thinks about it at all, that when he throws a pie he has done sufficient; not only does he believe it, but he is indifferent even to the extent of doing little to alleviate the position., There may be many things which must await self-government, but this is not one of

them; yet whilst they have been "reverberating the finest thoughts of man" they have allowed their country to become overrun with despoiled and hideous beggars.

The *cbokras* fall into two classes; there are those who are deformed children (by the same token no provision is made for them); in their favour it can be said that they expect to do some work for their pittance, for they hope to carry [your purchases back to the taxi. The other class of *chokra,* performs the same function; its only excuse for being in the market arises from the complete indifference of the country to provide compulsory education. Thus, when it should be studying at school, it is to be found begging. Here and elsewhere it will be asserted that these and many other defects are the fault of the British Government. It is not the purpose of these lines to defend nor criticise that Government. It is undeniable that much could have been done which remains undone. But given self-government or deprived of it, the impetus to reform must come from amongst the people. That great work could be done is illustrated by the following extract from an Indian newspaper:—

"Very good work is done in Salem town by way of regular feeding of beggar children every day. The local people have liberally responded to the appeal of the Collector's wife and about 200 children are having their meals in the Collector's compound every day. About Rs. 10,000 has been collected for the purpose. The donations were enthusiastically given and more money is promised, if need be. The feeding is supervised by the office staff in turns and the food is cooked in the Collector's office restaurant.

"The work is one that deserves being copied in other towns, where there are beggars roving about in miserable plight, though there are many people who have made large profits in recent times and who would gladly come forward to help in such charitable endeavour. Apart from the sheer humanity of it, this kind of public organisation has its own moral value in rousing the civic conscience as regards the food issue."

It is not to be doubted, however, that the failure to provide beggar relief will be laid at the door of the English. Wherever it is laid, the purchaser of tooth-paste ruminates that if a quarter of the energy was given to agitation for social advance-

ment, which is given to the securing of token political power, India would be a better and happier place.

But it is not so, and rocked by a struggling conglomeration of deformities, congenital idiots, and misshapen bodies our shopper lurches forwards. From the background drifts the monotonous wail of myriads of still smaller *chokras,* who, smacking a protuberant belly with a cupped hand, greet the would-be purchaser of tooth-paste, with, "No mummee, no daddee, belly emptee. Master, give *baksheesh."*

By this time at least a quarter of an hour has passed, but undeterred, the unfortunate struggles manfully on. The "shops" are cubicles let into the wall. Each vies in dirtiness, one with the other. At long last a "hole in the wall" is reached which displays tooth-paste. Narrowly dodging round a bullet of betel-nut propelled through the air by the well-pursed mouth of a nearby green-grocer, the stall is approached.

The contractor turns a discerning and dilated eye; a special rush of adrenalin oozes into his blood; he prepares for the coming battle. Forward goes the surging mass of humanity, and there at the

head like a lamb to the slaughter, goes the lonely representative of civilisation.

On a small board are several packets of tooth-paste. You might search all day to find a price ticket on them; there is not one. It is not the way of the East to let the customer know the price. The contractor gauges his price not according to the laws of supply and demand, far less on the basis of cost plus a reasonable profit. The price which he can obtain will depend upon the credulity of the buyer. The warning "Cavest emptor"—let the buyer beware—thus extends not merely to the article but to its cost as well. From the moment of arrival at the "contractor's hole" a process of attrition, of intense haggling, sets in. There can be two reactions to this; if not in a hurry it is accepted^ good humouredly, as part of the East. Having tried to secure one's wants at a reasonable price, and having failed, one goes elsewhere. If one is in a hurry, or is in urgent need of the article, it then becomes a matter of the greatest irritation. To be asked a price showing 100-150 per cent profit is not unusual, and thus the packet of tooth-paste which would show a handsome profit at Re. 1-8 has become Rs. 4. Can it be imagined that the

British public would acquiesce for long in a state of affairs like that? Conditions which enable a shop-keeper to get 6,"- for a 2/3*d.* article? The new-comer pays Rs. 4 and departs; the man of experience just departs. Then is set up a horrible scream. "Sahib, Sahib; Master, Master, I take Rs. 3,"8 annas and lifting from the ground a meaty-looking stomach, the contractor waddles forward, furiously chewing his betel-nut, and waves the tooth-paste in your face.

The customer walks slowly down the bazaar; the seething mass of humanity moves with him, at his side goes the contractor, still waving the tooth-paste in the air, gradually reducing his price. As the entrance to the bazaar is reached the price has come down to two rupees eight annas; the customer, in sheer desperation pays that amount, and takes the tooth-paste. Back waddles the contractor to his stall (meanwhile taken over by his four-year-old son almost as adept at low class commerce as he is). The customer is fighting his way into his taxi. He has fought his own battle, and carried his own tooth-paste, yet the assembled company consider that they should be recompensed for having accompanied him. The magical Eastern air

is rent with cries of "Master, Sahib, baksheesh, baksheesh": every tone of voice is wafted on the air, the imperious voice of the little boy, the wheedling voice of the professional beggar, the high pitched whimper of the blind man and the cringing moan of the cripples, all join together in a cry for baksheesh.

To this accompaniment the Englishman, grimly clutching his tooth-paste, climbs into his taxi and drives to the station. In nine cases out of ten his train will have left.

That is the traveller's induction to the ethics of Indian commercial morality. Deception, profiteering, cunning and corruption are the contractor's tools; his material—the traveller, used to placing confidence in a shopkeeper's integrity. In England, that nation of shopkeepers, a fshop is entered with full confidence in the shopkeeper, his advice and assistance is sought as to what to buy. Often the cheaper of two articles is offered as being the most satisfactory. Where is the man, in India, so brave as to place himself in such a perilous situation?

The second class of contractor is found amongst those merchants who have secured small contracts from Government departments. How,

and under what circumstances, they acquired their contracts is hidden in a mire of secrecy, which few are able to explore. But, ultimately they are to be found: contractors with the word "Sahib" at the end of their names and "Messrs." incorporated into the beginning. Titles which the Englishman leaves others to bestow as a courtesy, they take upon themselves. In the matter of products, versatility might well be taken as their middle name; for years producers of tinware, they will willingly turn to the production of rubber utensils, if an extra pie can be extracted from the deal. The labourers whom they worked at a pittance for their skill upon the one, will be replaced by rubber workers, who will toil, for an equal sum or less, on the other. The Indian craftsman is potentially the finest in the world; to watch a wood-worker is a revelation; at work he contains as much dexterity in his feet, as four pairs of English hands. If work were produced for the sake of art, or even partly so, he would produce only the finest articles. But that would counteract the subservience to gain, and while he ceremoniously offers his prayers to Saraswati, the goddess of learning and skill, he, spiritually, offers his thanks to Mammon.

With this background it is small wonder that the article produced is inferior and mean. Nor can they cry in aid that the Government pays an uneconomic price; in many cases the Government pays two and three times that obtainable in the open market, and three and four times the cost of material and production. Within matters of weeks, particularly during the present war, small fortunes have been amassed by formerly penurious contractors.

Let us visit the home of one of these gentry. It is reasonable to expect that the contractor will be living in a dream-like structure, reminiscent of fairyland; that every home will abound with the majesty and beauty of the Taj Mahal. For has not the "barbarian" descfibed London W. 2. as "..... built in rows and rows of houses one like the other, covered in soot from the stacks of neighbouring chimneys., this district of London houses....."

O horibile dictu! here is the fairyland of India. Row upon row of little hovels, situated on the outskirts of a large and dirty town. Stretched upon the pavements are shrunken masses of human jetsam, that pavement is their home, there they live, eat (when they can), sleep, attend to nature, and presumably, for all that is known or cared,

procreate and die. As a backcloth stand the contractors' stately homes. Their substance is but sand and water, with a sprinkling of cement; on either side of a broken door are two windows, heavily barred like the sides of a cage. As it is unlikely that anyone would want to enter the building, the bars, presumably, are intended to prevent those inside from coming out.

But we must needs enter, and crouching low to avoid bruising our heads upon the door beam, we are reminded of Gulliver entering the land of the Lilliputians.

Having laboriously entered the building, and taken a few steps, we are surprised to find ourselves in the open again. This bears no relation to a "barbarian's" first encounter with a swing door. We are in a courtyard. The floor is stone, and needless to say, very dirty; here and there is a pile of manure and straw; as likely or not a goat or two is strolling at its leisure. Meanwhile word has gone that a stranger is in the midst, and from various cornerstones, at varying heights, bejewelled noses timorously peep at the adventurers. In the distance a shuffle *oisarees* is heard and with the certain knowledge that the females have, by now, closeted

themselves in a room at the back, or wherever they do closet themselves, we proceed.

As we cross the few feet of paving we perceive in the dimness of a small room, the figure of the contractor awaiting our arrival. We step into the room and stumble against a form stretched upon the cold stone floor. Oblivious to our profound apologies a young cow rises slowly to its feet, and ambles into the yard.

Precisely how to address our host, we are not sure. Ought we to say "Good morning Mr. Messrs. Hindi-dish-wallah Sahib," or would "Mr. Messrs." be more polite. We finally decide upon a simple "Good morning," and he indicates some stools upon which we are to perch. The word "perch' is'used advisedly, for there is little more one can do. This is the living room, the living room of a person earning much more than the London W. *z* boarding-house keeper. "The living room," in London W. 2. "is as ghastly as it is objectionable." This proves "living room" a misnomer. In London W. 2. "the furniture is old but of no period." This is not furniture. Such articles as were found in London. W. 2. "were stodgy in appearance and had the tendency to have

knobs on." If you put a knob on this it would collapse. The normal contents of the room are a bare table, some stools, occasionally a decrepit and worn-out cane chair, and here in all its desolation, the contractor sits devising schemes for increasing his profit, by lowering the standard of his stores. Whatever be the nature of London. W. 2. the "barbarian" abroad was content to live there ; would he be content to live in such conditions as more affluent persons maintain under his own Eastern sun ? It is to be doubted.

It is a matter of regret that we cannot understand the contractor's tongue nor* he ours. So, the Babu or writer is brought. The Babu is old, ugly and toothless. His claim to distinction is contained in an acquaintance ' with English, It is he who writes those wonderful letters beseeching the Almighty to continue our long life and prosperity, provided—oh, yes 1 provided—we increase the profit on the store.

We settle back on our stools to listen to "the reverberations of some of the finest thoughts that ever struck the mind of man." That usually involves the following. 1. I am a poor man; 2. I have a large family (to say nothing, we note in

parenthesis, of a large stomach); 3. You do not pay me enough; 4. I have many workmen; 5. There is a war on (a profound and touching thought); 6. Materials are scarce, etc., etc. We point out that even if disposed to help, we cannot overlook that he has been bribing our employees to accept inferior stores. "Bribing?" is the reply. "No Sahib, that is not bribing, it is the custom of the country,'" But there we can leave him, for we shall have more to say hereafter of "the custom of the country,'"

In the still more remote civilisation of the United States of America, there grew into considerable proportions an organisation which was ravenously eating into, and corrupting, the commercial life. At the head of this structure stood an archgangster. It may be that within his home Al Capone, or some similar "over-lord" was the essence of kindness and gentility; kind to his children, a devoted husband, in short, a man of infinite charity. That would not be surprising; it is not unusual to find that the more unscrupulous a man in acquiring wealth, the more lavish is he in disposing of it. But, for all, in the eyes of the general public he epitomises everything that is bad in commercial

morality. In just such a manner, does the Indian visitor react to the bigger contractors.

There they are—these "arch" contractors: residing in palaces, giving generously.to public charities, and generally comporting themselves as becomes wealthy Rajahs. Why the "barbarian" in England was surprised by the ostentation of a charity ball is difficult to comprehend. It is nothing new to India. The merchants engaged in it many moons ago, and since they changed their names to contractors, they have not ceased to follow the same pursuits.

But all these details are merely but the trappings. The gravamen of the matter is that these individuals control a system which would make Wilberforce turn over in his grave. Here is an extract from a book by Brailsford called "Rebel India." "The great majority, however, of the workshops in India escape control entirely, either because they are too small to come under the Factory Acts, or because they use no mechanical power. In these over ten millions out of India's 11,800,000 industrial workers are employed. Some are permanent like the wealthy carpet factory in Amritsar, which, as the manager told me, produces only articles of

luxury 'for Maharajahs and American millionaires," Here boys aged about eight, worked in the deep shade, which must have strained their eyes severely, through an n-hour day, for 2½d.. They are virtually slaves bought from their parents by the foreman for a lump sum at the outset of their careers,"[5] To this might be added example upon example, not least amongst them are the students with University degrees found working as labourers at 8 annas a day. It may be asked how does this affect the big contractor, when the allusions are to the small industries. The answer is a simple one. "Little bugs have small bugs upon their backs to bite 'em, and smaller bugs have littler bugs and so *ad infinitum."* By an inverse ratio we arrive at the big contractors. They obtain a Government contract ; they obtain it by virtue of their standing and opulence. It is believed that they can be trusted to carry it out effectively. No sooner have they got it, than they "farm" it amongst small contractors who very often pass it down,, to "smaller bugs" on their backs. In the final reckoning numerous intermediate profits are being made, the contractors at the lower end of the scale are paying starvation wages, and the article inevitably suffers. At first,

this is done legitimately but when the subdividing of contractors is forbidden by the Government illicit means are resorted to, and illegality thus forced underground is always more virile and malignant, than the same evil in the light of day.

These, again, are not matters which must await self-government. It is just another example of waiting at the bottom of the peak while someone else climbs up with the flag.....yes, even if it be the wrong peak.

If it be true that a country gets the kind of Government it deserves, what sort of a Government will a country get which allows such a cancer to exist within its body? But the oligarchy of contractors continues to flourish. They are more omnipotent than any dictator, and aided by accumulated wealth, insinuated influence, and an intricate organisation for stimulating "the customs of the country" they sit in their ivory chairs, produced by sweated labour at 2 annas a day, their paunches wrapped in cloth, spun in India at a like rate. Where were they when those "finest thoughts of man were reverberated," or can it be that their greed for money, is but another of the ideas dumped on the country by the West?

And so we leave the contractor, the tiny bug, riding in his elaborate rickshaw, the medium size bug, in his medium size car and the big bug, in his luxurious American limousine, the latter be it inferred and noted, forced upon the gentleman by a decadent and degraded Western civilisation.

III
DELUSIONS

III

DELUSIONS

A large variety of persons from the much-publicised Hitler to the unsung inmates of small and little-known asylums, have been credited to be suffering from delusions. It is an unfortunate state of mind, but if taken at the early stages it can be cured.

For those Indians who have not yet discovered it, those gentlemen, in the white coats and black trousers in the front rows of the cinema, are a sort of Englishmen. And further, their presence can be explained in a very few words.

Way back in the early 18th century the Indian was peacefully ploughing his land with a spike, and a stave and an emaciated cow, in much the way as he does today. The only intruders with whom he had to deal were the English merchants, and as he doubtless traded with them in as warm-hearted and frank spirit as he does now, their presence was not entirely unwanted. But it must not be thought

that all his ancestors held the same views as our present-day "barbarian," who attributes war and homicide to Western Civilisation. There were, for example, the Mahrattas, who, laying waste the greater part of Bengal, had burned and pillaged their way to the gates of Calcutta. Then, as usual, the Indian called in aid the English merchants, who, with true old-world courtesy despatched a strong force, which turned the wicked Mahrattas away. Then, there was the Nawab Aliverdi Khan, a ruler who gently punished his subjects by squeezing their heads in a mechanically propelled device, and pushing thorns under their nails. It was the English merchants who delivered the Indians from this maniac. And so it went on. Meanwhile the valiant French (to say nothing of the Dutch) were poking their finger into the Indian pie, and once again it was the English merchants who finally, and decisively disposed of them.

The purpose of these few lines serves not to justify the presence of the Englishman in India. Their purpose is to dispose of delusion number one that had the English not taken control of the country the Indians would have had it to themselves. One cannot infer that they read beyond that part of

history which teaches how their forbears sold merchandise to the traders, but if they should, they would probably agree that had the Dutch not invaded India, the French most certainly would. It is an equally fair inference that had the French taken the country, they would have become the butt of all the calumnies which are today thrown at the English. Therefore, it is not surprising to find, that whilst the modern "barbarian" finds the night-life of London "crude and nauseating" by contrast that of Paris is "worth going a long way to see;" it is not surprising that he draws his comparisons between the best night-club he can find in Paris and the worst he can discover in London.

But there it is. It was the English who penetrated peacefully into India and remained there, not, mark you, by fighting peace-loving Indians, but pillagers, the French and the Dutch. Yet had it been otherwise, the modern "barbarian" would have been reared on money earned from a French Government, would have acquired an outstanding ability in the French language, would have gone to France to seek his learning and culture, would have been President of some

Ecole in Paris, and the English, the blessed English, would, for him, have had the loveliest, naughtiest, and most intriguing night-life in the whole world.

There is a peculiar bird which always assumes that what another bird has got is better than its own. With this in mind it steals the nest of its fellow bird, but having lived in it, and dirtied it, finally concludes that its own was, in reality, the better, and returns from whence it came.

Perhaps the next delusion of the Indian people is abundantly summed up by the "barbarian" himself, it is a corollary to what has been written before. Not content with condemning the English he observes that "the people of the Continent, are equally civilised, though less conscious of it." That must, of course, remain a question of opinion, and one, at that, which varies according to whether one is a "Barbarian" or a "Civilised being,"* The Englishman likes to think that he is tolerant and sincere and pursuing a policy designed for the advancement of such countries as his Government may control. Can it be that the "barbarian" believes that present-day conditions on the Continent of Europe, indicate a state of civilisation higher than

that to be found in England ? Is it imagined that the Nazis would have permitted his book, "Oh ! You English" to be published as applicable to the German ? If not, is that the standard of civilisation he admires ?

When Fox Talbot experimented with the effect of light upon sensitised paper, he little realised the effect his photographic plates would produce upon sensitive Indians. For photography is the perennial plaything of present-day India. Every street in every town has its full share of photographers, and they are employed upon the slightest reason or pretext. The arrival of a visitor necessitates a group-photograph; his departure occasions another. Portraits, groups, group-portraits ; standing, sitting, walking, running ; smiling, frowning, laughing, crying; all are photographed at every turn. A new sash round *the puggri,* a new black waistcoat and a clean shirt is the justification in the North. The clean white shirt will suffice in the South. Into the black cloth disappears the photographer and Veraswamy's clean white linen is perpetuated for posterity.

' From the camera to the cinema is but a short cry. Both were "dumped" on the East by the West.

But never before in the history of man, has he gathered up "dumped" refuse with such avidity. The cinema provides a ready, rapid and easy source of profit to the Indian with a small amount of money to invest; it provides an effective means of education combined with entertainment for his people. Whether it be a desire to attract further profit or to give value for the price paid matters little, but the standard of comfort maintained in English cinemas is moderately high.

The cinemas in India are of two kinds. One projects Indian films in the vernacular, the other imported Western products. Exact statistics are not known, but a considerable proportion of the latter is Indian-owned. The prices vary from about 8 annas to two rupees eight annas. The most one would pay in an English suburban cinema is about one rupee eight annas. In the luxury cinemas of the West End of London, two rupees eight annas is the average price. The cinema in India is located in a building designed on the principle of Western cinemas, but in the state of development which existed about 20 years ago. The rain beating down on the corrugated iron roof, lends reality, as the accompaniment to a rousing war

film, but to the more temperate stories of "William Pitt," "Pani" or "Rod," does no more than render the talking-machine inaudible. It must be a condition precedent to the opening of an Indian cinema that search be made for the most uncomfortable chairs that are in existence. Having found them, they are deposited in neat rows for the greater discomfort of the would-be patron. Add to this a *chokra* to sell unsalted and stale cashew-nuts at two annas a packet of about 30; a discordant beli or symbol to indicate when the film is going to commence and end; a projector and a screen, an operator and a number of labourers to close the windows and blackout the light; a system of lighting which entails that the electrical installation will give out at irregular intervals, stir well and boil for a week and you are ready for business. In short, for the benefit of the Englishman who has not met those pleasures, the whole is not unlike what is to be found in the nether regions of the Angel, Islington. Having taken your seats, the lights are dimmed, one by one—a pause—a horrible groan as the "talkie" apparatus is started—the show is on. There you sit, trying so hard to become enthralled, the perspiration pouring down your tem-

ples, your back breaking, your posterior aching, until finally, the sheer personality of the shadows on the screen, draws you into a state of empathy, and oblivion to your discomfort. The most engaging part of the show has been reached—a bell rings "Interval"—up go the lights one by one, and there you are : left hanging on the next word, with an artificial break in the film, unintended by the director and producer alike. You peer forward over the balustrade, the lower floor is filled with Indians, (let there be no misunderstanding, anyone other than an "untouchable" is seated in the gallery with you. The "untouchables" would likewise be with you, but their presence would bring heated objections from the higher castes). As you watch you think of Mr. Karaka's book, and comment on Western civilisation's cajolery, persuasion, and perchance even threats against the East before they might be induced to enter this house of depravity." Meanwhile the bell rings and off you go again through the whole monotonous procedure.

There has been growing up in the West over a long period of years, a fervent desire for the full co-operation of all peoples. War and blood are merely the outward signs of the labour pains pre-

ceding its ultimate birth.

That unity has basically existed within England for many generations. England expresses its emotion, a quality reserved by the "barbarian" exclusively for the East, in its National Anthem. Only those will doubt that who have not experienced a tingling sensation along the spine, when at moments of crisis he has heard it played. It need not be the National Anthem, equally might *it* be "Abide with me," but the Englishman has come to associate with those songs, not an imperialistic symbol, but the epitome of all that England means to him : his home, his kith and kin, his very happiness.

So, at the conclusion of the cinema performance the National Anthem is played and the Englishman stands. He thinks of his home, many thousands of miles away, of green fields, of happier times. Some Indians stand with him, many walk out; even Eastern courtesy does not restrain them. Is it to be thought that they would be permitted to crawl away, if the Continental Nazis were their Government ? The Nazis, "people of the Continent, equally civilised, though less conscious of it." In some cinemas they also play the American

Anthem : the Englishman stands as a mark of his respect for that. And can it be doubted that if the Indian had a National Anthem, the occasion for its performance would equally find the Englishmen standing ? This is a small matter, and yet it is a big one. For it is the manifestation of another delusion. It is a manifestation of a delusion quite as much as every line of Mr. Karaka's book ; of the cries of the Indian Nationalist papers ; of the whimpering "Master," which comes from the throat of every cringing wretch. It is a form of paranoea, —of persecution mania—for it takes as its first principle the assumption that the average Englishman despises the Indian and regards him as barbarian. It is an assumption which Mr. Karaka (no doubt, unwittingly) tends to perpetuate, but it is as baseless as it is untruer.

Tucked away in the environs of the town stands an unimpressive building, the front of which is patrolled by an unimpressive man. The building houses the Magistrate's Court; the man is a policeman. He is dressed in a dishevelled *khadi,* like a bush shirt, with a pair of near brown shorts protruding below ; upon his head is balanced a helmet cum *puggri* of the deepest red ; the general appear-

ance is reminiscent of a lollypop, strawberry flavour. Four years ago he tore himself away from his village, where he displayed reasonable skill as a ploughman. Today, at eighteen rupees per mensem, as a policeman, he remains : a fairly good ploughman. He wears *puttees* but his feet are bate, his knees are dirty, his head (through no fault of his own) is empty ; what he lacks in personality he makes up in incongruity.

Along the road come four more policemen, similarly dressed and equipped, but with the addition of a rifle. The rifle is unloaded. That, however, is of small moment, for given ammunition they would have no conception of where to put it, but it adds to the picture and goes well with the red lollypop hat, strawberry flavour. The four rifles rest upon the shoulders of the four policemen in divers ways. One carries his on the left shoulder, magazine outward, another on the right shoulder, magazine downwards, the third on his right shoulder, magazine inwards, the fourth perches his midway between his shoulder and the small of his back. In the centre of this imposing array of legal majesty, drift the prisoners. Heavily manacled with hand-

cuffs and chains they slouch to meet their judge. The policemen appear far more woebegone than the prisoners, for which they have every reason. Tomorrow the prisoners will be in jail; they, however, will be wandering the s?me road, with the same rifles, in the same untidy manner; the only change will be a different collection of prisoners.

Arrived at the entrance the procession halts, whilst the policemen exchange the pleasantries of the day (if any). If the scene is Southern India it is as likely as not that the media will be Tamil. So far as is gathered from the vocal noises, the Tamilians make up their language as they go along. It does not sound the same on any two occasions, and without studying the rules, the indications are that it is unimportant what sort of noise you omit, so long as you occasionally put "enge" on the end.

The pleasantries exchanged, the procession moves on, up the stairs and into the court-room. To the majority of the defendants, this is no unfamiliar spectacle. Their cases, petty larceny, improper possession and kindred offences take as long to conclude as a heavy Chancery Suit in an English High Court. A case of conspiracy to defraud might

be four months in preparation and ten months being heard. Nowhere does the British Government stipulate that an accused shall not have a speedy trial. Its administration of justice is the pride of English civilisation, and the world. The disgusting delays which frustrate a speedy trial can certainly not be laid at its door.

Take the case of Mustapha Quickone, one of the defendants under escort. Almost a year ago he was working for the well-known firm of Messrs. Hindi-dish-wallah Sahib. He was one of a number of foremen supervising labour. It came to the notice of Mr. Messrs. Hindi, etc., that stores which were on his premises late on any given night, had ceased to be there on the following morning. He made enquiries, and watched the activities of his employees. Whilst he watched nothing occurred. One evening, he and some trusted servants were observing from the cover of a nearby tree. Mr. Messrs. Hindi etc., suddenly remembered that he had a prior engagement and departed, leaving his trusted servants to continue the vigil. The following day when he was approaching his premises, his servants told him that Mustapha Quickone and another foreman had been seen making

off with his stores. He had long suspected Mustapha, so he informed the police. The station writer told the station sergeant: the station sergeant told the sub-inspector ; the sub-inspector took word to the Inspector (Crime Branch).

The Inspector (Crime Branch) holds an invidious position. It is his task to act on what he is told from below, in accordance with instructions which he receives from above. Access is obtained to his room, through a pair of swing doors such as exist in any reputable London public house, and are to be seen on the entrances to liquor dives in Arizona Cowboy films. He normally carries a prolific fungus on his upper lip, which would put any "London cabman" in the shade. He sits at a broken-down desk, beneath a faded photograph of a nonagenarian predecessor with an equally prolific growth. At his side is a much-used horse-hair chair and two books. They are the Criminal Procedure and the Indian Penal Codes, both of which took printers' ink on the dates when their subject matter first became law.

These two books are greatly fingered, and by dint of constant and studious enquiry the Inspector is able to refer to any section, name any crime and

recite its punishments, but would prefer not to attempt a recital of its constituent elements. He is a kindly man, but timid, and a great measure of the delay in investigation, is occasioned by his uncertainty as to the truth of the information from below, and his inability to understand the instructions from above. Having perused an assortment of case-sheets, crime-sheets, chitties and notes; having referred, inferred, deferred and conferred, the Inspector began his investigation.

Meanwhile before the police could send for Mustapha's intended co-accused, a wealthy friend of his co-accused had sent for the police. In the result it had been decided that no case could be made out against the intended co-accused, and the enquiries proceeded against Mustapha alone. ("But, No, Sahib, it is the custom of the country").

The enquiries muddled along for four months, until Mustapha appeared in court for the first hearing after the filing of a complaint. He could not afford bail, for what little money he had and could borrow, would soon be in the pocket of his pleader. So elapsed eight more long months. Many of the adjournments had been at the request of the defence, at least, at the request of the

pleader of the defence. Every adjournment spells an added fee, and the pleader of the magisterial courts places his agility in snatching fees, second only to his adroitness in securing adjournments. Intense will be the congestion on the great day of judgment, when the pleaders from the magistrates' courts arrive *en masse,* armed with sheaves of bogus medical certificates, to apply for a short recess.

The interior of the Court is large, and as is inevitable, dirty. The rear portion is railed. Behind the rails sit the public. "The public" includes sweepers, lascars and their ilk; they sit agog, even when the proceedings are conducted in English and they cannot understand a word.

At the far end of the room, an office-table, stands on a dais. The table is divided from the rest of the room by a brass bar, from which hangs a green and much moth-eaten curtain. On the dais is some green baize ; on the green baize is a chair; on the chair is the Magistrate. The Magistrate will normally be a civil servant in which case it is not his fault that the last qualification required of him is a knowledge of law. Whilst on the bench, as a judicial officer, he strives to perform his functions

in an equitable manner.

To his immediate front is a long table. On his left sit the pleaders, on his right the Prosecuting Inspector. The Prosecuting Inspector resembles a lollypop, strawberry flavour, as much as the policeman. He retains the glorious red headgear, but wears an ordinary khaki shirt with stars on (not "knobs"), khaki shorts, shoes and stockings and a Sam Brown belt. Why the Sam Brown belt? You tell me! His knowledge of law is acquired by a course of six months, running errands in the office of the Public Prosecutor, at the end of that time he is till not even proficient at running errands. I:ut that is not to condemn him, for he is the first to acknowledge it. He knows that an Indian Evidence Act was passed in 1911, (he was ploughing then). He did not understand it in 1911, and sees little prospect of doing so today. Thus, and not without good reason, he takes the line of least resistance and assumes it was not passed. His psychology is rather complex. His presentation of the case proceeds on the assumption that all lawyers are rascals (a dangerous assumption in India); that the onus of proof lies on the defence; that it is his bounden duty to

withhold anything which is detrimental to his case; and that he must answer for his manner of dealing not to his fellow-men and his conscience, but to his Commissioner. In fact, if he wanted a motto, he could not do better than "My Commissioner, right or wrong."

Behind the Prosecuting Inspector is the witness-box. This must be a Western innovation for it has knobs on, and behind the witness-box sits the clerk. The clerks main function is to referee the fights (forensic fights) which occasionally break out between the advocates and the Inspector.

From a door on the right, like a compere emerging from the files, dashes a dhotied usher, and the air is filled with his doleful lament. What he says or why he says it, cannot be recorded, but the proceedings remain in a state of suspended animation until he has finished.

The case proceeds. If one follows the proceedings closely it will be observed that often a stage is reached .where the Magistrate, the prosecuting officer, the pleader, the witness, the clerk, and the public, are all talking at one and the same time. That in itself constitutes an unholy din, but it is not finished yet. From the right hand wings emer-

ges another gentleman. With his sandalled feet pattering across the floor, he carries a typewriter to the side of the Court, sits down, produces a wad of paper, places a piece in his machine and. commences to type. What he is typing bears no relation to the proceedings. He gives the impression that he is typing the story of his life and that destiny has ordained that magistrate or no magistrate, case or no case, he must type it at that time, at that place and in that manner. Hark now, all ye that are able.

Mr. Messrs. Dish, etc. gives his evidence. From some inspired sources he hasjieard that there will be no conviction unless he can confirm what has occurred. So his evidence omits the "prior engagement" and confirms the stealing of the F to res. The reason is that the only other witnesses are menials. Who should the Magistrate believe ?

Mr. Messrs. *etc.*, is a contractor, he is well known locally, he is an adept liar and remains unshaken in cross-examination. But the beginning and end of the whole matter is that he is a man of money, and Mustapha is not. This does not suggest any malice or non-performance of duty on the part of the Magistrate; it is merely indicative of the deep-seated belief in India that a man's word is as

good as his bank balance. The standard line of defence in Indian courts is that which alleges, invariably on grossly inadequate grounds, that the prosecution is *mala fide* conceived, that the prosecutor has a grudge against the accused and that all the prosecution witnesses have been bribed or coerced.

That defence sometimes fails; the magistrate often rejects such suggestions. But this defence is not nearly so frequent as the implication that poor men are *prima facie* liars, because that can be implied both by prosecution and defence, and is always in the subconcious mind of the magistrate.

By the precepts of Western Civilisation, a man's wealth is not the yard-stick of his veracity. That it is in India, is but another delusion, and another example to boot, of the preponderant part which money plays in Indian conceptions.

IV

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

IV

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

Whilst a " rose by any other name may smell as sweet" bribery by another name remains as vile. Call it as you like : gift, present, bribery, or the custom of the country, it runs counter to all "the finest thoughts of man,"' As an implement it is absent from the tool-bag of the man of ability and integrity. It is the last resort of he who, lacking resolution, ability and moral fibre, can secure his ends by no other means. It can be effectively employed only upon those who place monetary gain above duty, honesty and good faith, and it exists in India in alarming proportions.

Mr. Kuushi is an advocate living on the outskirts of an Indian town. Many moons ago he left his little village, and migrating to the town, studied for the bar. Since then the patter of his sandals is to be heard with increasing frequency along the floors of Indian criminal courts. At the time of our meeting he is busily engaged packing his papers

and books, as he is going into the country to conduct a defence.

It is not a difficult case. In fact, the defence is substantially the same as most of the other defences which he has conducted ; only the details vary. His client is charged with bribery. It is said that he had bribed Government officials and seduced them from their duty. The defence runs through the usual gamut; all right-thinking people deplore bribery and will have no part in it; my client is no exception; the prosecution case is a tissue of lies ; all the prosecution witnesses, excepting three, are prejudiced against him; the three remaining witnesses are too poor to be honest.

Mr. Kuushi has built up a considerable practice in these defences. Success in the shape of acquittals often eludes him, but his greatest asset is his zeal and perspicuity, in fact so great are these that he almost deludes himself into believing that bribery and corruption barely exist.

Being almost ready to leave he summons two rickshaws. The second is for his junior. The junior's job does not vary much throughout the world. It is he who reads through his principal's papers, and carefully marks all the wrong passages

This has its advantages. Later when Mr. Kuushi finds that he has referred to a passage which he had himself marked, and that *it* is also wrong, he can turn in histrionic ire upon the junior and everyone assumes it was his fault. The junior would like to secure some Government employment. If questioned, he will tell you with disarming frankness firstly, that he hopes to secure appointment to such a post, not upon his ability but upon a chance acquaintanceship, and secondly that his object in seeking such an office is not, as you may think, to further the war effort, but because it will be a good thing after the war to have held a Government post.

So, Mr. Kuushi bids adieu to his family and approaches the rickshaw. At a conservative estimate the worthy advocate weighs some 16 stones, the flesh upon his bones would warm the heart of the most ravenous cannibal, and surmounting it all is a corporation, so large and so much out of proportion with the rest of his anatomy as to indicate that it was affixed as an afterthought.

His face is wreathed in smiles, his body in white-spun linen and the whole, the magnificent corporation excepted, gives the appearance of a virgin approaching the altar.

While Mr, Kuushi takes measure of the rickshaw, the ricks haw-wallah takes measure of Mr. Kuushi, as well he might. He will be obliged to pull the rickshaw duly laden with the advocate to the station. To prepare him for this herculian performance he will have devoured a bowl of cold rice. In stature he is as emaciated as his customer is obese, as dirty as the Kuushi linen is white, as miserable as the advocate is happy. His home is the remnants of a mud hut. There with his wife and eight young children he ekes out an existence which beggars all description.

His place in life is that of beast of a burden. He performs for his betters the duties which are otherwise performed by oxen and horses. He draws the rickshaw towards the kerbstone, and gravely salaams Mr. Kuushi who, lifting his dhoti around his thighs, like the principal girl in a Drury Lane pantomime, steps gingerly into the rickshaw and departs.

The outer elevation of the station from which the advocate will depart is much the same as many Western stations. The interior varies with the nature of the halt. The smaller stations are often little more than platforms, unrelieved by any brightening factor.

You might imagine Mr. Brown of Peckham making a train journey as he would in India. He packs all his belongings in a variety of multi-coloured boxes. Any oddments which cannot be forced into a case (there are usually more things that will not go in, than will) are wrapped up in the carpets. Food for the journey is placed in special receptacles and wrapped round with handkerchiefs. He gathers up his wife and children, and the two chickens which he bought last week and makes for the station. He knows the train will not go until the early hours of the morning, but he arrives on the platform in the early .evening. There he selects a spot which is most calculated to interfere with the free passage of pedestrians seeking a platform to catch a train. He places his luggage in a heap, ties the chickens to it, lies down upon the ground, groups his family around him in varying degrees of undress, and goes to sleep. If you can imagine that, and if you can then visualise hundreds of "Browns" sleeping in a similar manner you have a fair impression of an Indian Railway station. There is no hurrying, the speed of the average traveller is usually just slow enough to hinder those who are anxious to catch trains. Cockroaches are

to be seen crawling round and over the sleeping forms. The platforms are stained red with expectorated betel-nut. This being war time the trains and platforms are crowded; so crowded, in fact, that Mr. Kuushi arrives to find that he cannot obtain a seat. He seeks out the guard, but the guard is' "sorry to say that every seat is booked,"' He investigates other channels to no avail. He knows that he must get the train as his case will be called and he will not be there. He returns to the guard. As he approaches he extracts three, rupee-notes. With these in his hand he says to the guard : "I really must catch this train" (this is a translation, the actual words may entail the inevitable number of "enges"), the guard observes the notes and then: "As a matter of fact, there is a reservation here for a gentleman who will not be travelling—you had better take that,"' He, of course, had better take the three rupees. Mr. Kuushi is given access to an empty compartment, which bears the names of sufficient travellers to fill it. Long before the train has arrived at its destination, it is apparent that the guard had specially prepared the name tickets, to ensure that "the custom of the country" received the full reverential honours which it deserved. The

remaining travellers' names were equally bogus.

Mr. Kuushi and his junior have started their journey to defend a criminal on a bribery charge.

At one of the intermediate stations Mr. Kuushi, who is travelling second class, decides that he would like some food. He alights and enters a dining-room. He is asked in which class he is travelling, and having replied is told that there is only accommodation for first-class passengers. He produces a few rupees, sits down and has his meal. And so it proceeds, if he pulled the communication cord in a moment of aberration, the unpleasant consequences could be disposed of by rupees, in fact, whilst many Indians clamour for a universal Indian language they overlook the fact that "money" has long usurped that position.

Meanwhile the prosecution witnesses have not been overlooking the delightful custom. One of them wishes to attend a wedding; another desires to visit his village. Off they go to the local Doctor. For a few annas they procure certificates of indisposition from some gastric ailment. This being sent to the Prosecutor, he is obliged to apply for an adjournment. So Mr. Kuushi, now anything but "happy," having bribed himself down to the

courts must needs bribe himself back again, for the case is not to be heard.

Such incidents are matters of daily occurrence. Neither is the custom limited to passenger movement. Money, and money only is the key which will unlock idle wagons for the carriage of important goods. It may never be known to what extent this pernicious system was responsible for large consignments of grain failing to reach famine-stricken areas.

There is not a field of human activity which has not got its full quota. Trade and profession both are equally cursed by this evil. An excuse often put forward is inadequate pay, but lack of wealth is the test of a man's character not the excuse for debasing it.

If a clerk wants to secure employment he must first ascertain who is the head clerk of the firm. His task is to make himself known and pay the requisite amount. Then, his application will be a matter of form and he will shortly find himself on the firm's strength. Without the payment he will have a faint hope of employment. As an employee he can be assured of promotion only upon payment of the usual stipend. His every movement with the

firm will be regulated by periodical payments.

The source of information renders it undesirable at this stage to enter into all which could be made available. Suffice it to say that, as a generality, it is not unreasonable to say that *no* monies pass from one hand to another without a little sticking to the palm.

A number of steps are now being taken to combat this "custom." The most recent is the establishing, under an Ordinance, of special tribunals to deal solely with Bribery and Corruption. It remains to be seen what degree of success will result; but those particular crimes are of that insidious nature which renders them difficult to unearth. Is it not within the people themselves that the remedy lies ? The payment of a bribe presupposes the existence of someone willing to accept it, and until that strength of character exists which is capable of defeating greed and allowing integrity to assert itself, this malignant cancer will continue to eat into the commercial and social life of India.

V
THE REACTION TO SEX

V

THE REACTION TO SEX

WANTED

"A well-connected, wealthy and really beautiful Kanarese Brahmin bride of 15, for a young, reputed, settled business man of respectable family. Knowledge in music or instruments will be a preference. Apply, etc."

"A bachelor graduate bridegroom 23 to 25 for a beautiful, educated, musically good, girl 16 years with good dowry. Apply with Horoscope to, etc."

Such are advertisements in common form from the Matrimonial Columns of an Indian daily newspaper produced by that civilisation which, we are told, is based on "feeling and emotion,'" In its possession of that basis of civilisation it is "more advanced" than the West. Read those columns again, and, in the name of the West, thank Almighty God, for its retardment.

Let us refer again to our modern "Barbarian": "Born as he (the "barbarian") is 'in the open air of nature and in the face of the sun' his impulse of sex is not poisoned and encrusted by the conventions of any civilised code. His morality is not based on dogmas; it is not a choice of good and evil, but an 'artistic balance of light and shade.' And he is not ashamed of it."

Then more's the pity ! It is difficult fully to comprehend what that passage means, assuming it carries some meaning, but in so much as it purports to describe the Indian view of sex, it may be well to examine what another Indian gentleman has to say upon the matter.

Here is Mr. N. S. Phadke. He has not had the "distinction" of having been President of the Oxford Union, the Busman's Union nor even a Mother's Union, but he is an Indian and a very clear-thinking Indian at that. He is a Master of Arts and a Professor of Moral and Mental Philosophy at an Indian College:

"(There is) a form of marriage which is over burdened with the tyranny of religion, in which the duties of the wedded partners are the expression, not of the laws of love, but of the extraneous tenets

of religion, and women are regarded as nothing better than objects of enjoyment whom men have a divine right to drive like dumb cattle. Anyone who observes the way in which marriages take place amongst us will agree that they come under the above description ..."

What of the dogmas now ?

Permit Mr. Phadke to continue on the matter of the life of Indian middle-class and poor women : ". . . . . They walk on this planet of misery for a short while, and during that while they unknowingly dig their own graves, labouring to keep the house and nurse children. Apart from a few exceptional communities, it is true of the majority of girls in India that they are married at 14 at the latest, attain puberty the next year, are burdened with an ignorant motherhood within a short while; half of these poor young creatures either succumb in the very first delivery or are before long victimised by tuberculosis or some such disease and set fairly on the road to the grave ..."

Such delightful and "artistic balances of light and shade" ! A trifle too much shade and a slight insufficiency of light don't you think?

On to the evening air, disconcerting even to

the mosquitoes, wafts the wail of clarionets and horns. The faces of the instrumentalists carry a mask of amazement. What they play and how they play it, is wrapped in a secrecy, which the European is neither likely nor anxious to solve. Perhaps their mask of amazement indicates the inability of the instrumentalists to solve it as well. Behind them struts a much-bedecked horse pulling an open carriage* In the carriage sit a number of young ladies, a few small children and on the rear seat two solitary figures. The one is a miserable young Indian. He is dressed in his best suit, with a clean shirt. He is the bridegroom; he is undergoing the ritual of marriage. Next to him is a little girl. She is 14 years of age. Her hair is garlanded with flowers, and more flowers hang round her neck. She is the bride.

In the West, "poisoned and encrusted by the conventions of a civilised code,'" restricted by a "morality based on dogmas,'" nurtured in a civilisation born of cold "science and reasoning,'" she would be at least 18 and happy as a lark in the sky. In the West this would be the happiest day of her life; this day would be the culmination of a meeting with the man of her choice, of happy hours and days

spent together, of a realisation that she and that man were, of their own free-will and understanding, to become partners for life. The very sight of her would conjure to mind that saying of the dogma-ridden West "Happy as a bride,'" But this is the East, and it is India.

She is but 14, and has no full knowledge of what is occurring or involved. All she knows is that her parents have ordained that she must now marry. When she protested she was quietly told that she was an ungrateful daughter, and asked whether "she wanted a horrible curse to fall upon her parents and her ancestors by marrying at a late age". Her bridegroom was chosen for her. The joys of courtship were unknown to her; by the standards of her civilisation they are indecent. In the place of a confidence that her life-companion will repay her devotion with love, protection and kindness is a quagmire of uncertainty. He may be debased, depraved, diseased, irresponsible and lazy. She is neither permitted to decide nor capable of doing so.

Her head is hung as if with shame* She is terrified to glance at her bridegroom; when she glances at the little children running naked at her

side, it is with a fervent wish that she were running with them.

She was "born in the open air and face of the sun." At the time, the mud hut in which her mother lived, had been washed away by the monsoon: she was born in the street.

Now, in a few days, when she has been further garlanded, when she has sat for agonising hours under a canopy receiving meaningless presents from her relatives (not dolls and childrens' books as you might expect) she will be a wife.

While the children of the West are still satisfying the educational needs of their childish brains, she will be satisfying the carnal needs of her wretched husband.

When she has performed that function she must satisfy the residue of his appetites. She must keep his house but still come out to meet him, in dutiful obeisance, when he returns at evening. She must produce his food, taking care to wait until he finishes before beginning her own, and then require only such as he has seen fit to leave. If he stands she must stand, if he walks she will walk, but at a distance and behind him. She is a chattel, the property of her husband bought for a handful

of rupees. To use the word "love," or "emotion" other than "carnal emotion" seems grotesque, in regard to such a relationship.

Be it noted that today very many right-thinking Indians (with whom this book is not CQncerned) openly deplore such marriages, and this has occasioned a slight, but very slight, reduction in their number. Let us examine again in the words of Mr. Phadke still another aspect which far from diminishing is on the increase :....."the Dowry Custom. It has reduced many a father to penury and driven many a desperate girl to suicide as a relief from ignominious virginity. Instances could be given of scores of strong, intelligent and remarkable boys chained to ugly, and totally unfit girls because the latter brought with them fat dowries and the boys' parents had their eye on nothing else: And equally common are cases of lovely and clever girls mated with the very dregs of society because their parents were poor and glad to choose a groom carrying a dowry..... It is not a matter for the least surprise that in these circumstances we are having a regular succession of imbecile, weak, diseased, dull-witted and cowardly men and women..... Is it humanely possible that two persons, the only excuse

for whose union was the monetary convenience of their parents, should know anything of divine love ? Is there any earthly chance of such persons passionately longing for each other's companionship ? Is it any wonder if their daily life is one of hourly quarrels, infinite dissatisfaction, scenes of brutal rage, a total absence of understanding and complete aloofness and detachment ?"

The "barbarian" does not claim perfection for his civilisation. He merely asserts that judged by the correct standard it takes on an air of culture and refinement. By what standard will he judge such happenings to cloak them with that air ? Judged by any standard, it is a case of the least said the better. What is the "feeling and emotion" which actuates the whole grisly business, if it is not carnal greed or superstition ? And if those be the emotions since when, by any criterion, have they been objects of commendation ?

These are not "Western ideas dumped on the country"; they are alien to everything held sacred in Western life, and to the casual observer from the West they would appear to cry out for extermination, even before their perpetrators cry out for political power.

The "barbarian" would have his readers believe that in England love and a desire to reproduce one's own species is "sob stuff and, sex, my dear boy, is just an infernal nuisance." Who, but an adolescent undergraduate could have written that. It is indicative of the source from which his information and opinions have been culled.

That he should judge the English outlook from the handful of self-proclaimed intellectual children, who blabber "my dear boy" is a commentary on the weight which should be placed on what he has to write.

The truth is, that by the standards of Western civilisation, marriage is not a matter simply of sex, greed or finance. It is a joining together, freely and by choice, of two persons in companionship, loyalty, sincerity and love in its deepest and most significant forms. The clear-thinking Indians set those standards for marriage in their own country; the few of them will go on striving for that ideal. It would be a pity if those who have seen some good in this aspect of Western Civilisation, should be misguided by a "barbarian" who whilst in England mixed only with undergraduates and, it would appear, a prostitute or two.

VI

THE REACTION TO POLITICS

VI

THE REACTION TO POLITICS

The greater proportion of the peoples of India are politically unconscious; of the remainder many are simply unconscious. In 1931 approximately 84 per cent of the population were illiterate. The position today is little changed. The 16 per cent are divided into a number of political bodies, each of which given the opportunity is convinced of its ability to rule the 100 per cent, but each of which is equally convinced that social chaos would result were the reins of government given to any party other than its own.

It would not be hard to believe that amongst the "steeped culture of its ancient civilisation," there might be found a satisfactory and workable form of government. Satiated with the "dumped" ideas of a Western civilisation it is inconceivable that it should be clamouring for more. That is the strange position that has arisen, for there is one Western idea—democracy—which, according

to the Indians, the British shew a disinclination to "dump". And as befits the standard of literacy, the more they imagine the disinclination, the more they covet the idea.

Within India are to be found the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Radical Democratic Party, the South Indian Liberal Federation, the Europeans and Anglo-Indian Association, the Indian Christian Association, the Forward Bloc—and Uncle Tom Cobley and all—and Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

The Indian National Congress purports to be a universal body. As a necessity Hindus are the greater proportion of the followers; it wants self-government for India. Whilst acknowledging that so far it has been impossible to formulate a government having the full support of the people, it does not agree that such a government cannot be found. Its cry is for self-government first, and find a ruling party afterwards. A magnanimous gesture, when seven-tenths of the population are Hindus. In short, the scheme may be compared to jumping into a seemingly bottomless well, in the pious hope that it must end somewhere.

The Muslim League, as its name implies, consists of Muslims. They also want self-government for India; excluding this, their views are diametrically opposed to the Congress. They view the Congress's policy as an attempt at domination by numbers, and are fearful for their freedom should the Hindus obtain complete political power. They assert that the Hindus and Muslims must be partitioned, and that portions of India, to be called Pakistan, should be set aside for their adherents. Congress violently (an apology—non-violently—which is the same thing) opposes such a step.

The Hindu Mahasabha holds substantially the same views as the Congress but restricts its support to Hindus. If not expressed, it is a fair inference from that fact alone, that its religious views would work more stringently against the Muslims and other denominations.

The Radical Democratic Party, other than that it fights Fascism and British rule, leaves its policy in a somewhat fluid state.

The South Indian Liberal Federation, is an example of many similar parties, which blazing no trail is constituted as a protective and defensive body for its own political partisans.

The Europeans and Anglo-Indian Association want British rule to continue; the Indian Christian Association is, in the main, against the Congress and the Muslim League; the Forward Bloc, led by Mr, Bose, now sojourning in Japan, is against everything and Uncle Tom Cobley has joined the ranks of the perplexed and unconscious.

But it does not end there, for religion and politics are so inextricably mixed in India, that it is impossible, at times, to tell one from the other. If fanaticism exists in politics it is increased fivefold in religion, and all the accumulated prejudices and hatreds of thousands of years can be found seething underground. A comparable position might arise in England if Mr. John Citizen worshipped at a Socialist Church and returned a member of the Protestant Party to Parliament.

The fast has long been a form of religious penance amongst a diversity of peoples. In India it has taken on a political aspect. Read an extract from an Indian daily newspaper: "As a counterblast to the proposed hunger-strike by their husbands in front of the Central Assembly in connection with Hindu Law reform, the wives of three Sanatanists

have started fasting since yesterday to dissuade their husbands from their contemplated move. After offering prayers at the Hanuman Garhi these women started their fast which they say would terminate on a solemn undertaking by their husbands that they would not fast over a bill which 'was widely acclaimed by all right-thifiking persons in the country as remedying an ancient wrong of Hindu women." The suffragettes and their fasts are not forgotten but they were the exception. The political fast is becoming the rule in India, even in relation to differences between husband and wife. Where it will end is hard to imagine. If it continues, the Central Assembly will, in time, present an appearance of emaciation and malnutrition. Helevetius might have said: "I detest your opinions and I will fast to the death against your right to utter them." So, religious penance has given pride of place to political blackmail.

Of the myriads of people and parties in India not one has been able to put forward a plan which, even faintly, indicates some workability. The major political parties have been unable to find any semblance of a common working agreement. "Who," you may ask the "barbarian," "is responsi-

ble for this ?" The answer is not long delayed: "The British and particularly, the wretched Churchill." When the Muslims distrust the Hindus, it is Churchill who has sown the seed. When the Congress cannot propound a plan it is because it lies upon the British to formulate one. If Ali Khan's kitteri has pups, it is Churchill. All the known and unknown evils of Indian political life can be laid at the British door, and a preference is shewn for delivering it to the House of Marlborough.

Through the window of a South-bound train, an Englishman surveys the Indian countryside. If age, and not progress, is the test of civilisation, there is the soil of the greatest. The farmer works with implements, unchanged through thousands of years. His home-made plough is a log of wood with a knife affixed. He gathers his water from a well. His means are a vessel tied to a balanced log, along which he walks to dip the pail into the water. Mud huts, oxen as beasts of burden, scanty clothes, earthen pots, camp-fires and up and down the length and breadth of the country, as far as the eye can see are crouching forms, attending to the needs of nature, indifferent to the eye of the passerby.

Yes, if civilisation goes by age, this is the finest.

Inside the carriage the Englishman observes the sleeping form of an Indian. He has entered the carriage during the night. The carriage is filled with the inevitable tin-trunks and tied-up carpets. Feeling his companion's gaze upon him, he sits up, draws through his nose, maintains a pursed and immobile mouth, opens the nearby window, and with a horrible noise spits : on to his Mother Tndia. He reaches for a nearby water jug, washes out his mouth, again spits through the open window, and murmers "Good morning." Two yards away is a lavatory with Wash-basin and running water, but he is the son of an ancient civilisation and that represents progress. He scorns it.

The train pulls into a station. Out of the window of the carriage-door goes the Indian's head. He calls loudly for some men selling eatables, on the platform. They dash across. He purchases a large leaf full of rice, and a concoction like a small ball of mud encased in pebbles. Another leaf with some red substance upon it, and his purchases complete withdraws into the carriage.

He sits down and begins to place handfuls of the rice into his mouth. His answer to the mysti-

fied countenance of the fellow traveller, is to commence a conversation, his mouth ever open and full of rice. He is a pleasant enough fellow, apparently intelligent. His age would be about 30, and he is obviously a person of education.

As the journey continues, he confides to the traveller that he often feels a stranger in his own country. The Englishman offers sympathy. With a confidence born of agreement he enlarges by remarking on the attitude of the "Empire-builder" towards him. The traveller agrees again. Superconfident now, he deplores the failure to substantiate the promises of self-government. The Englishman demurs. "Why," he asks, "do you consider you have not been given self-government ?" "Why ?" he retorts, "because of Churchill and his Imperialist clique, of course." "But," continues the Englishman, "do you not realise that the man in the street in England is anxious to see home-rule for India ?" "Yes. I thought that once," he says, "but the continued failure to provide it has altered my views."

The Englishman fills his pipe, the Indian has now got down to his mud ball with pebbles on. The Englishman blows out a cloud of smoke arid

asks, "Now, my friend, supposing you were given the power to pass self-government to India, how would you do it, and to whom would you entrust the power? Would you give it to the Congress, disregarding the cries of the minorities that they will be suppressed? Would you give it to the Muslims in the shape of a divided India and Pakistan and risk internecine strife (of which we have already had examples)? Would you just walk out and leave them to get on with it? What would you do?"

The Indian pauses, then, "I feel sure it would work out. The trouble has been that England has not been sincere." "But that,'" insists the Englishman, "is begging the issue. Assume, for discussion, that the past has not been all it might, what would you do *non*?

The Indian pauses again; "I think" he says at last, "it is for the Englishman to find a solution, after having had India all these years."

"For a stranger to find a solution to India's problem, which the Indians cannot themselves decide?"

"Well," says the Indian, forced into a corner, "I would just walk out and let them get on with it. There would be no bloodshed."

The train steams on.....,..,....

Thus grows the Congress policy. No solution is to hand, so take the line of least resistance, clear out, and we'll hope for the best. The outward sign of all that is worst in the Indian of today. His appalling propensity for waiting at the bottom of the peak while someone else struggles to the top with a flag. When it is the wrong peak, he remains seated at the bottom, laughing. When it is the right peak, he is envious and wants his share. Never will he exert himself, to scale the peak by his own endeavours.

The English have watched and guarded India for hundreds of years. That many, if insufficient benefits, have accrued to India from that watchfulness, is not to be denied. Neither can it be denied that England cannot take a completely unselfish point of view in the matter of self-government. Over that period of years, India has come to be a vital part of English economic and mercantile life. For all, the most that England would assure is a peaceful India, able and willing to defend itself against aggressors. What indications have there been of that ability and intention amongst politicals ?

The "barbarian"[5] thinks it may appear imperti-

nent for him to venture to criticise Winston Churchill. "Incongruous" is a better word, taking the criticism in its context. But how rash for the "barbarian" to sum up the career before it was completed ! How rash to diagnose something inborn in Churchill's character which prevents him being a leader of men—a man who has proved himself one of the greatest leaders the world has known. Only those who lived through the London blitz, will remember how, after hearing his voice over the radio, the whole timbre of the people he governs took on a higher key. How, in the darkest days, it was his force and personality which acted as a constant spur. But then, even a "barbarian" can change an opinion.

Mr. Karaka has seen fit to "hit propaganda." In a pamphlet of that name he proceeds to hit it for 53 pages. The final result gives the impression that previously something had hit Mr. Karaka. Whether the purpose of the pamphlet was to project personal attacks upon some of his friends, whether it was an excuse to shew by a cover photograph that the author is now old enough to smoke, or whether, as it reads, it was simply to argue that the author was the only person capable of handling

propaganda, is not made clear. It is sufficient unto the day to observe that what it does indicate is a judicious toning down of opinion. That little-island—England, which drinks down war in its "thirst for sensation,'" has now become "the last bastion of democracy,'" That little London cabman who prided himself "as the bloke that won the (last) war;" who fought not "to make the world safe for democracy" but "for a flat (sic) which for him stood for all that was best and brightest in the history of civilisation," and for "those women and children whom he thought were in danger of extinction ;" then "seventeen years after, still had the look of a disillusioned man." Now, in the same cause "his fight is for his home, his country, his people." That same London cabman with "his short stumpy fingers" and "huge square nails," and "the accumulation of dirt, the only visible mark of civilisation" is now "the Common Man—to be spelt henceforth with a capital C and a capital M." The scoundrel Churchill, with his inborn inability to lead men, has by his words become the inspiration "to the living to carry on the fight. But for that (and other inspirations) England would not have been living at this hour." And be it added.

nor would India,

There must be inherent in a civilisation something great, that men will twice, within 25 years, lay down their lives to defend it. There have been mistakes, but man learns by mistakes, and civilisation depends on progress. Progress is, of necessity, a matter of trial and error. War, with which the "barbarian" castigates Western civilisation is not a product of its civilisation but an external force which seeks to destroy it. The Western nations have attained internal unity to greater and lesser degrees; they must now strive for global unity. But India must climb the peak with them, not sit at the bottom, and the first essential is internal agreement. That, also, is in the hands of the Indians.

VII
MISCELLANEA

VII

MISCELLANEA

No panorama of India would be complete without the Babu, the "failed B. Sc.," for like the poor relation he is always with us. All his energies are directed into three channels, to do as little work as possible, to think no more than is essential, and to collect as nany chitties as his short span on earth will permit.

Into the office of a would-be employer comes a young Indian. Outside his dhoti hangs a long white shirt. His forehead is illuminated by the bright colours of his caste marks. He enters the room with a degree of diffidence. A step, and a pause; another step, a salaam, a grin displaying red-stained teeth, another pause; a further step, another pause. He waits—shoulders bent, his hands behind his back—his chitties tightly held under his armpit.

There can be no institution as old or as fatuous as the Indian custom of chitties or testimonials;

everyone possesses them. From the non-English-speaking bearer who proudly produces a letter reading "until I met the bearer I thought that asses were the most foolish living creatures," to the graduate with letters in an illustrious hand, which, disregarding the capabilities of the applicant, describe the social, financial and educational achievements of all his relations: "I have no knowledge of the applicant, but I knew his great uncle who was a Deputy Tahsildar. During his period of office he diligently collected the revenues, and it speaks volumes for his initiative that he retired a rich man." And from the distant New World comes back the response, "you're telling us."

The clerk as an employee has many attributes. Properly and decently treated he displays a desire not to displease, bordering on an anxiety neurosis. His limitations are contained within an inherent lack of perseverance. His hours are from 11 to 5, but he cannot maintain himself for that period of six hours without an hour in the middle for luncheon. During those five hours he plods away, doing nothing which he has not been told to do, and happy if able to evade a little of what he has.

Underlying his every act and thought is the

acquisition of money. He. works not to achieve but to earn. His one and constant demand is for an increase in pay. War, famine, flood and pestilence pass over bis head. He works not to further the interests of his fellowmen or of India, but of himself. This is nothing new. Mahatma Gandhi has long since urged him to the need of change; has many times explained that the basic principles of his religion put selfless endeavour before accretion of wealth. He is indifferent.

In work and play these thoughts predominate. In the evenings he plays football, hockey and other sports. Let it be said for him, that he plays them well. "Arsenal" may well look to their laurels if an Indian football team ever visits England. But he is not content. He takes the gilt off the gingerbread. When the game is finished he goes to his employer and demands an increase in pay, as he played so well for the firm's team. That is not sport in any language.

It is, however, no easy matter to make him view such matters in another light. Credulous to the extreme, brought to manhood within restrictions of caste, which stress the superiority of the upper caste, he accepts without question practices acquired

on the way up.

Neither is this trait limited to the lower castes. Those at the top, become obsessed with an idea, often to a point of absurdity. A first principle is that there is nothing so bad that the Government will not subscribe to it.

In a magisterial court, an advocate is cross-examining an Army Officer. The advocate is a lawyer of great ability and note. Whilst he talks of the Government as "we," he appears to think of it in reality as "you,"' His line of defence goes according to precedent, that the accused has been "framed" that the prosecution is passing responsibility and that it is *mala fide* conceived. From a mass of documents, many of them secret, but supplied by the Government to enable him to prepare his defence, he selects a letter. A slow smile crosses his countenance, "Will you please look at this ?" The officer takes it and examines it.

He continues, "That is a letter from a senior officer to this accused, is it not ?"

"It is."

"It states that G. H. Q. are displeased about a certain matter, and requires the officer to whom it is addressed to make known the position to them,

does it not ?"

"It does."

"The writer, therefore, directs the accused to inform him how many persons in his area, for the reasons given, are without payment. Is that correct ?"

"It is."

"You will agree with me that if there were many people in that area without payment, the officer would probably incur the displeasure of G. H. Q."

"Yes. I suppose he might," replies the officer.

The advocate leans forward and points a menacing finger:

"So ,. ..that officer has not merely asked the accused for the information, but: indicates to him the answer which he requires ?"

A hush falls upon the Court. The witness looks perplexed. The advocate steps back with a self-satisfied glance towards the onlookers.

"I am afraid I do not understand," says the officer.

"Do not understand, Sir ! Look at the letter. Look at the last line. Read it, please : 'Nil returns are required," "

Upon this no comment is necessary. It is

the outward sign of an inward perversion. What hope can there be for mankind, when loss of faith is based upon inaccurate assumptions.

Is it a matter for so much surprise that a Western observer places greater value *on* his own Civilisation? Desirous of seeing the Indian in his natural surroundings, heeding the advice that he should not be judged by the behaviour of the city dweller, he wanders into the country.

Tramping over miles of dried, brown soil, skirting tanks, vast expanses of still water, scratched by cactus and by briar, he enters an outlying village. This is India, as he conceived it at school. Low huts with earthen pots outside the doors, around which little brown children play. Overhead monkeys jump and play amongst the trees, to his right he sees a small monkey sitting between the legs of another, searching for fleas, or whatever monkeys have in India. He remembers similar amusing sights at the London Zoo.

His entry into the village is heralded by the pariah dogs. The pariah dog is half-tame, half-wild. Covered from head to toe by mange and filth, it lives on refuse collected from the streets. Its eye shews a terrifying fierceness, it snarls and

growls, and as the wanderer proceeds, the barking is taken up until it reaches the far corners of the village. The villagers come to their doors and watch him with an air of amazement. They are as surprised at what they see, as he is.

The little children are dirty, horribly dirty. Some are quite pretty, as they run around quite naked excepting for a string with a little shield upon it.

The men wear little more; the women are dressed in dirty *sarees*. Normally they allow the upper portions of their body to be uncovered, but as the stranger approaches they cast a sidelong glance from the corners of their eyes and adjust their covering. On either side are to be seen several women suckling their young. Nearby a goat does likewise. On the road at the entrances to the huts the women sit. Between their outstretched legs sit other women. With a professional air they part the woman's hair and search for lice. Is it unkind of the traveller to think of the monkeys which he has just left ?

In a nearby nullah, in full view, is a man attending to nature. It is not pleasant to dwell upon this matter, but it is a far too common sight in India.

Nor is it always the menfolk. It is not unnatural that the air is pervaded with a horrible stench. Disease is rampant, the expectation of life in India is one of the lowest in the world. Further along the road a woman is collecting cow manure. She picks it from the ground with her hands, and takes it back to her hut. There she will dry it and use it for covering the floor, for fuel and numerous other purposes. Midway along the road are the shops: mud huts with open fronts. The filth is indescribable, herbs, nuts, rice, the inevitable "mud balls with pebbles on,'" But that, is not the matter of comment. All around are clouds of flies. The carriers of the dread cholera, typhoid and many other diseases. They settle on the food in hordes. At the side of the village is a pool of stagnant water. Here is the village convenience. At the water's edge an Indian is dipping his index finger into the black, dank liquid and washing his teeth.

These are the things which the casual observer sees. He cannot, of course, live with these people, but he wonders if these are the conditions he sees how much greater must be the degradation within the four walls of their mud hut. Should he pity them ? Should he condemn them ? He does not

know. Their religion, by which they profess to shape their very existence teaches, as do all the ancient religions, a standard of cleanliness which no modern civilisation can better. In truth, modern civilisation bases its hygiene upon it. How then can ignorance be called in aid? Yet there it is, a scene of terrible squalor and dirt.

Before he began to wander, the man from the West used to aphorise "wealthy as a Rajah,'" now when he returns he may add "degraded as a villager."

VIII
EMOTIONALISM OR RATIONALISM

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"Does it ever occur to him (the Englishman) that the standards on which our two civilisations are based are entirely different in their essentials ? One is based on intellect as denoted by science and reasoning, the other is based on feeling and emotion. So that although we remain barbarians by standards of the West, in feeling and emotion we are much more advanced."

The quotation is from the "barbarian;" the "much more advanced barbarian." It is from the last chapter of his book, which serves to summarise, If I read it correctly, it is his final analysis of the essential differences. To what extent is it true ?

In the first place to write of a civilisation, in that context, based on feeling and emotion, as opposed to science and reasoning is a contradiction in terms. Man in his primitive state, and fundamentally in any state, is a mass of conflicting passions. Stripped of the cold analytical faculties of reason

and of science, his functions are determined by carnal and homicidal passions, by acquisitive, and self-assertive desires, by gregarious and self-protective instincts and a mass of other emotions. Civilisation, at some stage, must be the controlling of these emotions.

The cannibal acts as his belly guides him, the raper as his passion urges him and the murderer at the dictates of his instinct. That is not civilisation. He is said to be civilised when he has so developed his faculty of reasoning that he is able to resist the desire to rape and kill. Both before and since the Stoics it has long been recognised that supremacy over passion is the first essential of progress. The only reason which restrains Mahatma Gandhi from giving full play to his belief that celibacy, the control of carnal passion, is a meritorious state, is that his reason tells him that it is above the power of normal mankind to achieve it.

The "barbarian" draws his distinction between reasoning and emotion, and proclaims the standards to be different. On this hypothesis, if we include reason in the growth of Eastern Civilisation, we shall have reduced the East and West to a common standard. The only conclusion is that the East is

actuated by emotion, devoid of reason. To allow mankind to react to the unrestrained dictates of emotion is the lowest form of barbarism. To call that civilisation is to express an absurdity.

This apart, to what extent is it correct to state that the outstanding characteristics of Indian life are feeling and emotion? The philosophers will tell you there's nothing good and nothing bad but thinking makes it so. The factor which determines the goodness or badness of a feeling is the standard by which it is judged. It is not to be inferred that the "barbarian" implies that Indian life is founded on bad feelings. Yet by what standard does he weigh them and declare them good? It is not by the standards of the West for he disclaims them.

By what standard is it good feeling which permits vast numbers of Indians, rich beyond the dreams of Croesus, to allow the majority, a vast majority, of his fellow-men to exist in conditions of indescribable filth ? Where is the standard which renders laudable the Eastern system of commerce, a system of extreme exploitation and bad faith; the subjection of all man's qualities to the furthering of greed; the state of mind in which bribery and corruption abound; the state of mind which as an

Indian has said believes everything Indian is of the best, and anything from the West is of the worst ? Where do we seek the standard which ennobles the carnal knowledge of little girls, the compulsory marriage of strangers; the servitude of females; the selling of wives for a dowry ? Are they the badges of an uplifting emotion ? By what conception can it be praiseworthy for a man to expect from another, the solution of problems which he cannot solve himself ? That emotion in its finer forms is the basis of Indian life is easily said, to find the evidence to support it is another matter.

It is agreed that there are two ways of looking at any subject, often many more. But where do you find the finer emotion or sincerity ? in the little moss-covered tombstone of a rural English churchyard or the Taj Mahal in all its majesty ? May it not be the case that Shahjahan well knew that unless he produced some monument worthy of his opulence, his countrymen would fail to understand ? His spiritual love would be judged by the temporal grandeur of his monument. As I see it the Englishman contains his remorse within his soul, the Indian within his cash-box*. "See", says Shahjahan, "how great was my love for this woman, I have spent a

King's ransom to perpetuate her name. Who but a great lover would spend that amount of wealth ?" Aad the Indian understands. The poor debased Englishman judges by the wrong standard, and besides being condemned, is confused.

To the traveller all the indications are that the basis of present-day Indian life are not "feeling and emotion,'" but greed and superstition. That this may be a wrong assessment, I have acknowledged. But as I look around me the signs which I see force me to that conclusion. It is well for the "barbarian" to state that "we have always been willing to.learn" but it is futile to learn unless you put into practice what you have acquired. I am the tenant of a property. I disbelieve in the continuance of private ownership of land. I consider, rightly or wrongly, that my landlord is a tyrant, that he is disinterested in my welfare and extracts an exorbitant rent. I do not allow that as an excuse for neglect, nor does the right-thinking Indian. I do not for that reason allow filth to abound, disease to ravage and vermin to multiply. I do not get upon my haunches and assert my determination to attempt nothing unless I receive my full demands. I build to advantage with what I have. I produce

the greatest comfort within the limits of my present state. By my example I inspire others. I argue the merits of my case, and finally when I have demonstrated my worth to the world I put forward a completed plan for the attainment of my ideal. If my landlord is so oppressive as to spurn me, he will be damned in the eyes of his brother-landlords, or those who were once landlords, and the pressure of public opinion will force the issue in my favour. That is if the landlord is oppressive. But the Common Man in England (henceforth to be spelt with a capital C and a capital M') is no oppressive landlord.

It is the wish of that Co,"nmon Man (and it will be fulfilled) that one day the Muslims and the Hindus and the rest of the assembled company, will join together in agreement. Then they will no longer sit at the bottom, but will join hands with the Common Man and clamber up the peak. If it is a wrong peak, their disappointment will be jointly shared, but eventually it will be the right peak, and the flag will be hoisted. And on that flag there will be ample room for the Union Jack, the National flag of India, and the clasped hands of friendship.