

Volume-7 Book-1

Voices of Indian Freedom Movement



J. C. JOHARI

VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

**VOICES OF INDIAN
FREEDOM MOVEMENT**
(VOICE OF LIBERAL AND CRITICAL NATIONALISM)
Congress Speaks 1900—1914

VOLUME VII
(Book 1)

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PREFACE

Indian nationalist movement took an organised form with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. From its inception the Congress took to the way of liberalism. Its leaders appreciated the British imperial system. They regarded it as a 'divine dispensation' and, at the same time, desired 'reforms' in the political, economic and social spheres so that India could be a developed and a modernised part of the British Empire. The real aim of these leaders was to secure all-round development of the country under the aegis of the British rule. In this way, they represented the most revolutionary element of the Indian society at that time. An important change took place in the wake of the present century. The wrongs of the administrations of Curzon and Minto forced the Congress leaders to criticise the bureaucratic rule in quite unequivocal and harsh terms. The voice of 'sane and faithful nationalism', as termed by Hume, was replaced by the voice of enlightened liberal and critical nationalism.

A proper study of India's freedom movement covers all what prominent Indian figures thought and did for the great cause; it also covers important reactions, interpretations and pronouncements of the British leaders and observers. That is, India's freedom movement is inextricably related to her constitutional development. The British rulers sought to make laws one after another, so as to change their system of administration with the growth of Indian nationalist movement. In other words, they sought to adjust their colonial system with the growing demands of Indian nationalism as far as possible. While the Government of India Act of 1858 replaced the rule of the Company with the rule of the Crown, the Indian Councils Act of 1861 inaugurated the 'policy of association'. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 came as an improvement upon the Act of 1861. The Indian Councils Act of 1909 (Morley-

Minto Reforms) came as an improvement upon the previous Act. It also came as a gift of the policy of conciliation and counterpoise of the natives against the natives. As such, I have put the matter in two parts. While Part I contains addresses delivered by the Presidents on the occasion of annual meets of the Congress, Part II has important readings related to India's constitutional development. The noteworthy point is that our national leaders spoke in different 'voices' and so I have sought to include their views in different volumes with a view to maintain, as far as possible, the unity of a particular trend. In this volume I have included Presidential addresses of the first fourteen years of the present century. One may feel astonished to find the addresses of two Englishmen (Cotton and Wedderburn) wherein the viewpoint of the English liberals has coincidence with the viewpoint of their Indian counterparts. It very well bears out that while the Congress leaders had a high regard for the British rule, sensible Englishmen had a regard for the views and sentiments of the Indian people as well. I hope that my scheme would receive the appreciation of my readers who would find here much for the purpose of their advanced study or research in this important field of modern Indian history and politics.

I have drawn material from numerous published sources, Indian and foreign, according to my own scheme and I offer my sincere gratitude to all of them. I am thankful to a large number of my friends for the help they extended to me for the completion of this project. I am thankful to Seema Saxena and Seema Johari who helped me in the collection and arrangement of the matter and checking of proofs. In particular, I am grateful to my Publishers who appreciated this project and took pains to bring out this volume in a record time.

—J.C. Johari

INTRODUCTION

A study of the addresses delivered by the Presidents of the Indian National Congress on the occasions of the annual meets during the first fourteen years of the present century shows a continuity with as well as a minor deviation from the past. While the trend of admiring the British rule and the goal of achieving self rule within the Empire alongwith the affirmation of loyalty to the British Raj continued, the trend of attack on the wrong of the bureaucratic administration became more manifest. It signified that the voice of 'sane and faithful nationalism' as termed by Hume, was replaced by the voice of liberal and critical nationalism. A section of the Congress leaders (as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and B.C. Pal) became vocal in denouncing the British rule and went to the length of suggesting agitational methods for the achievement of the goal. Known as the 'extremists', they frankly criticised the policies and methods of the elder Congressmen (called 'moderates') and in 1905 they desired to grab the post of the President of the organisation. They had their success at the Calcutta Congress (1906) when resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education were adopted. But they saw their failure at the Surat Congress (1907) when they created disturbances in the session and then left the Congress in a mood of sheer disgust and resentment.¹

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1. "The elder nationalists, we shall henceforth call them Moderates, had tended to regard British rule as a beneficial necessity. Extremists believed that any foreign rule, however just and benevolent, was a curse." S.R. Mehrotra: *Towards India's Freedom and Partition*, p. 101. In 1907 Aurobindo Ghose wrote: "The Congress has contented itself with demanding self-government as it exists in the Colonies. We of the new school would not pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute Swaraj—self-government as it exists in the United Kingdom."

Congress Sessions

<i>Sessions</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Venues</i>	<i>Presidents</i>	<i>Chairmen (Reception Committee)</i>	<i>No. of delegates</i>
Seventeenth	23.12.1901	Calcutta	Dinshaw E. Wacha	Maharaja Jagadindranath Rai Bahadur	896
Eighteenth	23.12.1902	Ahmedabad	Surendranath Banerjea	Ambalal Desai	471
Nineteenth	28.12.1903	Madras	Lal Mohan Ghose	Nawab Syed Mohammed	535
Twentieth	26.12.1904	Bombay	Sir Henry Cotton	Pherozeshah M. Mehta	1,010
Twenty-first	27.12.1905	Kashi	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	Madholal	756
Twenty-second	26.12.1906	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	Rash Behari Ghose	1,663
Twenty-third	26.12.1907	Surat	Rash Behari Ghose	Tribhuvan Das Malvi	1,675
	28.12.1908	Madras	"	Dewan Bahadur K. Krishna-swamy Rao	626
Twenty-fourth	27.12.1909	Lahore	Madan Mohan Malaviya	Shri Har Kishen Lal	243
Twenty fifth	26 12.1910	Allahabad	Sir William Wedderburn	Pandit Sunder Lal	636
Twenty-sixth	26.12.1911	Calcutta	Bishen Narayan Dhar	Bhupendernath Basu	446
Twenty-seventh	26.12.1912	Bankipore	R.N. Mudholkar	Mazharul Haq	207
Twenty-eighth	26.12.1913	Karachi	Nawab Syed Mohammed	Harishchandra Vishan Das	550
Twenty-ninth	28.12 1914	Madras	Bhupendranath Basu	Sir Subramaniya Iyer	866

It is true that as a result of the growing influence of the 'extremists', Tilak's slogan (that 'swaraj is our birth right') had become very popular, it is also a fact that the Congress leaders continued to identify swaraj with 'self-government within the Empire'. Thus, the admiration of the English rule continued to have its synchronisation with the demand for self rule. It is well evident from these words of Surendranath Banerjea spoken at the Ahmedabad Congress (1902): "For myself, I believe, the Congress has a divine mission. It is a dispensation of Almighty God for the unification of our peoples and the permanence of British rule in India." Lal Mohan Ghose in his address at the Madras Congress (1903) termed it 'divine mission of the champions of liberty'. Bishan Narayan Dar in his address at the Calcutta Congress (1911) reiterated that the British rule was the 'greatest gift of Providence'. Like other 'moderate' leaders, he discovered the cause of the admiration of the British rule in 'boons' as annulment of the partition of Bengal and in a host of other 'achievements' as maintenance of perfect order, peace, and security of life and property. Bhupendranath Basu in his address at the Madras Congress (1914) made it very clear that India's freedom within the Empire would be on a level of equality and reciprocity. As he stressed: "The two extremes—the one of separation, the other of subordination—are both equally impossible and must be put out of our mind. The ideal that we must pursue, and which the Congress has set before itself, is that of coordination and comradeship, of a joint partnership on equal terms."

The fact that the criticism of the British rule that was hitherto mild became quite sharp is evident from the affirmations contained in these addresses. At the Calcutta Congress (1901) Dinshaw E. Wacha, known as the Fawcett of India, furnished an economic argument of loyal nationalism in which he strongly criticised the famine policy of the Bombay Government and threw much light on the faulty provisions of the Famine Codes meant for preventing this disaster. He discovered the cause of rural poverty in some unjust arrangements like system of absentee landlordism and inadequate faci-

lities of irrigation. In particular, he hit at the huge military expenditure. He reminded the administration of Viceroy Lord Curzon that it “has to discharge its duty to the people, and to promote their content and prosperity.” Again: “Certainly it is not pleasant for any civilised government to be told that its people are steeped in abject poverty that, according to all symptoms, is growing.” Likewise, in his address at the Ahmedabad Congress (1902) Surendranath Banerjea criticised British rule for not dealing with the problem of India’s famines and not doing the needful in alleviating poverty of the masses. In very forceful words he said: “The tale of India’s growing poverty does not indeed rest upon the syllogistic formula, or upon calculations which though made from official sources are not repudiated by official authority—it is supported by facts the significance of which it is impossible to overlook, and by the testimony of higher authorities, official and non-official”. So he hit at the point of huge military expenditure that is ‘heavier in India than it is in the United Kingdom’. Even an Englishman like Sir Henry Cotton in his address at the Bombay Congress (1904) indicted British bureaucratic rule for being autocratic.

The tone of attack on bureaucratic rule became aggressive after the partition of Bengal in 1905. The Kashi Congress, as Mrs. Annie Besant comments, “met under the gloom created by Lord Curzon’s policy”, that was rightly criticised in the Official Report of the Congress as ‘repressive and reactionary.’² On this occasion Gokhale in his address used these harsh words: “A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengali brethren and the whole country has been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any Government measure has encountered during the last half a century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of our present system of bureaucratic rule—its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the

2. Annie Besant: *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 253.

people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of Service interests to those of the governed.” In his address at the Lahore Congress (1909) Malaviya in very vehement terms hit at the attempts of the Curzon administration for dividing Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the Bengali people that “can be described as the most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship.”

The partition of Bengal was a strategic device adopted by the British bureaucracy to weaken the growing force of Indian nationalism. The Indian Councils Act, 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) came as another device for the same purpose. By granting separate electorate system and weightage to the Muslims, the British rulers implemented the doctrine of Syed Ahmed Khan and thereby communalised the trend of Indian politics. Thus, while some Congress leaders (as Gokhale and Banerjea) appreciated the Act of 1909 in the light of reforming the organisation and working of the Legislative Councils, others frankly criticised them for introducing the pernicious system of communal electorates. At the Lahore Congress (1909), Jinnah’s resolution (seconded by Hasan Imam and Harul Haq) was adopted that desired termination of this system at the earliest possible time. In his address on this occasion, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya hit at the Regulation framed under the Act of 1909 and said : “To call a member elected by this tortuous process a representative of the people is a misnomer.” He did not spare the Muslim leaders who subscribed to the doctrine of Syed Ahmed Khan when he said : “It is sad to recall that as Congress continued to grow in strength and influence, some of our Muslim fellow subjects of the Aligarh School and some members of the landed aristocracy came forward openly to accuse it.” In the concluding part of his address he said : “But pray let it be done, when it must be done, out of a regard for public interests which demand equality of treatment, and equal justice for all communities. Let it be done with the desire of avoiding causes of disunion. Let it not be done out of a feeling of narrow sectarian jealousy.”

By all means the Indian National Congress had been a

national organisation since its inception. In a short course of time, it developed a consciousness of its own. The mischievous propaganda of the Aligarh School failed to stop the growth of this national organisation. In his address at the Bombay Congress (1904) Sir Henry Cotton endorsed that "different races, the numberless castes, classes and creeds of India are welded together in your ranks . . . The growth of a national spirit is the touchstone of your organisation." In his address at the Allahabad Congress (1910), William Wedderburn desired conciliation of the Hindus and the Muslims as the arraying of these two communities in hostile camps would cause danger to the peace and progress of India. He also hoped that those who have broken from the Congress, because they have ceased to believe in Congress methods and in constitutional agitation, would consider dispassionately and revert to their old faith. Like Hume, he hoped and desired that "hand in hand with the British people, India can most safely take her first step in the new path of progress. Similarly, in his address at the Karachi Congress (1913), Nawab Syed Muhammed ardently desired, "Let us strive for unity amongst us, for the advancement of the nation, and for bringing the forces of progress and of solidarity into line with our achievements in the past and our expectations for the future."

In all these addresses, however, a critic may discover a serious point of inconsistency. When imperialism and nationalism are contradictory forces, how can the two be reconciled? Aurobindo Ghose commented that the ideal of colonial self-government was the 'very negation of patriotism' and 'a political monstrosity.'⁸ Syed Ahmed Khan expressed his horror at the fact that while in one voice the moderate leaders pledged unflinching 'loyalty' to the British Raj, in another voice they hurled abuses at it. The fact is that the moderate leaders never took it as a matter of their involvement in a paradoxical situation. They desired *swaraj* (self-rule) within the Empire as

3. As A. Tripathi says: "The Moderates wished India to be a prototype of England, of which they had read in Hallam, Burke and Macaulay. Aurobindo turned his face from this Anglo-Saxon model and went back to the Aryan mores of Indian civilisation." *The Extremist Challenge*, p. 71.

prevailing in the Dominions. They certainly affirmed and reaffirmed their staunch 'loyalty to the Raj' and also criticised it in quite unequivocal and strong terms for its lapses. Politically, their criticism of the English rule was uniformly civil and constitutional, their attack on the economic front was vehement and devastating. We may well take note of it in the addresses of Naoroji and Wacha, in particular. Surprisingly, even Gokhale who frankly accused Tilak of 'wrecking the Congress', spoke in so harsh terms about the wrongs of the Curzon administration at the Kashi Congress that even the British rulers thought in terms of branding him as a dangerous extremist.⁴ It is evident from the despatches exchanged between Morley and Minto (July-August, 1907) which show that while the former had begun to wonder whether Gokhale was not at heart such a revolutionist as B.C. Pal, the latter expressed the view that he was thoroughly disappointed with him and thought that it was "a mistake on his part to have allowed his re-election to the Imperial Legislative Council."⁵

As a matter of fact, in all these addresses, a well thought out attempt to resolve this contradiction may be discovered. What Syed Ahmed Khan and his followers as well as the extremist leaders said about the moderates should not be accepted at its face value. The deliverers of these addresses and their followers adhered to the line of Gladstonian liberalism and they invariably demonstrated their faith in and commitment to the course of sensible and faithful nationalism as conceived by Hume. But the changing conditions forced them to sharpen the edge of their criticism. Hence, in all these addresses we may trace the undercurrent of an enlight-

4. For instance, at the Kashi Congress, Gokhale said: "We have, gentlemen, a long and heavy indictment to bring against Lord Curzon. We charge him with having arrested the progress of education. We charge him with having deliberately sacrificed the interests of the Indian people in order to conciliate English exploiters and administrators. And, lastly, we charge him with having set Bengal in a blaze. It is Lord Curzon and Lord Curzon alone who is responsible for the rise of the new party, for he drove the people to despair and to madness."
5. See N.R. Ray: 'Introduction' in B.N. Pande (ed.): *A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 28.

tened liberal and critical nationalism. Patently, it looked like a piece of self-contradiction; latently, it was the continuation of the same quest—reforms for India from the reformed Raj

It also informs us to contend that the moderate leaders took something from their extremist comrades in spite of their sharp differences with them. They appreciated the idea of *swadeshi* (use of home-made goods), though they did not find favour with the course of boycott of foreign goods as it might lead to the severance of India's connection with Britain. They raised the slogan of Swaraj and followed Tilak in calling it 'as our birth-right'. Above all, their tone of criticism of the British rule became so harsh that, on some occasions, the dividing line between the moderates and the extremists became blurred.

In fine, the moderate leaders were true nationalists and they desired to prosecute the freedom struggle with a cautious approach. They never desired to act like the paid agents of His Majesty's Empire and so they did not appreciate the advice of the English rulers for making a 'public repudiation' of their extremist comrades. They rather hoped that their extremist comrades would come back to their fold after some time and that it could be done by following the path of persuasion. They frankly condemned the treatment meted out to Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and others. In his address at the Surat Congress (1907), Ghosh said : "All agitation is not subversive of other. Every agitator is not a rebel, though he is labelled as such by a section of the Anglo-Indian Press." He called the extremist leaders 'impatient idealists' and advised them to keep their fiery patriotism in check. The criticism of the English rule was informed not by a sense of hatred or venegence; it was a consequence of their enlightened approach. When the first World War broke out, the Congress leaders once again expressed their full support to Britain. So Bhupendranath Basu in his address at the Madras Congress (1914) said : "India has recognised that at this supreme crisis in the life of the Empire, one should take a part worthy of herself and of the Empire in which she has no mean place."

—J.C. Johari

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PART I

**INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL
ADDRESSES (1901-1914)**

A CLARION CALL

**Sing, O my clarionet ! Sing these words:
Everyone is free in this wide world.
Everyone is awake in the glory of science,
India alone lieth asleep !
China and Burma and barbarous Japan,
Even they are independent, they are superior,
India alone knoweth no walking.**

**(A Bengali song of Hem Chandra Banerjee
translated into English by B.C. Pal)**

1

ECONOMIC ARGUMENT OF LOYAL NATIONALISM*

Ladies and Gentlemen,—From my heart I thank you all for the honour you have done me in calling me to preside over the deliberations of your assembly which, today, enters on the seventeenth year of its career of national usefulness. It is indeed most kind of the gentleman who, on your behalf, just proposed, seconded and supported my election such complimentary terms, to observe that I have earned the honour by my steady devotion to the work of the Congress. For this mark of confidence I feel grateful to you, though you will believe me when I say that that work to me has been all through a labour of love. Let me hope that so long as health permits and this life lasts, it may be in my power to devote myself to that work with the same love, unflinchingly and unselfishly.

The Late Mr. Justice Ranade

I now crave your indulgence for a few minutes to refer to some of the mournful occurrences which have taken place since you last met at Lahore, and which have, eclipse like, cast their dismal shadow over the land. The hand of death seems to have been specially busy during the interval, reaping a harvest which has filled us with the greatest grief. No sooner had the new century dawned on the horizon than the Reaper claimed as his own one of the greatest and noblest sons of India, the like of whom she may not see for many a year to

* Presidential address delivered by Dinshaw Edulji Wacha at the Calcutta Congress held on 26 28 December, 1901.

come. Suddenly and without warning. Mr. M.G. Ranade breathed his last on 17th January. The country was at once plunged into the deepest sorrow at this national calamity. Mr. Ranade, the erudite judge, the profound scholar, the keen student of Indian economics, the philosopher cast in the Hellenic mould, reminding us of Socratic intellect and Socratic simplicity, the pure patriot, of glowing zeal, and above all, the spotless citizen of boundless faith and hope, is no more. Whether, as the poet says, he has gone to swell the fullness of the eternal psalm, or rise slowly to a higher birth or, as George Elliot pathetically sings, to join the Choir Invisible of the Immortal Dead who live again, his voice shall always remain with us, reminding us, and the generations to come after us, of the great unselfish career in the cause of his country, stimulating us by his example to follow in his wake, and urging to leave our footprints, however slight, on the sands of time. Like Mr. Gladstone, he showed, as Mr. Morley informed his audience at Manchester eight weeks ago, the great things which a great man may make of life. Like our veteran living patriot, who still labours for his country's good six thousand miles away, perseveringly and patiently, Mr. Ranade also made the public good the ruling motive of his life from the beginning of his public career to its end. May India cherish his memory for ever and ever!

The Late Queen Victoria

Ere, however, the tears on the death of Mr. Ranade were dry, the whole country, along with the rest of the British Empire, was overwhelmed with greater grief at the demise of our late gracious Queen-Empress. Universal lamentation followed the event from which we have not yet finally emerged. Such was the beneficent influence of that illustrious Sovereign during her lifetime that though she never paid a visit to India, her people,—men, women and children—seemed, as if by magic, to feel her gracious presence and be gladdened by the thought that she really moved and lived among them. Such magnetic attraction, from so long a distance, was indeed marvellous, and could only be accounted for by her uniform

solicitude and regard for her Indian subjects. One touch of her love for them had made the whole world of India aglow with deep reverence and respect for her. Thus it is that in the death of Good Queen Victoria, Indians mourn not only the loss of a unique Sovereign, of great benignity and greater grace, but of an affectionate mother and the type of the highest and most exalted womanhood. Already history has enshrined her memory as the greatest of English sovereigns who, for the unprecedented period of sixty-four years, had bravely and majestically borne the yoke of a mighty empire which had grown with the growth of her rule, east and west, and counted well-nigh one-fourth of the human race. As far as her Indian subjects were concerned, every important domestic event in the Royal household, or historical occurrence in the country, had had the influence of attaching them closer and closer to her throne, and deepening their loyalty towards her person and rule. Her solicitude for their moral and material welfare, her sincere Royal wish for equal and impartial justice, and her spirit of religious toleration are now matters of history. They have proved the strongest link in the chain which binds them to the beneficent British rule. And it may be said with truth in her case that in their contentment and security and in their gratitude for her government, she had, in the words of her own memorable Proclamation, twice reaffirmed, her "best reward." The Queen-Empress is no more, but in the words of the late Poet-Laureate, it may be observed that if she has now laid aside her terrestrial crown, she now wears another and truer one than any wreath that humanity can weave for her. In every part of the country memorials are being raised which are destined, like those ancient monoliths of the great Asoka of happy memory, to perpetuate her name so long as the sun and moon endure. But more than monuments of marble and bronze, it may be unhesitatingly observed that the name of Victoria the Good will live for ages to come in the hearts and affections of the Indian people.

The Late Mr. McKinley

The death of another exalted personage by the hand of a dastardly assassin is also greatly to be lamented. Though not directly connected with India, the Indians have a genuine love and regard for the Americans, who are, after all, the kith and kin of the English beyond the Atlantic. We are specially grateful to them for their generous sympathy and support during the dark days of the two severe famines which closed the nineteenth century. It was an act of international sympathy which we Indians can never forget. The death of Mr. McKinley, late President of the United States, is, therefore, greatly deplored by us. It is indeed mournful to reflect that so good, so capable, and so popular a President should have fallen by the hand of one of the bands of that fanatic brotherhood, who entertain the frenzied cult that Society and Order are best served by anarchy and shooting down or stabbing princes, potentates and presidents. That such ideas should now and again take practical shape is deplorable. They sully the fair fame of the West, which, it is to be hoped, Civilization and Humanity may soon put an end to.

The late Sir Seshadri

Lastly, we cannot but be sorry for the death, at the early age of fifty-seven, of Sir Seshadri, the distinguished Dewan of the Mysore State. In him the country loses an administrator of the highest capacity and most matured experience. He was the latest instance of the Indian statesman, who had shown himself capable of governing fully an indigenous State with as much skill and sagacity, judgement and determination, tact and sympathy as some of the greatest of English administrators who have left their mark on British Indian history. Sir Seshadri has now gone to swell that illustrious roll of modern Indian statesmen at whose head shines the ever-to-be-remembered Sir Salar Jung; but let us hope that all our Native States may from time to time produce administrators of similar ability and renown to demonstrate, if demonstration be still needed, that statesmanship is not a monopoly which is confined to one race and one country alone.

The Coming Coronation

But let me now turn from the mournful past to the glad-some present. The Prince of Wales whose respectful acquaintance this country made over a quarter of a century ago is now the King of England and Emperor of India. We are greatly rejoiced at the fact that there now sits for the first time on the venerable throne of King Alfred the Great, whose millenary was so enthusiastically celebrated a few months since, a Sovereign who had visited this great Empire which is justly said to be the brightest jewel in the British Crown, and won the hearts of its princes and people by his unaffected simplicity, his incomparable grace, and his sterling sympathy. The circumstance is unique indeed in the annals of England and India alike which History will not fail to record in the fulness of time. Our only regret is that that the gentle and popular Queen Alexandra did not accompany her royal Consort on that occasion. All the same the great esteem and regard in which she is held is no less than that in which Indians held her late illustrious mother. Exactly six months from this day the country will have the pleasure of laying at the foot of the throne of their Majesties, on the auspicious occasion of their Coronation, its sincere congratulations and further expressions of its attachment and devotion to their rule. It becomes, therefore, the duty of this Congress, now assembled in session, to take the necessary steps to be able to offer at the time its dutiful address of congratulation to their Gracious Majesties and wish them a happy and brilliant reign. And let us fervently hope that reviving the immemorial usage of former sovereigns of this ancient country, His Majesty may be pleased to take occasion by the hand and confer on the people some mark of his Royal justice and beneficence, which shall not only evoke unbounded enthusiasm among them but hand down his august name with feelings of the greatest gratitude to their children's children for many a generation to come.

Famine Slowly Passes Away

Turning now to a retrospect of the year just coming to a

close, the first important event which attracts our attention is the passing away, slowly but steadily, of the famine conditions which unhappily prevailed to a deplorable extent during the preceding twelve months. The recent monsoon, with its fair harvest, has greatly tended to improve those conditions though it is a fact that parts of Gujarat and the Deccan as well as Kathiawar are in the throes of a third famine. The situation there is not only gruesome positively heart-rending. Apart from the holocaust, the two previous seasons of insufficient rainfall have claimed, both in men and plough cattle, there is apprehended this time a dearth of drinking water as the season advances. This contingency is awful to contemplate. But it is to be devoutly hoped that the winter rains may tend to alleviate the aggravated condition of hardship and distress from which the peasantry is suffering at present. We are, however, aware of the anxiety of the Government in reference to the grievous situation of the two provinces. It is indeed gratifying to record the fact that since the date of the assumption of his high office, the Viceroy has been able to infuse among the officials not a little of his own spirit of greater watchfulness, solicitude, sympathy, and, above all, of speedy action for those suffering from the visitations of famine. That spirit will, no doubt, be able, as far as human efforts can go, to alleviate in a great measure the affliction of those who are now unhappily subjected for the third time to the appalling inroads of the drought.

Effects of Famine

It goes without saying that the two admittedly severest famines of the century have greatly taxed the energy and resources of the Government. We have been officially informed that the total cost of relief on their account has amounted to 25 crores of rupees, whereof 17.25 crores are direct expenditure. But great as this cost is, it is nothing in comparison with the loss of crores entailed on the peasantry in the afflicted parts by reason of deficient crops and almost total destruction of agricultural cattle. It is to be greatly feared that the restoration of the live stock to the number which was estimated

before the famine commenced will take some years. Meanwhile this diminution of the ryot's capital is certain to all upon his industry and bare annual income. So that the sacrifice the State has undergone cannot be considered to be abnormally heavy relatively to the losses which the impoverished ryots have suffered. Already the Government has told us of the returning prosperity to its finances. Unfortunately the same can in no way be predicted of the peasantry, who will be more closely chained to the wheel of toil for the next ten years at the least in order to be able to retrieve the utterly destitute position into which they have been plunged by the double calamity. It would, however, be illogical to jump to the conclusion that because State finances are supposed to prosper, therefore, the mass of the cultivators are prospering also. Nothing is more delusive or opposed to fact.

State and Private Relief

Again, it is of importance to remember that all over the world, State expenditure has to be derived from the annual produce of the land. In India especially nearly 28 per cent of the gross revenue is derived from the tillers of the soil, who form the bulk of the population. It is not as if the State by its own diligence were able to accumulate 25 crores of rupees, which it afterwards sacrificed for the relief of millions of distressed and starving humanity. All the money comes from the labour of the sweating cultivators themselves. Practically, therefore, in spending the monies on the famine-stricken, the Government, as an enlightened but alien and Christian Government, was doing no more than the duty it owed to those who yearly contribute crores to its treasury. But the spirit of humanity which prompts so large an expenditure, when famine unhappily overtakes the land, is beyond all praise. Organized State philanthropy is, however, known to be a plant of too recent growth. It is needless to remind you that up to the date of the Behar famine of 1866, there were no systematic relief operations of the character which we have since witnessed. This methodical system of relief has developed with the march of civilization and the progress of humane ideas all over the

world. Just as in matters of jail discipline and reforms, there has been a great evolution in the mind of the British people, so in reference to famine relief. England herself, half a century ago, would have hardly thought of such a perfected standard of relief operations as was practically carried out in India during the two recent famines. But not to go too far, take the case of Russia of today. It is well known that there has been a prolonged famine in that country for the last seven years consecutively. Can it, however, be said that even now she has realized the standard of relief organization which the British Indian Government, despite many mistakes, has on the whole so successfully carried out? Thus, in judging of the relative efficiency of relief in matters of famine, it is essential for purposes of a just comparison to take into consideration the standard of charity and philanthropy which may have prevailed in a given country at a given age. It would, however, be unfair to judge of the results of one period by applying to it a standard prevalent in another.

India's Gratitude and Patience

None will have the temerity to deny that the Government of India, in coping with the two recent famines, has achieved a success never before attained. The key to that success may be principally discovered in that lofty standard of duty and responsibility which it prescribed to itself, no doubt, prompted by the humanitarian views which the civilization of the nineteenth century has almost crystallized all over the world. Secondly, it may be perceived in the solicitude of the authorities to profit by their previous experience. For this act of State humanity, India acknowledges with unanimous voice its warmest gratitude. And, while it is a pleasure to record this memorable fact, it is equally a pleasure to refer to that private charity and beneficence which were visible during the dismal period. Despite bad trade and diminishing prosperity in our staple arts and manufactures, the fountain of that charity constantly flowed. State relief was most liberally supplemented by private, as the recent publication of the Report of the Central Committee of the Famine Relief Fund informs us.

But what greatly adds to the merit of this private charity is the magnificent fund raised by the Lord Mayor of London, by Lancashire, by other countries in England, by Australia and by the United States. Indians are not insensible to these foreign donations in money and grain. They feel extremely grateful to England and England's kith and kin beyond the seas for what they have done with regard to the alleviation of starving humanity in this country. Barring the "melancholy meanness" of the British Exchequer in persistently refusing to render financial justice to India by giving a grant of 5 millions sterling, it is indeed a bright episode in our mournful annuals, which is certain to be remembered for many a year to come. But if the State has nobly discharged its duty, it is indeed a matter of the greatest satisfaction to notice the testimony borne by all who have visited the famine camps, from His Excellency the Viceroy down to the humblest person, to the exemplary powers of patience and endurance displayed by the unhappy famished themselves all through the most trying periods through which they endeavoured to struggle for existence. In the words of the Finance Minister as recorded in his last budget, they are certain to "leave a memorable record in the history of mankind."

The Famine Policy of the Bombay Government

The lessons, however, which the two famines have taught will, it is to be devoutly hoped, be carefully borne in mind. Much has no doubt been done, and done with success. But much more still remains to be done. The defects pointed out by the Commissions of 1898 and 1901 should be removed, especially those revealed in Bombay. No doubt, the Government of that Presidency has attempted an elaborate defence of the details of its famine management, which had been severely criticized by Sir Antony MacDonnell and his colleagues. But much of that laborious rejoinder is unconvincing. Anyhow, it has not improved the position of that Government if public opinion expressed on that apology is to be taken into consideration. But be the defence right or wrong, it cannot be gainsaid, broadly speaking, that the Bombay Government had

misconceived its true functions as regards famine relief operations both in 1897 and 1899—the result, in my personal opinion, of a too illiberal and narrow view of the situation. In that Presidency there was some strange infatuation on the part of those responsible for the relief which led to the many deplorable incidents in Gujarat. The primary idea was to run famine on the cheap. Hence there was considerable false economy of a most grievous character, which ultimately resulted in heavy mortality and most acute stage of the famine. The tests were hard and unreasonable, while the system of wages and task-work was unusually rigorous. But on this subject, and on that of the appalling inadequacy of the medical staff employed—an adequacy of which His Excellency the Viceroy was himself personally convinced when visiting the Gujarat Relief Camp—the Commission, so ably presided over by Sir Antony MacDonnell, have commented so freely that I would fain refrain from repeating them here. Apart from the mortality caused by the most illiberal policy pursued for a time by the Bombay Government, but eventually modified under severe pressure of public opinion, there was a large number of deaths from cholera, owing to the inadequacy of medical hospital assistants.

“Cholera raged in May,” say the Commissioners, “and did not finally abate till August. It is stated by all witnesses that much of the mortality due to cholera was wrongly assigned to other diseases, and it is evident from the figures given below that to a large extent this was so.”

But even apart from cholera, the excessive mortality from famine in Bombay Presidency was deplorable.

“Making allowances,” again say the Commissioners, “it is not possible to dissociate the mortality from the famine or to regard it as inevitable. We have no doubt that the mortality in the period up to May would have been less, had more works been opened near the peoples’ homes in the Kaira and the Panch Mahal districts, and had the provisions of the Famine Code in regard to the distribution of gratuitous relief

in the villages been acted upon with due liberality. We are also of opinion that much of the cholera mortality would have been avoided had the provision in reserve of a scheme of village works enabled the authorities to split up the large works and return people to their homes, and had the organization of the works been more efficient."

Thus, it will be seen how the famine policy of the Bombay Government was comparatively a failure. That authority, which was taken to task from the very beginning by its critics, was too self-sufficient to modify its mistaken policy, which eventually resulted in such heavy and lamentable mortality. Nay more. An attempt was seriously made in the Press to contradict public opinion as if it were valueless or unfounded. The results of the Commission's investigation have now demonstrated the fact that, after all, the public were in the right, and those responsible for the famine operations grievously in the wrong. That error has now been admitted by the Bombay Government, but it is indeed most extraordinary that it should have pleaded it as a justification of the policy it pursued. In its defence it has laid the blame of that error at the door of the Government of India. It puts forth in its extenuation the circular of Mr. Holderness which prescribed economy. It did nothing but faithfully follow it, practising economy with a vengeance. This part of the defence has already been severely criticized. Commenting on it, the Advocate of India, in its issue of the 22nd November 1901, justly observed :

"It is inconceivable to our mind that the Executive should have been so overpowered by this perfectly legitimate act of the Government of India that it felt bound to shirk its obvious and plain duty at a time of emergency and to hold tight on the public purse-strings whilst the people were dying in thousands from sheer want."

In plain words, the defence of the Bombay Government amounts to this—that it refused to do its obvious duty because it had been warned by the Circular to be careful how the

money given to it was spent :

“If doubt actually existed as to the meaning of the Circular”, proceeds the Advocate, “this could have been brushed away in half an hour by the simple process of wiring to Simla for specific instructions. To openly declare at this date that they feared to incur censure is an admission of neglect of a precaution which would have entirely obviated any such criticism of the Bombay famine policy.”

A Hollow Defence

Again, the *Times of India*, which also throughout fairly criticized that policy on the basis of the authentic information carefully supplied by its own representative and other correspondents, is constrained to observe in reference to their extraordinary self-incriminating defence that :

“It is more in the nature of a statement of the difficulties which the Bombay Government had to encounter in meeting the last famine, than a vindication of what they actually did... It is not case to distinguish between the excuses of the Bombay Government and the accusations brought against them by critics of their famine policy....They admit that their arrangements were not sufficient to meet adequately the emergency which arose.”

And what was the reason ? The Government of Bombay pleads the following :

The recurrence within two years of a more extensive famine than those of 1876-77, and 1896-97 was not considered to be a danger to be seriously anticipated.

How fatuous is this reasoning and how strange indeed that a responsible Government should give it currency, when common sense informed the Presidency at large that one famine following closely at the heel of another, without having afforded any breathing time to the ryot to recuperate himself to however small an extent, cannot but hit him harder, and suggested that, therefore, the State should be fully prepared

for the more distressing emergency certain to arise. On this defence of the Government of Bombay, just quoted, the *Times of India* (22nd November) had the following further scathing commentary :

“We have only to substitute war for famine, and the Commander-in-Chief for the Government of Bombay, to illustrate the utter untenableness of this explanation....The collapse of Gujarat was to some extent unexpected, but how do Government reconcile the confession in the fifth paragraph of their letter, that they under-estimated the resources and staying power of the inhabitants of that province, with the statement in the third section of the next paragraph that the relations of the Collector with the subordinate officers are so close that nothing abnormal should long escape his notice, and there is no chance of any distress occurring without his having had an opportunity for preparing for it.”

The abnormal did happen. It was pointed out at the earliest stage by all outside critics, even the most friendly, that the second famine was of abnormal intensity, and yet the Government of Bombay obstinately adhered to that attitude of non-chalance, as if the thousands of deaths by starvation, which undoubtedly resulted from the attitude, were nothing to it ! Every just critic of that Government will, therefore, agree with the perfectly fair observation of the *Times of India* that :

“The mistakes of the famine administration are all traceable to the absence at headquarters of sufficient appreciation and knowledge of the conditions and economy of district administration.”

Gujarat Inquiry and General White-washing

Neither has the Bombay Government presented an edifying figure by its extraordinary action in the matter of the Gujarat Inquiry. Its Resolution thereon is even more indefensible than the excuse of its famine policy. After having instituted a judicial inquiry and received the verdict of the trying authority, it seems to have gone behind the judgement of

Mr. Maconochie, and by a procedure which has been universally pronounced to be utterly illogical, if not something worse, tried to whitewash itself and the subordinates implicated from the allegations made in the Legislative Council by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokuldas K. Parekh, namely, tyrannizing the destitute ryot and exacting revenue with the left hand, while doling out takavi advances with the right. Public condemnation of this way of disposing of the scandal is great, and I need not say that it has in no way enhanced the reputation of that Government. If at all, it has by its impatience of enlightened and even authoritative criticism done its best to diminish the confidence of the people in the impartiality of its administration. Only two individuals stand not in shining relief in this matter—Mr. Maconochie and Mr. Gokuldas Kahandas Parekh. The verdict of the former is accepted as being independent and impartial, while the great courage displayed by Mr. Gokuldas in proving his allegations to the hilt of immense sacrifice is universally praised. He has, in fact, fully vindicated himself and "Gujarati," his original informant.

Is There Responsibility in the Government ?

Gentlemen, I think I have now referred at sufficient length to the extraordinary and unconvincing defence the Bombay Government has made with regard to its famine policy, and would, therefore, refrain from further animadverting on it. We may leave that Government to derive such consolation from it as best it may. The more serious constitutional question, however, which arises from it should not be allowed to escape our attention. What we have to ask is, whether there is any responsibility with any authority whatever in this serious matter ? Or is it still the case, as was stated years ago, by John Bright in one of his memorable speeches, that in India it would seem that there are three kinds of responsibility, namely, "the question of divided responsibility, of concealed responsibility, and of no responsibility whatever." It should be borne in mind that there is great danger in a repetition of such error of judgement in future in any Provincial Government. It is, therefore, to be devoutly

hoped that the beneficent intentions and instructions of the Government of India with regard to famine will everywhere be followed with scrupulous care and faithfulness in future operations, which we all hope may now be remote.

Famine Codes do not Prevent Famine

This subject naturally leads us to the Famine Code itself. In all human affairs it has long been recognized that, however perfect the measures may be, the value of their perfection greatly depends on the men who eventually happen to carry them out. In matters of State, the same proposition holds equally good. Hence, the Government of India may go on tinkering and perfecting its Code, ever so long, but it is hopeless to expect that while the men, to carry out its excellent provisions in practice, are not of the right type, all the good that might be expected will be achieved. And, after all, what may the most perfect Famine Codes accomplish? They will not prevent famine. At the best they are a set of instructions to guide and direct the famine officials how to act under given circumstances and how famine may be allayed. Though, therefore, the efforts which the Government of India makes, on the recommendations of each Famine Commission, to improve the Famine Code, are praise-worthy, it must be candidly observed that they are in a way futile. Not all the codes and pandects on famine relief will ever go to prevent famine by a hair's breadth. Statesmanship lies not in devising these Codes but in concerting far-sighted measures which shall prevent famine. Famine Codes are most useful when famine actually prevails; but by themselves they do not avoid famine.

Impolicy of Running Famine of the Cheap

Another point in the same connection may here be touched before I proceed to make a few observations on the prevention of famine. The Famine Commission compute the total direct expenditure on the last famine at ten crores of rupees, and the indirect at five crores more. But this aggregate expenditure of fifteen crores is characterized 'as excessive. They say it "far exceeds that incurred in any previous famine." Evidently, it is implied that the State in future should take care that such a

large expenditure is not incurred. They, however, felt conscious while making the remark that it was liable to be misunderstood. So immediately follows the qualification, namely, that they do not for a moment advocate a departure from the humane policy of famine relief laid down by the Government of India; but experience has shown that the object in view can be attained at a moderate cost with little demoralization, if prudence and foresight be duly exercised, and if means be properly adjusted to ends. As laid down in the abstract the principle is indeed admirable. But who is to be the judge of moderation? It will all depend on the view the chief officials at the seat of the Central Government may take at a period of famine. The Imperial treasury may be far from full; or it may be that it has to disburse large sums on their undertakings or on war-like operations. Under such a condition of affairs the Imperial fiat might go forth that famine expenditure should be kept well in hand—in other words, most niggardly incurred. The practical result of such an order may be easily anticipated. The provincial administrations would readily fall in with the views of the Central Government and endeavour to do all in their power to run famine on the cheap, as the Bombay Government actually did. The last found a convenient excuse for its own condition of unpreparedness by laying the blame at the door of the Government of India. This is the great evil to be avoided. In the case of Mr. Holderness' Circular alluded to, it is superfluous to observe that it was the subject of much hostile criticism throughout the country. In substance, it enjoined expenditure to be kept as low as possible, no doubt consistent with safety to the life of the famished (which was the point the supine Government of Bombay grievously missed) under the pretext of preventing people not in need of State aid flocking to the famine camps. That plea had really no solid foundation in fact. If people began to crowd at the very outbreak of the famine in relief camps, it was because they found themselves utterly prostrate and destitute after the effects of the earlier visitation of 1896-97. They had absolutely no breathing time to recuperate themselves. Evidence of the crippled and helpless condition to which most of the peasantry in the afflicted parts were reduced by the famine of that year is

not wanting in Sir James Lyall's report. It is, therefore, quite intelligible there is greater influx of the starving at the very outbreak of the second visitation. But such a phenomenon should have been carefully investigated and the causes verified before taking unnecessary alarm and issuing that ill-fated Circular which, in Bombay at least, worked so disastrously.

Principles and Practice

Having observed so much, it should not be understood that the abstract principle laid down by the Government of India is unsound, namely, that famine expenditure everywhere should be judiciously regulated, with a due regard to the conditions of each locality. On the contrary, it is but right and proper that the State should safeguard the interest of the general tax-payer. But will all know how in Indian affairs principles laid down in the abstract are one thing, while their practical carrying out is another? In famine matters it is the case that some of the Provincial Governments, with their finances at a low ebb, are naturally prone to economize expenditure to a dangerously narrow limit. They always try to be one better in the exercise of their economic conscience than the Central authority itself. This tendency on the part of subordinate Administrations needs to be carefully watched and checked, as if unwatched and uncontrolled from above, it is prolific, of the greatest mischief to the starving population. Again, in carrying out the instructions of the Central authority for a judicious expenditure, it is highly essential that the human factor should on no account be overlooked. In famine relief operations finance has to be subordinate to humanity itself. Discrimination and human sympathy for the woes and sufferings of the starving and the dying, of orphans and widows, of the sick and the infirm, of the less able-bodied and the helpless women—these demand paramount consideration. It is to be feared that it is a disregard of this special aspect of famine which eventually leads to illiberal expenditure every way and exposes all Administration to the adverse but justifiable criticism of the public. So much for the evil of circulars of the character just alluded to.

The Example of the Central Government

But Provincial Administrations are also apt sometimes to be carried away, when, in obedience to so-called "confidential" circulars, issued by the Central authority, called upon to practise economy of a penny-wise but mischievous character. This specially happens when the Imperial Government finds itself financially embarrassed by one reason or another. I need not recall here the two historical instances which occurred during 1877-78, with reference to the famine in the Madras Presidency and in the North-West Provinces. The Indian Government was then in a state of hostility with the Amir of Afghanistan. The Imperial Treasury wanted all the money for the last object, but you cannot have forgotten what the sequel was. I pass over in silence the narrative of that most lamentable famine, which resulted in the terrible mortality of 12.5 lakhs in the N.W. Provinces, and of 20 lakhs in Madras, as related in the Famine Commission Report of 1880.

Rational Way of Expending Monies on Famine Relief

It would be thus seen how dangerous is it to lay down a hard-and-fast line with regard to famine expenditure. Moreover, just ponder for a moment on the monies, which the State spends like water on a border or trans-frontier war, the *raison d'être* even of which may be more than doubtful. Crores are spent on war-like operations, the ethics of which may be most questionable, on the plea of repelling external enemies; but when at our own door our own enemy claims victims by thousands and millions, the economic conscience of the Government seems to undergo a sudden evolution, the purse is at once tightened, and all economic lessons are at once remembered! In fact, the policy would seem to be that you may spend as many crores as you like on frontier scares and wild goose expeditions, but when it comes to laying low the internal enemy of famine at your very door, the man in charge of the Imperial Treasury must sit tight and discourage all judicious expenditure! Let us hope such a policy will no longer find assendancy in the Council of the Government of India. Expenditure on famine must be regulated in each instance according to its extent, its intensity, and the local

circumstances accompanying it. It is the only rational method to pursue if the ultimate object is to see that not a single soul, as the Viceroy, be it said to the credit of his humanity, justly said, dies of starvation. And here it may be worth remembering that the monies spent, whether they be 10 crores or 15 crores, are, after all, the monies contributed by the very people for whose relief that expenditure is incurred. Cheese-paring expenditure and low mortality are never compatible. It is only by a discriminate and liberal expenditure that the starving millions can be saved from the jaws of death. We are, however, told that the Government is bound to watch the interests of the general tax-payer. But may it be asked who is that entity? Is he not the same individual whose class annually contributes well-nigh 50 crores to the Imperial Treasury under the following heads?

Land Revenue	Crores	Rs. 26
Salt	„	8.5
Stamps	„	4.5
Excise	„	5.25
Provincial Rates	„	3.5
Registration	„	.5

And is it not the case that it is the same mass of people who contribute those 50 crores who flock to the relief camps in times of famine when driven by sheer desperation and want? One-fifth of this annual contribution only comes to 10 crores. But, as is officially declared, famine recurs in the land once every 11 years, though, of course, the late famine was an exception. So that 2 per cent of his own contribution once in 11 years, is certainly not an extravagant expenditure to alleviate his distress in times of scarcity or famine. In other words, if you reserve one-fifth per cent of 50 crores per annum, is it a great or extraordinary sum? Let me inform you, gentlemen, that in the matter of Railway Finance alone, the State incurs a net loss to the extent of a crore of rupees per annum, which is met from the ordinary revenues of the Empire. This fact may be ascertained by anyone desirous to verify it from the Administration Reports of Railways. It was brought out, again, in evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, and I would draw

the attention of you all to Appendix No. 28, at page 225, Vol. II of the Report. But this crore is unseen, and, therefore, attracts no attention.

Sir Charles on Famine Expenditure

It is, therefore, to be sincerely hoped that famine expenditure will be incurred in conformity with the peculiar conditions attendant on each famine rather than on any hard-and-fast lines which the Imperial Government may choose to dictate to suit its own peculiar exigencies of the hour. In this connection I am disposed to agree with the remarks made by Sir Charles Elliott in his second contribution to the Asiatic Quarterly Review for October last, which critically examines the report of the Famine Commission. It is to be presumed most of you, if not all, have learned what views Sir Charles holds on the alleged excessive cost of the last famine. That distinguished official is recognized authority on the question of famine. His experience of famine expenditure may be said to be even greater than any member of the Famine Commission. Sir Charles is not at all convinced from the evidence collect, bearing in mind, firstly, the intensity of the famine, following as it did the one of 1896-97, and, secondly, the extent of the relief that was administered and the duration of it. Having said so much on this financial aspect of the Famine Commission's report, we may congratulate Sir Antony MacDonnell and his colleagues on other matters on which they have expressed their candid opinion. No doubt, almost all of us will differ as regards their pronouncement on the incidence of land-revenue assessment and the burning question of restriction of transfer. But it is satisfactory to note that in the main the Commission has endorsed almost all the objections urged by leading exponents of Indian thought in the country, and specially those raised in my own Presidency as regards suspensions and remissions of revenue and the concentration, as far as possible, of famine labour on village relief works and other cognate matters. It is also satisfactory to note the genuine testimony borne by the Commission, as all the other experts in agricultural matters have done, to the skill of the Indian peasant. Here is a pregnant sentence which may be well borne in mind : "In the mere practice

of cultivation, Agriculture Departments have probably much to learn from the cultivator.”

Recommendations of the Commission

As regards the many practical recommendations made by the Commission, it is not possible to refer to them in this place at any great length. This, however, may be observed : that if they are carried out in the spirit in which they are made, a wholesome change in the conditions of the impoverished peasantry may be slowly discernible. As matters stand at present, it is to be feared that it will be long before all traces of the evil effects of the last two famines disappear from the land. But meanwhile all the State can do, in pursuance of the recommendations now made, will no doubt to a certain extent tend to ameliorate his condition. At present he is so far crippled as to be scarcely able to stand on his legs. As the Commission says, the State will have to “put heart” in him with a view to rehabilitate him. Anything which contributes to bring back his former staying powers, the absence of which drove him, at the very threshold of the last famine, to the relief camp, will be considered as the first hopeful sign of returning prosperity.

The Converts Famine has Made

This brings me, gentlemen, to the subject of the prevention of famine. Till within the last twelve or fifteen months the entire official classes in the country and their supporters in the Press, as well as not a few outsiders, Europeans, of course, were so deeply ingrained in their belief as to the absolute impossibility of controlling famine that it had become well-nigh a hopeless task to reason with them and bring conviction home to their minds that however unkind nature may be, and however deficient harvests may be owing to the inadequacy of the rainfall, famine itself, that is, the condition of destitution and suffering to which masses of people are reduced by drought, was preventible.

But the phenomena presented in all the afflicted localities during the last calamitous visitation, it is satisfactory to note, have spontaneously brought home that truth which arguments

had vainly sought to teach. The conditions prevalent during 1899-1900 have themselves been the greatest teachers, and those who were so stubborn of conviction have been the first to acknowledge themselves as converts. It was observed that there was sufficient store of food in the country, the surplus of the grain produced by the more favoured provinces, to feed the hungry and the starving. But though the food grains were there, there were no means for the famished to buy them. It was the revelation of this fact which wrought the conversion. And among those who were perforce obliged to admit the inexorable logic of that fact was the Secretary of State himself. After having persistently denied, no doubt from want of accurate knowledge of the real economic situation prevalent in the country for years past, that famine was preventible, his Lordship had to admit what the school of the pessimists had been endeavouring since 1896 to instil into his mind, that it was. That recognition was indeed no mean conquest of truth over the forces of ignorance, which had contributed so largely to a complacent belief in the optimism which declared that all was going well and nothing could improve so happy a condition of affairs. In reality, there was a confusion of ideas in the minds of the optimists. Drought itself was identified with famine. Sir William Wedderburn and others, with a clear insight into the questions derived from their superior knowledge and experience, pointed out time out of mind that drought, aye of the severest character, may befall a country, and yet there may be no famine, in other words, no sufferings to which the poor tillers of the soil, numbered by millions, are subjected by reason of the effects of the drought. In short, none has rendered greater service in dispelling that confusion than Sir William. And next to him, we may offer our warm and grateful thanks to Mr. Loenard Courtney, a statesman and an economist, whose views are listened to with the greatest respect and attention by both the great parties in Parliament. At the preliminary Conference of the Indian Famine Union held on June 7th, at Westminster Palace Hotel, he took special care to make it clear in his presidential address at the very outset what famine was. I think the observations he then made deserve to be repeated on this occasion, if only to emphasize their significance once more, and doubly convince that school which till

late thought that famine was an act of Providence, and therefore, as impossible of check and control as the planetary system.

He saw an objective that would at once be raised by some, arising out of the improper meaning which were attributed by many men to the word famine. They would say that it was sought to abolish the alternation of the seasons, that these would be periods more or less of drought, that all the wise men in the world would not be able to prevent that in the future, and that they must, therefore, expect famine as a necessary thing in the future history of the world. But that phase did not cover the proper use of the word famine. He would not say that it was beyond the reach of human thought to abolish droughts, it might be that by the partial reforestation on India the risk of drought might be diminished, it might be that by the continual conquest of Nature, we might be able to do away with the effects of that scarcity of rain which happened in a particular season. But famine was not drought, or even the lack of produce which followed from drought; it was the sufferings of human creatures which was consequent upon these varying seasons, the deprivation of the means of sustenance that such seasons of calamity brought.

Causes which have Led to Famine

Having thus cleared the ground as to what constitutes famine, the next question which we have to consider is the causes which led to it. For, it is only when the physician has diagnosed the disease that he is able to prescribe a cure. To probe, therefore, to the bottom of the cause or causes of the severe famines which have recently visited this country and which threaten to be more frequent than before, is the paramount duty of the citizen and the State alike. Practical remedies which in a measure may tend to minimize the sufferings of famine in the future are only possible and feasible when the true causes have been accurately ascertained beyond all contradiction. And here it may be not unuseful to remind you that famine is not a calamity known to India alone. Famines have prevailed all over the world from time to time. But we have heard very little of them during the last fifty or seventy years, save now and again in Russia, and sometimes

in Ireland and Italy. Leaving aside all other countries, let us take the case of England alone. How is it that there at least for half-a-century past there is no such calamity as famine, though the country depends for two-thirds of its food-supply on foreign nations? Is it not the case that it is the vast and most satisfactory improvement in the economic condition of the English labourer and artisan which has banished the sufferings? There might have been any quantity of food-supply from foreign parts; but so long as there was the lack of the necessary means to buy that supply, the food for all intents and purposes might as well be at the bottom of the sea. Now the one phenomenon, above all others, which was discerned on the surface in India in reference to the last famine, was the almost total disability of the masses to maintain themselves and their families no sooner than the conditions of a deficient harvest were established. This phenomenon was not a new one. But what happened in previous famines was that the famished did not resort to the relief camps in large numbers at the very outset, They did possess some staying power, some means which enabled them to subsist for a time without State relief. It was only when the pinchings of poverty became acute and began to be seriously felt, with the approach of the summer season, that they were to be noticed seeking relief. Why, then, this difference during the last famine specially? The universal belief is that the staying power of the masses has vanished. The belief would naturally lead us to conclude that their economic conditions must have deteriorated. Here it seems there is a difference of opinion. There is the majority, more or less in full touch with the masses and their condition, which ascribes it to the growing impoverishment of the ryots, while there is the minority, chiefly the official classes, who attribute it to their imprudence and improvidence. In spite of this difference it appears that there is one agreement underlying the contentions of both. It is not denied that the ailment of the peasantry is an economic one. Economic causes, whether superficial, as one set of thinkers aver, or deep-rooted, as another set assert, are undoubtedly at work which have prevented the cultivator from saving enough in fat years to provide against the lean one. Of late those lean years have been many. The peasantry, in one locality or another, has not thriven 1991. Bad harvests or

woefully deficient harvests have been frequent, which have plunged them into a heavier load of debt, from which they have barely found time to relieve themselves and be on their legs again. This much is generally acknowledged. But most of us, from our closer contact with the masses—a contact which it is scarcely possible even the best of officials can ever claim—are further of opinion that in addition to the misery and destitution arising from deficient harvests, there is the burden of the State-demand for enhanced land revenue assessments which is gnawing into the vitals of the peasantry. This demand is rigid and is collected with all the hardness of the cast-iron system, which British administration has introduced into the country. It is to be feared that periodical revisions of the Survey Department have not a little to answer for agricultural indebtedness. Instituted with the best of motives, it is now admitted by those who have carefully studied its history, say, from Lord Salisbury downwards, that revisions have been far from beneficial to the ryot. That great authority has observed in his memorable minute of 1879—that :

“We may fairly discourage scientific refinements in the works of assessment which are a natural exercise of the intellect in highly cultivated officers but which worry the ryot, distribute the burdens of State with needless inequality and impose a costly machinery on the State.”

Thus, the periodic enhancements have been oppressive and beyond the means of the payers who, over a greater part of the country, own on an average seven acres of land. To satisfy the burdensome call at inconvenient sessions the ryot is driven into the arms of the moneylender. Once in the clutches of that entity it is almost hopeless for him to extricate himself. But this cause is denied by the officials. It is declared that the assessments are light, and that the ryot, if he suffers at all, suffers from other causes. Here, then, is a difference of opinion. Now and again departmental or other committees have sat to trace the causes. These have demonstrated that the agricultural indebtedness of the peasant is chiefly to be attributed to rack-rents. More, there have been a few careful observers who, having fully studied this

agricultural problem, have independently come to the same conclusion that we have been entertaining these many years. I have to refer you, gentlemen, to the minutes of Sir Louis Mallet and Lord Salisbury on the subject, made as far back as 1879, and which are officially embodied in the appendices to the Famine Commission Report of the year. I would be taxing your patience and time too much if I here cited even a hundredth part of what they said. Suffice it to say that Sir Louis Mallet was strongly opposed to Survey Settlements and the enhancement of land revenue, which was their logical resultant. He had no hesitation in observing that "the policy of further taxing the land might easily become a political danger." From the economical point of view, he regarded such a policy as "mischievous" and directly tending "to a progressive pauperization of the community." This was said twenty years ago, but who will deny the prophetic character of Sir Louis Mallet's observation, with the knowledge and light of the two famines? Progressive pauperization is a fact which cannot be ignored. But it was not Sir Louis Mallet alone who had scented the economic mischief from afar and sounded the tocsin of "political danger." As early as 1883, a thoroughly able writer, fully conversant with the economic situation of the peasantry of the country, gave an equally serious warning in more unmistakable terms in the columns of the Spectator. It was observed that :

"The ultimate difficulty of India, the economic situation of the cultivator, is coming to the front in a most disheartening way and is existing among the most experienced officials a sensation of positive alarm."

That was "the great Indian danger" of the future. He accurately described the situation as follows :

Tens of millions of persons there either can do or will do nothing but cultivate; and if cultivation does not pay, what hope have they? The traders do not buy more food of them for being rich, and they have only food to sell. They can get their clothes cheaper through free-trade and railways, but they have reduced clothes to such an appreciable minimum that the saving is not a rupee a year per house. They need nothing save only land, and

land, under the pressure of numbers becomes so dead, that either the profit per acre will not keep them, or they get too few acres for a maintenance. Other occupations would save them, but they must be occupations for millions, and where are they?

I ask you all the same question which the writer put eighteen years ago : Where are they"? We should be all glad if there be a single official in the country who could unhesitatingly and courageously declare today that the description of the masses just related has been in any way exaggerated. Was he at all drawing a pessimistic picture when the same experienced writer further described the economic condition of the cultivators?

Five people cannot live and pay a direct tax in money and the interest of old debts at 16 per cent upon five acres of over-cropped soil, without danger in bad years of a catastrophe. That is the position of the whole districts in India. All, however, that we want is a thorough examination of the subject by men who can lead opinion.

Lord Salisbury on Land Assessments

Let me now refer to one more authority, the present Prime Minister. As Secretary of State for India, it fell to the lot of Lord Salisbury to review the whole of land revenue policy of the Government of India in the seventies. Referring to the minutes of many of his colleagues on that policy, as questioned by Sir Louis Mallet, his Lordship observed that, "they mostly shrink from the general discussion" to which he has invited them. On his part, however, he gave his opinion in a most decisive way :

So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system, it is desirable the cultivator should pay a smaller proportion of the whole national charge. It is no in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts, where capital is scarce, sparing the towns where it is often redundant and runs to waste in luxury. The injury is exaggerated in the case of India, where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent. As India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested, or atleast sufficient, not to those which are already feeble from the want of it.

How Enhancements have gone on Merrily

Gentlemen, it will be thus obvious to you that even, as far back as 1879, the condition of the peasantry was such that so well-informed a Secretary of State as Lord Salisbury, who was capable of forming an independent judgement on the merits of the land revenue policy of the Government of India, recognized the necessity of moderating the assessments. But what has been the actual fact? You have only to discover what has been the revenue derived from land in every province save Bengal, to learn for yourselves how much of the increase is owing to normal causes, to improved communications and to the law of unearned increment, and how much to pure enhancement unaccompanied by any reasons whatever. An exhaustive inquiry into this matter will, no doubt, bring facts to the surface to confirm the view universally held. Lord Salisbury would have a difficulty in pointing to the congested parts where he could apply the lancet with safety, for the body has grown feebler and feebler and is now in an utterly prostrate condition.

An Exhaustive Inquiry Inevitable

If such, then, be the condition of the peasantry, is it not time then an exhaustive inquiry of an open and independent character long since demanded should be instituted, so as to collect all evidence which may decisively determine the principal causes of the present agrarian situation? For, it is superfluous to add that any palliative measures to superficially remedy the actual disease can never lead to the improvement which we are all anxious to seek. The misfortune is that, in the first instance, the Government of India has shrunk from doing so. It has long since dreaded to drag into daylight this great skeleton in its cupboard. But the irresistible march of circumstances is certain to leave it no alternative but expose it. A public inquiry, therefore, is inevitable. Government cannot any longer play the policy of the ostrich. It is more states man-like to face the ugly question and find out the truth. It is the safest as well as the speediest course. For the longer it is delayed, the worse will be the agrarian situation. And not all its legislative measures will be able to avert what Bacon

calls the "rebellion of the belly," when it sets in right earnest. As the Manchester Guardian (November 2) has tersely put it :

"We are forced to ask ourselves whether these economic evils may not be traced directly or indirectly to that famous system of government which has been slowly built up by the labours of many great Englishmen, and whether, while anxious to do our best for India to give her a thoroughly just and good administration, we are not unconsciously undermining the foundation of Indian society, which rests upon the peasant cultivator in his village community...The whole system of land tenure and of taxation is called in question by the repeated famines, each worse than the one before it, which we have witnessed of late years."

Recommendation of the Indian Famine Union

It is, therefore, to be devoutly hoped that the inquiry which the Indian Famine Union has prayed for in its most influentially signed memorial will be speedily granted. It is similar in principle to the inquiry which the Congress itself has asked for. The time for criticism has passed by, and that for constructive statesmanship has arrived. But the construction can only proceed upon a solid foundation, of ascertained facts. The materials for the foundation, therefore, are the first essential. The inquiry should consist of an examination into the economic condition of a limited number of selected villages by means of Provincial Commission of officials and non-officials in whom the public have confidence specially chosen for each province. I am inclined to the view that a single roving Commission going all over the country is most unlikely to achieve that object. Each Indian province differs from another. Each has its own conditions. It is therefore essential that a Commission of experienced persons of local knowledge should inquire into the agricultural condition of each of the typical villages in their own respective provinces. Perhaps the expenditure of such Provincial Commissions may be somewhat large, but in my opinion it will be more than repaid by the valuable recommendations they may make. It would be grievous in this matter to have a dead uniformity all over the country when each province differs so much in economic condi-

tions with another. What may suit the villagers in the district of the Punjab can hardly be said to suit those residing in the districts of Southern India. When the exact economic position of the different provinces with their history and the causes of their difficulties is ascertained we shall be on solid ground. In my opinion, the best way to proceed would be to ascertain from the books of *Sowcars*, traders and others, the prices of wages, corn, and so forth, and the cost of cultivation and maintenance at one period, and compare it with similar statistics of the latest year before the outbreak of famine. It may be also important to learn which may be the villages which can boast of tiled-roof houses instead of the humble thatched ones; what may be the general quality of the food; what may be the domestic furniture, whether metallic things have replaced the primitive earthen ones and so on. Lastly, the percentage of households which may have shown these increased marks of prosperity. It is only by such a comparative compilation of statistics that the increasing prosperity or growing impoverishment of each of the typical villages can be found on which to build a fairly stable inference and proceed thereafter to prescribe the necessary remedies.

Meanwhile, it is advisable to suspend all further land legislation of the mischievous character of the Bombay Land Revenue Code. It cannot be said that the agrarian legislation of the last twenty years for the amelioration of the peasantry has tendered any good. Look at the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act alone, with Sir Antony MacDonnell's Commission has pronounced to be a failure; for it has come to the conclusion that indebtedness has increased, rather than diminished in the four districts which have been under the operation of the measure for the last twenty years.

*Certain Mischief of Recent Agrarian Legislation
Specially for Bombay*

Nothing at this juncture in the administration of India is more to be deplored than legislative measures for the so-called improvement of the peasantry. History teaches a painful lesson in this respect which, it is to be hoped, the Government of India

will bear in mind. Agrarian reforms, to cure a desperate agrarian situation, whenever undertaken in opposition to the views and the interests of the peasants, have ended in great political disasters. We need not refer to what distinguished Roman writers have said of the agricultural conditions of their own times. Again coming to modern times, we need not refer to the condition of affairs in France, in Turkey and in the United States. In my opinion the less there is of agrarian legislation in which is to be discerned more of the arbitrariness and cupidity of rulers than their moderation and justice, the better for the peasantry and the country. Justice must be respected. Let him who sows reap, and let him who plants the tree eat its fruits. Such injustice in agrarian legislation, where the cultivator is sought to be deprived of a larger and a larger portion of the fruit of his labour, must eventually culminate in slavery. The ultimate result of this policy is, that the labour of the peasant is blighted and becomes barren leading to those economic evils from which he now suffers. It is to be feared that so far as the new land revenue legislation of the Bombay Presidency is concerned, these evils are likely to show themselves in all their ugliness as its operations extend. None doubts the beneficent intentions of the Government. But, after all, such intentions are judged by results. That there will be no such result, as the Government affects to believe will follow the measure, seems to be the firm conviction of the people at large, even after the debate that has taken place in the Council.

It is greatly to be regretted in this matter that no attention has been paid to the popular voice. The Viceroy himself declared at Bombay, in that memorable speech he delivered at the Town Hall in reply to the address of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, that he was most anxious to listen to that opinion. And yet he refused to consider the appeal of the public to suspend the sanctioning of the Bill and allow them reasonable time to examine the provisions of the amendment which is undoubtedly of a revolutionary character and which seeks to establish State landlordism in the country, which one of his predecessors, twenty years ago, repudiated on behalf of his Government. I have no inclination to enter into any disquisition on the subject

of land tenures in the country. This is not the time nor the place for it I only beg to draw your attention to one fact, and it is this : that, as Sir Louis Mallet observed, there is absolutely no fixity in the land revenue policy of the Government. Everything varies with the views of successive Government. Hence have arisen a mass of inconsistencies in its land revenue system. Lord Salisbury cynically observed :

Have we any grounds for thinking they will cease? They are not merely subjects of reproach; they are a warning of the fashion after which our Indian Government is made. By the law of its existence it must be a Government of incessant change. It is the despotism of a line of kings, whose reigns are limited by climatic causes to five years.

But the despots return to their homes, while the effects of their despotic action remain to harass and annoy a much enduring and patient people Consider, gentlemen, the action of the Government of Lord Curzon, in the matter of the Land Revenue Amendment Act, whereby the perpetuity of tenure in survey lands has been "by a stroke of the pen" abolished. It is the first forcible attempt at the assertion of State landlordism, which the Government of Lord Lytton indignantly repudiated : "We do not accept the accuracy of the description that the tenure of land in India was that of cultivating tenants, with no power to mortgage the land of the State, and that land is the property of the Government, held by the occupier as tenants on hereditary succession so long as he pays the Government demand. On the contrary, the sale and mortgage of land were recognized under the Native Government before the establishment of British power, and are not uncommon in Native States at the present time. It has been one of the great objects of all the successive Government of India since the days of Lord Cornwallis, if not to create property in land, at all events to secure and fortify and develop it to the utmost. The Government, undoubtedly, is the owner of a first charge, the amount of which is fixed by itself on the produce of all revenue-paying land in India, but over the greater part of the Indian empire, it is no more the owner of the cultivated land than the owner of a rent charge in England is

Council, of the dissenting members, to retire from the Council Hall as soon as the amendment was lost. All enlightened and self-respecting Indians have approved of that course, and I refrain from saying anything more on the subject. But I repeat, gentlemen, my conviction that for a genuine improvement in the material condition of the Indian peasantry the less of legislation there is the better. And what may it be asked, has been the effect of our land laws during the past twenty years? Were not each and all of them enacted with the single object of bettering the condition of the peasantry? Has that object been attained? The very fact that they are still tinkering and tinkering them, now in the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces; now in Bombay and the Central Provinces, now in Bengal and Madras, under one form or another, is evidence conclusive of the non-fulfilment of that object. In short, the statute-book is groaning under the accumulated weight of the agrarian legislation of the last quarter of a century, without the slightest benefit to those on whose behalf it has been undertaken. Their net effect has been to aggravate the original economic evils which it was intended to cure. The legislative remedies have proved worse than the disease. While the peasant wants bread, the State makes him a present of its legislative abracadabras. Gentlemen, you cannot be unaware of the official reports which reach us from time to time of the return of material prosperity to the fellaheen of Egypt. What may have been the chief cause which has led there, especially during the last seven years, to that prosperity? Has there been any land legislation of the character the various Indian administrations have passed within recent years? No; legislation is the last thing which Lord Cromer has thought of while improving the condition of the Egyptian cultivator, why? It should be remembered that his Lordship was not unaware of the land laws of this country. As a matter of fact he was no important member of the Viceregal Legislative Council which introduced the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1883. Again, it was he who had, with the help of Sir David Barbour, made a semi-official enquiry into the condition of agriculture in the various provinces, the gross income of the ryot per acre, and collected all other kindred statistics. And yet Lord Cromer, as the Minister Plenipotentiary of the English Government in Egypt, in spite

the owner of the land upon which it is charged.”—Despatch, 8th June 1880, para 31.

Failure of All Legislation

It was thus against the revolutionary character of the legislation that the Bombay public [prayed] for delay, but which was refused, while those non-official members who took a leading part were characterized by the Honourable member in charge of the Bill as incapable of comprehending the very elements of reasoning, and by another as guilty of reckless and perverse misrepresentation. Such language would not, on behalf of Ministers, have been allowed to go unchallenged in the House of Commons. But in India it seems that the amenities of our expanded Councils, where representatives of the people are invited to advise and aid Government in law-making, demand that those in power and authority should flout the representatives of the people and charge them with dishonesty when they attempt to express their honest opinion. That the representatives were offended is shown by the way in which the foremost of them, in giving his reply, expressed himself on the unpleasant incident. The Honourable Mr. Mehta observed, addressing the President : “My Lord, I acknowledge, as I said in answer to the remark of Mr. Monteath, that it is open for the people who take another view of a question to be intolerant enough to doubt the capacity or intelligence of those opponents; but it is going altogether beyond the bounds of decorum and propriety, to say nothing stronger to question their honesty. Speaking on my own and on behalf of my colleagues who think with me in this matter, I lay an emphatic claim to having devoted such ability and intelligence as we possess to the consideration of this question and to laying the view which we have thus formed before this Legislative Council. I lay a still stronger and more emphatic claim to the integrity and honesty of purpose as well as of myself, however, egotistical it may seem, as of those colleagues who hold the same views as I do upon this subject.” There is not the slightest doubt—and I have the best authority for saying it—that it was this breach of decorum that contributed not a little to accentuate the previous determination, openly declared in the

of his Indian experience, has eschewed all land legislation. Why? The answer is not far to seek. Because he was quite convinced that paper statutes never advanced the welfare of the Indian ryot. The means he employed were more practical. Firstly, he thoroughly understood that throughout the world the agriculturist suffers for want of the necessary credit and the capital. With the assistance of these, the agriculturist could always be kept free from debt, and be enabled to labour assiduously to improve the outturn of his produce, with benefit to himself and the State. Secondly, Lord Cromer also knew that irrigation was the first essential where Nature was freakish in her seasonal bounties. No doubt, they have the Nile in Egypt, but that river has existed from time immemorial. It did not, however, prevent famines. What was wanted was a judicious distribution of water, and a system which stored it for use during a season of deficiency. Irrigation, therefore, was of paramount importance. The fellaheen may have all the capital needed to till their land, but if the necessary water was not there, they could do little. Lord Cromer, with the eye of the practised and far-sighted statesmen, devoted his attention to extended and improved irrigation. You all know the colossal irrigation works on the Atbara now going on. Thus by the establishment of a national bank, on rational principle which immediately meet the requirements of the Egyptian cultivator, and by extended irrigation works, Lord Cromer has been able most successfully to achieve the amelioration of that entity, and lead him on to the path of comparative prosperity. But you will observe that if he has been able to accomplish so much, it is owing to the entire absence of the agrarian legislation of the kind which the autocrats who reign for five years in this country are so fond of introducing. Egypt for the last fifteen years has been singularly fortunate in possessing as its virtual ruler, without interruption, a British statesman of great pluck and energy, of foresight and immense experience, who unhampered has been allowed to work out his benevolent project for the benefit of the millions of Egypt. Once for all a broad and generous policy, far-reaching in its beneficent and vivifying influence, was laid down, and it has been allowed to be carried into practical operation uninterrupted and unfettered by circumlocution, red tape and a dozen other obstructive and contradic-

tory elements more or less of a character how not to do it, which are so rife in India.

Extension of Viceregal Period

This fact leads me to offer an observation in this place. In India, it is highly expedient, as the *Times of India* sagaciously observed two years ago in an article which may be read with profit at this juncture, that when we have a good Viceroy of a practical turn of mind, imbued with a deep sense of his responsibility, and intent on rendering lasting good to the masses, as Lord Curzon seems to be by universal consent that he should be allowed to remain at the helm of affairs for a longer period than the orthodox of five years, so that he may be in a position to achieve all the good which his knowledge and experience may have derived during the first term of his office. It is indeed most curious that a capable Viceroy, who is known to be rendering good, should have to lay down his office at the very time, or the psychological moment, when India has the greater need of utilizing to her best advantage his previously acquired experience.

Ex-Parte Official Reports on Land Assessments

If, then, you ask me what remedies may be recommended to Government for extricating the ryot from his present condition of indebtedness, and gradually leading him on to the path of prosperity, I should reply that the fundamental reform, whence all other reforms must naturally flow, is a modification in the present policy of land revenue assessment in vogue in the different provinces. For the last two years and upwards, thanks to Mr. R.C. Dutt and his untiring perseverance and patience, the controversy has been going on as to the oppressive character of the assessment. Here, too, there are two schools of thought—the official—which contends that the assessments are light, and the non-official, which avers to the contrary. Where there is such a diametrical difference of opinion, it is always best to find out the truth by exploding the fallacies lurking in the facts and arguments of either side. There ought to be a judicial pronouncement of the moot question, on the [basis of reliable evidence

which may be collected by means of an impartial tribunal specially appointed for the purpose. Unless such a judicial and exhaustive inquiry is undertaken and a final verdict pronounced, it is to be feared this controversy is likely to remain interminable. But it is wisdom that the sooner it is closed in the manner suggested, the better. The future land revenue policy should, then, be based on the ascertained opinion of that tribunal. But it will never do to flourish before us a mass of out-sided facts and arguments of Commissioners and Collectors as are to be found recorded in those precious serials of Survey Settlement Officers published from time to time. They are purely *ex-parte* and not subject to the cross-examination necessary to arrive at the truth.

Irrigation versus Railways

Meanwhile extended irrigation works of all kinds, small and large, by means of canals, tanks, reservoirs, wells wherever practicable, and the harnessing so far as possible, after careful investigation, on some of the large rivers after the manner of the Godavary in the past by General Sir Arthur Cotton, are essential. Next, of course, is the stimulation of credit and capital; and, lastly, elementary education suited to a large rural population. It is, however, satisfactory to notice that after the experience of the two severe famines, the State has now taken the first step towards improving and extending existing irrigation and taking new works in hand. A Commission is already sitting on the subject, taking evidence under the presidency of a talented Engineer, who has been mainly instrumental in achieving success with irrigation works in Egypt. It is to be hoped that the report of Sir Colin Scott Moncreiff and his able colleagues may prove most practical. Our only regret is that the State should have for so many years subordinated irrigation works to railway construction at railway speed—a procedure against which your representatives entered their protests before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure. I would quote only one or two passages from the report of the Commission of 1879 to inform you how far the Indian Government had neglected the golden recommendations of that Commission, with the late Sir John Caird as its most expert member. It observed :

“That among the means that may be adopted for giving India direct protection from famine arising from drought, the first place must unquestionably be assigned to works of irrigation.”

But the Government assigned it a second place only. Instead of appointing an Irrigation Commission which was the first essential, there was appointed in 1883 a Parliamentary Select Committee on Railways. Thus while 150 crores of rupees have been spent on railways since 1884, only twenty crores have been expended on irrigation. But I need not tarry to inform you of the beneficent results which by this time might have arisen from spending on wells and tanks even a fourth of the sum incurred on railways. Not that the Government was not made aware of the economic advantages to the State and the ryot alike of irrigation. For the Commission of 1879 further remarked that :

“It has been too much the custom, in discussions as to the policy of constructing such works, to measure their value by their financial success, considered only with reference to the net return to Government on the capital invested in them. The true value of irrigation works is to be judged very differently. First must be reckoned the direct protection afforded by them in years of drought by the saving of human life, by the avoidance of the loss of revenue remitted, and of the outlay incurred in costly measures of relief.”

Unfortunately this golden counsel, I repeat, was never taken into serious consideration till the Second Famine Commission of 1898 once more accentuated the advice, with some further pertinent observations to answer those who, in the interval, had waxed most eloquent on the wonderful miracles of railways. In paragraph 536 of its report. the Commission observes after referring to the expenditure on famine protective works, that :

“Experience has shown that on the occasion of a widespread failure of the rains. railways, however useful and necessary they may be, do not keep down prices to a point at which the slightest pressure only is left. So far as they equalise prices, they widen the area of scarcity, though lessening the intensity elsewhere of famine. Though they bring grain to tracts liable to

famine in years of drought, they also prevent large accumulation of grain in those tracts in years of plenty.”

Thus railways have been no unmixed blessing. Moreover, it is now recognized that, after all, they are only a means of speedy distribution of grain from one place to another, but they in no way add a single rupee to the wealth of the country. But it has taken years to explode this fallacy at the seat of the Central authority. In these matters it would seem that the Government has been far behind the march of enlightened Indian opinion. It required three Commissions and two severe famines to recognize and become alive to the supreme importance of extended irrigation, wherever possible and practicable which, in the long run, actually stimulates agricultural wealth. The Famine Commission of 1879 openly said :

“It is not only in years of drought that irrigation works are of value. In seasons of average rainfall they are of great service and a great source of wealth giving certainly to all the agricultural operations, increasing the outturn per acre of the crops and enabling more valuable descriptions of crops to be grown.”

Next, in para 544 the Commission of 1898 has pointed out that since 1880, an average return of 6 per cent, net on capital outlay has been realized on irrigation works which can hardly be said of railways. On the contrary, the last are still losing something like a crore of rupees per annum to the general tax payer. That I am not speaking at random on the subject of this net loss by railways, I have to draw your attention to the Appendix in the Report of the Royal Commission to which I have already alluded. It will be seen from it that in fifty years there was a loss of over 51 crores. That, owing to low exchange, in late years there was a heavy loss on guaranteed railways may be admitted. But I may inform you that, apart from these railways, almost ninety per cent of the State lines have been hitherto losing concerns. The following statistics, which are worked out from the latest table officially published in the Gazette of India of 6th July 1901, will make it evident to all what a drag on the annual

revenue are the railways. In all there are fifty-one railways (excluding the East Indian) which lost from the date of their construction up till 1900 to the State, Rs. 43,34,72,459. Of these six only show a net gain :

1. Rajputana Malwa	7.26 crores
2. Warora Colliery	0.10 „
3 Eastern Bengal	1.10 „
4. Nalhatti	0 01 „
5. Patna-Gaya	0.09 „
6 Lucknow-Bareilly	0.01 „
	— —
	8.56 crores
	— —

The rest, namely forty-five lines, have lost between them 51.91 crores. Thus, deducting the gain of the above six lines, the net result was a loss of 43.34 crores to the State? The total capital outlay of the six lines was 40 crores. The capital of the losing lines was 167.46 crores. The total capital equalled 207 46. On this the net loss was 43 34 crores. All these lines began to be constructed after 1870. If, therefore, we take it that they generally began to earn profits five years after the date of their completion, and allow the older and new lines an average earning period of twenty years, we shall in no way be exaggerating the loss. Thus, these railways have lost on an average 20 per cent in twenty years or, say, 1 per cent per annum. This is the result. But it will interest you to know something of the principal losing lines.

	<i>Capital in crores</i>	<i>Loss from the beginning in crores</i>
1. North-Western Railway	50.71	25.33
2. Oudh and Rohilkhund	12.56	3.39
3. South Indian	7.53	2.79
4. Southern Mahratta	9.82	4.36
5. Indian Midland	10.31	2.86
6. Bengal-Nagpur	17.51	2.00

I beg to draw your attention, gentlemen, to the enormous loss on one line alone the North-Western Railway, which, capital of 50.71 crores has lost 25.33 crores. Of course, it is to a large extent a Military Railway. But I ask why the annual loss on such a railway, which is purely constructed for military purposes, is not debited to the Military Department just as all charges for mobilization. You will observe that the above six lines alone make up more than half of the total capital outlay and that they have managed to lose between them 40.73 crores or, say, nearly 40 per cent of their capital ! Contrast this railway finance, gentlemen, with the total capital outlay from the beginning of 32 crores on irrigation works which, even after taking into account the non-productive or losing ones, have paid net 6 per cent. It should be remembered that even the East Indian Railway, with all its profits, does not yet yield to Government, after deducting the amount of profits payable to the Company which manages the line, more than 2.5 per cent per annum on its capital, according to the latest official return. Of course, I am aware of the fact that 50 years hence this railway would be the entire property of the State and would then form a most 'valuable asset' against State liabilities. But, meanwhile, I think it is but right that I should point out to you its present paying character. You will thus see what has been the financial burden on the tax payer of extended railways at breathless pace. Even admitting their utility, is it possible that any country, much less so poor a country as Indian, can afford the luxury of the annual losses described above ? And what, it may be asked, is the fair market value of the losing concerns ? Does the Government expect to realize anything near their respective book cost ?

Agricultural Banks

As to the agricultural banks, it is some consolation to notice that after well-nigh twenty years the project, due to the initiative of Sir William Wedderburn, has been revived and that the Government has recognized its importance. It is satisfactory also to notice the institution of an expert Committee to consider the practicability of the scheme from the point of view presented by the existing conditions. Opinions, however seem to differ. The Committee has framed its scheme on the basis of the Co-

operative Credit Societies on the Continent. Their principal object is, no doubt, co-operative banking on a modest scale, with safeguards of a rigid character. Its principle is entirely voluntary. Friendly cooperation must take the lead. Where such cooperation is formed, it will have to regulate its practical proceedings on the lines formulated by the Committee. No doubt here and there some rudimentary Cooperative Societies are already in existence. The one in Multan is supposed to be doing well. On our Bombay side here is an agricultural syndicate, which has done some useful work and which needs development. These small institutions now in existence lead one to hope that after the passing of the present scheme by the legislature, there may be a genuine movement for the establishment of such Cooperative Credit Societies. A good start, with good management, is the first element of success. The *sowcar*, I mean the honest user, is not likely to view his rival with anything like friendliness or favour. At any rate, he will closely watch its proceedings. And if he finds in the end that the new Credit Institution is in no way inimical to his interests, he will slowly endeavour to recognize its importance. Whether in the process of time, which may be many years, he will entirely identify himself with these societies and become its guiding spirit and beneficent fairy is a problem. But anyhow the most satisfactory feature of this new scheme is the wisdom the Committee has exercised in recognizing the absolute importance of the *sowcar* in the domestic economy of the ryot. To the Committee, he is not the black tyrant and blood-sucker that he has often been represented. After all, the Committee is aware that the enlightened self-interest of the State in India demands the existence of the *sowcar*. Without his aid, it would become impossible that the crores of land-revenue could be so punctually gathered from year to year.

Credit

So far, then, the scheme promises to be hopeful. Whether this kind of banking will eventually become popular and stimulate thrift and industry remains to be seen. In fact, thrift and industry are the two cardinal virtues of the Indian peasantry. despite all assertions to the contrary. What the ryot badly wants

is capital and credit. As to capital, it must first exist in the country and as to credit it is a serious question whether with the new fangled legislation in vogue which has sought to restrict the right of transfer in land, credit will be improved. Good security means good credit. But where the former is next to non-existent, how the latter may be established is a question difficult to answer. The *sowcar* whom the Committee invites to help the Co-operative Societies, will think twice and thrice how he may foster credit on nothing.

Wanted Elasticity and Success of the Egyptian System

It is also a moot point whether the scheme has in it all those elements of elasticity to ensure fair success. Anyhow it is possible that, even after a full and fair trial, these societies will prove a success and not a failure as the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act. Again, my fear is that what is easily understood and practised by a European peasant is not possible to be understood and practised by an Indian ryot. The German farmer, for instance, thoroughly understands the principles of the Raiffesen System and profits by availing himself of the advantages offered by it. But is it possible that the illiterate Indian peasant can do so? Are not all his agricultural environments cast in a different mould from those of the German or Italian? It is a great mistake to slavishly follow the European system in this respect when, on the face of it, it is recognized as most unsuitable. I am, gentlemen, personally more inclined to look with favour on the monetary system in vogue for the last six or seven years in Egypt to help the rural classes there. One reason, of all others, which inclines me to it is the great success that has already attended the operations of the Egyptian system. Bearing in mind that the Egyptian cultivator differs little from his Indian brother, it is safe to assume there are more chances of success in following it than the one about to be tried here. The National Bank in Egypt has an autonomy of its own, and is every way unshackled in its operations save so far as the collection of instalments brings it into contact with Government. In its nature, I take it to be a refined edition of the *sowcar*, but without the *sowcar's* cupidity. The bank is quite content to earn but ten per cent on its monies, out of which it fully spends four on charges of collection and

rural agency. It sends, like our local Insurance Companies, a large number of experienced and trustworthy agents to the various villages to ascertain the position of the applicants requiring capital. After due enquiries reports are made. On the basis of these reports advances are made, and instalments of an easy character are fixed. Collection of instalments is made, in which Government aid is taken. Hence there is a Controller appointed by Government to scrutinize all transactions. But beyond this there is no other State supervision. Such a practical scheme, already a great success, would have been preferable. I would recommend instituting one National Bank at least of the character established in Egypt in each Province of the Empire with its branches in the districts. But I entertain no dogmatic opinion on the subject. Nothing would give us greater satisfaction than to see a modest beginning made on the right lines which would attain the principal object we have all in view for the better improvement of the pecuniary condition of the Indian peasantry. Hence, a full and fair trial is essential. Experience may discover defects which might be remedied, and thus give greater permanence to it and offer better chances of success as years roll on. As to education of the rural classes, it is unprofitable at present to say anything. The question of education is our despair. If even after well-nigh fifty years the Provincial Governments, in spite of growing revenues, cannot afford to spend directly from their respective treasuries an amount in the aggregate larger than a crore on all kinds of education, it is hopeless to expect that they would spend anything like a reasonable sum for the education of the rural classes. I, therefore, refrain from making further observations on this melancholy subject, though Lord Curzon has of late revived some hope in this direction, which, it is much to be wished, may be fairly realized.

Grain Storage

In connection with this question of famine prevention, it is also essential to bear in mind whether the annual export of food grains, chiefly wheat and rice, to foreign countries does not contribute somewhat to increase the intensity of famine when drought occurs. The quantity exported varies from year to year

according to the demand, but the average of the last five years may be taken as 21 lakhs of tons per annum. The surplus left is not much. The Commission of 1898 came to the conclusion, after most elaborate calculations and searching tests, that :

“Having regard to the degree to which the increase of population appears to have surpassed the increase of food crop areas, we are inclined to the belief that whatever may have been the normal annual surplus of food grains in 1880, the present surplus cannot be greater than that figure.”

The quantity was five million tons, but both Sir James Caird and Mr Sullivan observed that they were “unable to place any confidence” in those figures. They computed that at the best the surplus was just enough to last ten days for the whole of the Indian population! Under the circumstances they strongly recommended the storage of grain, which was the immemorial practice in the country, and which continued till the system of payment of the State dues in cash instead of kind, and the indebtedness of the ryots, chiefly arising from enhanced revenue assessments, swept it away. Sir James and his colleague remarked that : “In a country where the annual surplus of grain is so small, and where it cannot be increased by foreign importation, there is absolute need of reserves in seasons of scarcity. The remedy for this would be to encourage the storage of grain in such localities in seasons of plenty.”

They recommended that Government should do, through the village officials, for the safety of the poorer classes, what the wealthier now do for themselves. The people live on different varieties of dry grain, grown in their several districts, which is the specific food they are accustomed to. As this common grain is rarely an article of export, its storage could in no way interfere with the operation of foreign trade, and, as the storage would be subdivided in every village, it could be done without disturbance to the usual operations of husbandry. In seasons of abundance, stores may very conveniently be made. A village of 400 inhabitants, cultivating 400 acres of grain, may be reckoned to have 40 of the class for whom the storage is proposed. It was estimated that a store of 7 tons would suffice for this number

during a year of famine, and the quantity required might be secured out of two years of good crops during the interval at the rate of 3.5 tons for each year, without any pressure on the rest of the people, while the storage of that quantity of grain would be a simple and inexpensive operation. The value of these practical suggestions has in no way been diminished even after the lapse of twenty years. On the contrary, the importance of storage is deemed of more paramount necessity for the future than in 1880 after the experience of the two recent calamitous visitations. Storage is an indispensable condition of safety, specially having regard to the continued exports and the greater poverty of the masses. The less the stocks of surplus grain, the higher the prices when a severe drought overtakes the country. But a large rise in the prices of food-grains signifies so much starvation to the poor who are unable to buy them. It is a matter of regret that this point of view is seldom borne in mind by the officials. Even if present to their mind, they take no steps to remedy the evil. The depletion of food-stores is an evil. The abundance of it means low prices, as the deficiency of it means the contrary. Then, as the masses are poor, they cannot buy the grain at famine prices, so that the inevitable result is starvation and death. Here it is essentially imperative that situated as the Indian masses are, storage in the simple and inexpensive way suggested by Sir James Caird should be one of the means whereby famines may be prevented, and hitherto I do not think I have noticed any very serious objection being raised against it.

Other Suggestions

It is not suggested that Government should have public granaries at special centres. Neither is it suggested that arrangements for storing grain should be made for the benefit of "thieves and rats" as Mr. O'Connor cynically observed when replying to a question of the Famine Commissioners of 1898. No: the latest Famine Commission has strongly recommended relief works as far as possible nearer the homes of the famished. Relief within a short distance of villages is advocated. And it is in this connection that the system, as recommended by Sir J. Caird, or in its more modified form, free from all objections, as

was very wisely suggested in the columns of the *Statesman* in August 1900, fits in admirably well and is, therefore, deserving of a fair trial, and I say this, in face of lord Curzon's declaration at Budget time that he would doubt the sanity of those who recommended grain storage. We have an eminently successful trial in this matter, which also can be easily followed. Mr. Parvati Chowdry,—a zemindar, has admirably succeeded, by establishing "Dharma Gola" in his own villages, and his "Note" on the same subject, alluded to in a recent issue of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, requires respectful attention from the authorities. I have now exhausted the subject of the prevention of famines. It is to be earnestly hoped that the practical lessons of the two famines will be seriously borne in mind, for it goes without saying that the consequences of another visitation of the character and intensity of the last is certain to add to the difficulties and anxieties of the Government. Even the *Times*, with all its desire to echo the optimism prevailing at Calcutta and Westminster, is constrained to observe that :

"It may well be doubted whether a day is not coming when not all the resources of the British Empire will suffice to cope with a succession of bad seasons and a final failure of the rains over an extendend area."

This is an ominous warning, of which those responsible should not fail to take a note.

Condition of the Masses

I would now crave leave to rivet your attention on what has been a burning question for many a year—I mean the condition of the masses. All are agreed that India, compared with the countries of Europe and the Far West, is poor. At the same time, it is alleged that the standard of living is low, and, therefore, the prevailing poverty is not of an appalling character. It is, indeed, natural for our alien rulers that they should resent any serious allegation which might in any way reflect on the character of their rule. It is certainly not pleasant for any civilized government to be told that its people are steeped in abject poverty and that poverty, according to all symptoms, is

growing. But when such a disagreeable statement is made, practical statesmanship suggests that its correctness or incorrectness should be conclusively demonstrated. For such a purpose two courses are open. Either the Government, against whom the allegation is made, should court a full and fair inquiry in *coram populo*, say, be means of a disinterested and imperial tribunal of experts, reputed for shifting evidence of irrefragable facts gathered from each district, and probing the truth to the bottom; or it should collect through its own trusted officers such reliable statistics as shall enable the public to draw its own inference one way or the other. In my own opinion, the first method is preferable to the second. An open inquiry in broad daylight, conducted from district to district, where witnesses could be put through the searching test of cross-examination as regards average produce in a given series of years, their average value, the range of wages, the cost of living, the saleable price of land itself, and all other circumstances essential to a right understanding of the true conditions of the people, is the most satisfactory. If the seal of public confidence is to be set on such an investigation, it is superfluous to observe that publicity and close examination of facts are absolutely essential. Unfortunately, for reasons best known to itself, the Government has shrunk from instituting such an open inquiry, though more than once appealed to. In India, it is always so difficult to conquer the hydra of hide-bound officialism.

Method of Computing National Wealth

The second method is departmental. It is the one which the Indian Government has twice adopted, once in 1882 and another in 1888. But it is deemed extremely unsatisfactory, for in its nature it is secretive. Circulars are sent round to the district officers to make inquiries. The public never knows what are the instructions conveyed to them and what may be the scope allowed to the officers, because the circulars are marked "confidential." Accordingly, "confidential" reports are made to which "confidential" replies are given. The results are embodied in a "confidential" despatch to the Secretary of State. If some member of Parliament is inquisitive enough to ask that functionary

whether he would place it on the table of the House, he obligingly answers in the affirmative on the understanding that the papers should be considered "confidential." They are never allowed to be published for general information. The bureaucratic mode in State affairs, in which the public are vitally interested, can never inspire any confidence. And the publication of mere extracts, which their own self-complacent optimism may choose to select, cannot satisfy public curiosity, much less carry conviction home. Of this nature was the inquiry very hurriedly made during the closing months of the Viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin. Selected facts and extracts from the "confidential" reports of district official were afterwards published in the official *Gazette*. But it cannot be said that there was any systematic attempt at computing the annual income, agricultural and non-agricultural. That was only done once during the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon in 1883. Sir David Barbour was entrusted with the work. He calculated that the income from all sources was Rs. 17 per head against Rs. 20 computed by Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji. But the details of the figures by which the aggregate was arrived at were never disclosed. Some official figures, however, had found publicity through members of Parliament. And ten years later, Mr. Dadabhoy, when in the House of Commons, put a series of elaborate interpellations in the matter. On 6th April, 1893, he asked the Under-Secretary: "Whether in 1882 the Finance Minister of India estimated the average income of each inhabitant of India at Rs. 27 per head; whether the estimates were based upon the contents of a Note entitled "An Enquiry into the Incidence of Taxation in British India," prepared by Sir David Barbour; and whether the Note contained the following particulars":

Agricultural Wealth per Head of the Population

Presidency or Province	Rate per head, Rupees
Bombay	22.4
Central Provinces	21.6
Madras	19.0
Punjab	18.5
N.W. Provinces and Oudh	16.4
Bengal	16.9
Burmah	27.6

I may mention that Sir Evelyn Baring had referred to the above identical figures in his speech in the same year that they were worked out at the introduction of the Bengal Tenancy Act. At the time the value of the agricultural income was calculated at 332 crores of rupees. Including Burmah and Assam it was 350 crores. The non-agricultural income was put down at 175 crores. The total was 525 crores. This sum, divided by the population of the day, viz., 19.45 crores, gave Rs. 27 per head. In the same Note, the value of the gross produce of the different provinces was given as follows :

	Rupees in crores
Punjab	34.15
N.W. Provinces and Oudh	71.15
Bengal	103.50
Central Provinces	21.25
Bombay	39.00
Madras	50.00

*How Government Shrinks from Publishing Details
For Critical Examination*

The result of the interpellation was that the Secretary of State declined to lay the full Note of Sir David Barbour, referred to by Mr. Dadabhoy, on the table of the House. Mr.

Dadabhoy further moved to have a similar return made for submission to Parliament based on the latest statistics available till 1893; but this also was refused. So far, it will be seen that the Government was disinclined to take public into its confidence, much less to allow it to offer by the publication of all the details a sound and healthy criticism thereon. The estimates, moreover, were all made out in secret, and the broad results alone were made known. What were the actual details of each province, namely, the quantity of agricultural produce, the several prices at which it was computed, and so forth, were never disclosed. Hence there was no means of testing the accuracy of the figures. In October 1900, at Simla, and later on, at Budget time in March last at Calcutta, Lord Curzon observed that his latest estimates of agricultural income showed Rs. 20 per head against Rs. 18 in 1880. Here, too, we have practically not been informed of the details on which the estimates have been worked out. Hence the public interested in the question have no means of testing the accuracy of the statement. Both, frankly admits Lord Curzon, are mere estimates. The data are not "incontrovertible." "There is an element of conjecture in them, but so there was in the figures of 1880." It will be thus perceived that after all both estimates have been pronounced by the highest authority as merely conjectural. But Mr. O'Connor, the Director-General of Statistics, whose department furnishes all statistics, goes even a step further than the Viceroy. Asked by the Hon'ble Mr. Bose, one of the members of the Famine Commission of 1898, whether, as matters stood, it was possible "to estimate with any degree of total accuracy the total food-supply in the country", he replied as follows: "I tried to make an estimate when the famine broke out a year ago, but abandoned the attempt finding it was not possible to work it out satisfactorily. We did not even know accurately the area of production of food grains. I think the estimates in Bengal are extremely defective; then, we do not know the areas in the Native States; in the Madras Presidency we have no information as regards large tracts; in fact, our information is fragmentary" (vide page 5, Indian Famine Commission Report, 1898, Appendix 7, Vol. I). After such an authoritative declaration by the Director-General of Statistics him-

self it is needless to observe that no scientific statistician or any statistical society of reputation, such as the Royal Statistical Society of England, would accept either set of statistics of agricultural income, unless they could be scientifically verified. But verification implies, in the first instance, all details; and, in the second place, absolute accuracy. When we bear in mind that the different provinces are differently situated, with different out-turns of food and non-food crops, with varying prices and wages, it is no light task to bring the data of all the different provinces to a common denomination and deduce results therefrom which might be reasonably accepted as correct. Moreover, the very method of computation should proceed on recognized scientific principles. Next, if one period is to be compared with another, it is necessary to take into consideration a series of good and bad years, so that there may be every probability of coming nearer to the truth. For instance, if the last computation of the annual income was made in 1880, and if, for purposes of comparison, another is to be made at present, it is essential to take into account the total agricultural income during the last twenty years and strike an annual average. We do not know whether the figures quoted by Lord Curzon have been worked out on this principle; otherwise it is entirely misleading to take the year 1900 only and base a comparison thereon. Indian harvests are subject to such violent fluctuations that unless a series of fat and lean years are taken together, it would not be right to select certain years and reject others. So far as to the statistics themselves. But further care is necessary to see that the system of computation itself, which may be adopted in one period, is the same as that is adopted in another if a fair comparison is to be made. All exceptional factors in each period should be eliminated and the constant factors brought on an identical level. For these reasons it would be unsafe to accept the estimate given by Lord Curzon at the last Budget time. And more unsafe still would it be to institute a comparison with the figures of 1880 and attempt to draw an inference therefrom, be it favourable or unfavourable. To take one instance only. What may have been the produce per acre in 1880, and what may it have been on an average during the twenty years which ended with 1900? Lord Curzon has.

told us that in 1880 the yield was computed at 730 lbs., while his own estimates are based on 840 lbs. But he offers us no proof in support of the statement ! Here, too, the public is not made aware of the details which could be verified. We are always advised by the authorities to verify our own facts before submitting them for their consideration. Are we not in turn entitled to ask Government to give us conclusive proofs of their own facts touching agricultural income ? Even, assuming the out-turn of 840 lbs. per acre for both periods, it would seem that taking the quantity produced per head of the population, the result would show that in 1880 it was 793 lbs., and in 1900, it was 740 lbs. Then, again, can we rely on the prices as annually recorded for food and non-food crops published in the yearly statistical serial when experts discard them as valueless, they being all the figures on a fixed day either in January or July ? Again, the retail prices which are more or less compiled on hearsay by the semi-illiterate village accountant, can hardly be relied upon.

An Expert Commission Imperative

It is almost unprofitable under the circumstances to pursue these official statistics, of which no details are offered for purposes of examination and verification. If the Viceroy is anxious to prove to the world that both agricultural and non-agricultural income has increased during the last twenty years, he would be greatly assisting the independent public by placing before it all evidence in full detail, which could be tested on principles which scientific statisticians have formulated. Either, then, this evidence must be made available to the public, or a public inquiry should be instituted. The value of the latter methods of investigation cannot be too highly rated. For what has been the case for years past ? The school of pessimists, at whose head is the veteran Mr. Dadabhoy, observe that their own detailed inquiry, based on statistics supplied by the officials themselves, leads them to infer that the annual income now is less than what it was in 1880. Mr. Digby is the latest and most capable exponent of that statement. I need not refer to the elaborate open letter he addressed some months

since to Lord Curzon. You have all perused it, and each of you could judge for yourself after verifying his figures. On the other hand, the optimists, who almost all belong to the governing class, contend, "as Lord Curzon did in March last, that, the movement is for the present distinctly in a forward and not in a retrograde direction; that there is more money, not less, in the country; that the standard of living among the poorer classes is going up, not down.

Thus, the one school directly contradicts the other. As far as the pessimists are concerned, I have already stated that they were for testing the accuracy of the figures of 1880, and hence an appeal was made to the Secretary of State in Parliament to publish all the details. But that official shrank from courting the critical examination for which they were wanted. It is scarcely intelligible why that functionary should have adopted an attitude of *non-possumus* in this respect. The object of both schools is to reach the bottom of the truth. If, then, the truth regarding the present condition of the people, as compared with what it was in 1880, is to be ascertained and placed beyond all cavil, why should there be such a reticence about making all information available to the public? It is the duty of every just and well-organized Government to find out whether prosperity is decreasing or increasing among its subjects. If it be decreasing, the causes of such should be discovered so as to remove them. Shepherds of people, as Bacon says, must needs know the disorders in a State of which economic ones are the chief. If that be the political axiom of all Governments, ought it not, *a fortiori*, to be the axiom of an alien Government like that of the British? Gentlemen, I will give you an instance. It lay, after the return of King Victor Emmanuel to Rome, was in an extremely bad plight. The condition of the people was miserable. For some years things went on from bad to worse. The tendency was to allow the economic situation to drift. But at last the day of reckoning came, and the Government was forced to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the condition and discover what was the real national wealth. It was presided over by Court Jacine, and the investigation proceeded

on lines suggested by scientific statisticians. Lord Curzon has, during the three years of his Viceroyalty, nominated at least four Commissions. What is there to prevent him from appointing a fifth one, of independent experts, European and Indian, to determine the true national income and set at rest this long pending controversy? In my opinion, such an inquiry has become imperative, and that would be the wisest statesmanship which could adopt such a course. It is, however, a matter of regret that, on the one hand, the Government and its apologists in the Press, both here and in England, resent the statement of the pessimists and try to discredit the figures, which are really supplied by itself; on the other hand, it refuses to give publicity to all the details on which it founds its own deduction as to the improvement in the condition of the masses. It is not unnatural if, under such a condition, there is no popular confidence in official statistics, while popular pessimism grows apace and derives fresh emphasis from the actual economic phenomena to be witnessed before their very eyes. The Government should not, therefore, fight shy of the proposed inquiry, be the result what it may, for it is a serious question, vitally affecting the welfare of millions of people. If, on the one hand, it is found that the national income has increased, the present bogey of the pessimists will at once be laid low. The people will be rejoiced to learn that, in spite of calamitous visitations, they are progressing favourably. On the other hand, if it is ascertained that after all there is growing impoverishment, it would be well for the optimistic school, at whose head are the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, to drop their complacent optimism and strive to remedy the evil by stimulating agricultural and other industries. The Government of India years ago accepted the postulate, as was laid down by the Famine Commission of 1879, that the ultimate object of the Government should be to maintain agricultural and other operations at the highest attainable standard of efficiency. In its despatch twelve years ago, it fully acknowledged its responsibility in the matter. It admitted that the cultivators and their families, and their cattle must be properly fed and their needs for labour, irrigating machinery and agricultural implements

adequately met. Insufficiency of food, as well as deterioration or lack of such mechanical appliances, must diminish the effectiveness of labour, and thereby reduce the produce of the country. Hence the Government cannot divest itself of the responsibility of allowing agricultural operations to be maintained at that high standard.

Evidence on the Condition of the Masses

This being the recognized responsibility of the Government, let me put before you the evidence which is to be found in official papers and reports as to the actual condition of the masses at present. I need hardly refer to the result of the inquiry made during Lord Dufferin's time, fully familiar, as you are all with it. It was bad enough in all conscience, though, to avoid disquietude at home, it was represented that it need cause "no anxiety at present." But what has been the condition of the self-same masses since? Let me quote the words of the report of the Famine Commission of 1898 :

"This section is very large, and includes the great class of day-labourers and the least skilled of artizans. So far as we have been able to form a general opinion upon a difficult question from the evidence we have heard and the statistics placed before us, the wages of these people have not risen in the last twenty years in due proportion to the rise of prices of the necessaries of life. The experience of the recent famine fails to suggest that this section of the community has shown any large command of resources or any increased powers of resistance. Far from contracting, it seems to be gradually widening, particularly in the more congested districts. Its sensitiveness or liability to succumb, instead of diminishing, is possibly becoming more accentuated, as larger and more powerful forces supervene and make their affects felt where formerly the result was determined by purely local conditions."

The accentuation, it is needless to say, came two years later on with a vengeance, and it is now a matter of history how at the very outset of famine conditions in 1899, millions swarmed to the relief camps, absolutely prostrated and with-

out any means whatever to buy food, I leave it to you, gentlemen, to contrast this dismal state of affairs with the general statement made in the Council by Lord Curzon in March last, as to the growing improvement and better standard of living. I leave it to you to judge whether you can reconcile the one condition with the other.

Two Salient Statements of the Viceroy Traversed

Leaving the question alone, it may not be amiss to one or two other salient points in Lord Curzon's Budget speech. He is reported to have said that in a country largely dependent for its maintenance on agriculture, the time must come when the agricultural income must cease to grow by reason, firstly, of increase of population and, secondly, by the limit of land further available for cultivation. Under such a condition, it is prudent for a farsighted Government to stimulate non-agricultural sources of wealth. None will dispute the general accuracy of the second statement, but is it proved that after a certain limit is reached, there cannot be any more agricultural productivity? It may be that the land is not so well cultivated as it ought to be; that owing to variety of reasons, want of capital, measure, and so forth, a plot of land may be capable of growing a larger quantity of product but cannot do so. As far as India is concerned, the best experts, from Sir John Caird to Mr. Voelcker and Mr. Leather, have unhesitatingly declared that there is every reason to expect that, with better means and resources, the productivity of the soil might be largely increased. When India can only grow 9 bushels of wheat per acre, for instance, against 30 and more produced in Europe and America, it goes without saying that the proposition, as laid down by the Viceroy, cannot be universally predicted. Certainly, it cannot be so predicated of India. It is, therefore, the duty of his Lordship's Government to do all in its power to stimulate that productivity. In the proportion that the economic condition of the ryot is improved, will there be a corresponding improvement in the country's agriculture. Unfortunately, it is notorious that up till now the Indian Government has

practically done next to nothing to promote agricultural industry in a way to induce greater prosperity to the peasantry. On the contrary, the evidence almost everywhere is to discourage that industry by a variety of harsh measures, legislative and executive. A considerable relaxation or modification of those measures is the first necessity. But so far the State seems to stuff its ears with cotton when appeals are made to it for lightening the burden of land assessments. It should not be forgotten that the revenue was formerly paid in kind, which in times of drought was in every way better suited to the ryot than the present one of cash. Moreover, now-a-days the ryot's crops are mortgaged, even before being harvested. However high the price may be for its crops, he realizes little profit out of it for himself. He is in no way better, perhaps worse. It is the middleman who is enriched. To the ryot only the load of indebtedness becomes greater.

All these facts have to be duly weighed when it is lightly asserted that it is impossible for Government to further stimulate agricultural industry. It is in its power to do so, as I have just suggested. If I may be allowed to offer an opinion on this subject, I would venture to say that agriculture in the country can still be made a great deal more productive. But this is not possible so long as the Government fails in its primary duty. The pressure of the land-revenue system being relieved, and other undue severities of forest and other laws which affect the domestic economy of the masses being relaxed, agriculture must materially improve. But the State refuses to recognize that assessments are heavy. As a matter of fact, however, it arrives at the conclusion because it has not yet cared to find out what is the real ratio which the gross produce bears to the assessment, and what surplus actually remains in the hands of the ryot after all charges of cultivation, interest on loans, etc., are deducted. It is quite possible to conceive of the gross agricultural income increasing and yet the net income of the producer a diminishing quantity. This aspect of the question also demands attention.

*The Monograph of Sir Edward Law on
Economic Progress*

Then let me briefly refer to the so-called facts of "economic progress" with which the Finance Minister so regaled us in his last Financial Statement. He says that, "close examination of certain material facts will afford further proof that recuperative powers are no idle assumption." Sir Edward Law then refers to a few figures of recent imports and exports to the consumption of salt, savings bank deposits and so forth. As to imports and exports, can any sound inference as to the real commercial progress of the people be drawn from merely exhibiting superficial figures of a triennial period? But Sir Edward's statements are open to so many challenges that all I can do in this place is to put the following queries to which, it is to be hoped, he will make an effort to reply fully, supported by irrefragable evidence, next Budget day. None will be more glad than myself to see a very satisfactory answer to every one of them. What are the scientific data on which to base the theory of the commercial prosperity of any country? Can India, which is a debtor country, and withal subject to foreign rule, be ever commercially prosperous when the naked fact of an annually increasing indebtedness and a large balance of exports, for which there is no return, is to be clearly seen? Can the abstraction of at least thirty crores of the national produce of the country, year in and year out, without the slightest hope of return, ever point to "recuperative" resources or tend to any material accumulation of the surplus national capital which, in other countries, develops true trade, arts, industries, and manufactures? Is it true that the large imports in piece-goods, in metals, in railway and building materials, in sugar, and so forth, are entirely or mostly on account of foreign capital, temporarily invested in this country? It is true that the large exports in rice, in cotton, in jute, in oilseeds, in tea, and so forth are entirely or mostly on account of foreign capital, temporarily invested in this country? If true, where would the so called commerce of the country be if there were an absolute withdrawal of that foreign capital? Apart from these facts, where is the evidence that in the consumption of

the articles required by the masses there has been any progress worth speaking of during the last twenty-five years, *pari passu* with the growth of the population? Are the masses in a position to buy today even a single yard more per annum of Lancashire goods than they were in 1875? How much of the metals now imported belong to foreign capital, and how much to indigenous capital? Has the State ever taken out fair statistics of the percentage of imports and exports belonging to Native States? Has it done so similiar for the foreign capitalists? And has it found out what is the real share of the people of British India; and, if so, what was that share per head of the population in 1875 and in 1900? Has the consumption of salt per head of the population since 1886-87 increased or diminished? Was it not 33,729,954 maunds in that year, and was it not 35,727,256 maunds in 1900-1901? In other words, is it not the fact that in 1886-87, the consumption per head was 13.9 lbs. and in 1899-1900, 12.7 lbs.? Is that a sign of the prosperity of the masses or a deterioration in their condition? Is it true that larger balances at Post Office Savings Banks signify greater prosperity? If so, may it be asked how is it that the deposits per head, which came in 1889-90 to Rs. 164, have since steadily gone down till ten years later they came down to Rs. 125? Is that phenomenon to be seen in the savings of people in Europe, in the United Kingdom, and in the United States? On the whole, it would be rash to share the opinion of the Viceroy and his Finance Minister that the condition of the people is undergoing improvement. The positive evidence is against the statement. Where there is no reserve, no accumulation, no wealth, where millions live from hand to mouth on a bare wage, from season to season, on a low diet, it is rather bold to assert that there is increasing prosperity. Rather we are obliged to agree with the Duke of Argyll, who had not studied in vain the economics of India, that "of poverty and of destitution, more or less temporary and among individuals in European countries, we know. But of chronic poverty, and of permanent reduction to the lowest level of subsistence, such as prevail only too widely among the vast population of rural India, we have no example in the Western world."

Thus, poverty must be admitted as the normal condition of India. It can only be dispelled by a wise, gradual and continuous betterment of the poor. The three E's of Count Tolstoi are necessary for the country's welfare, namely Enrichment, Enlightenment and Emancipation from superstition and oppressive burdens.

The Economic Evils of Absenteeism

It is to be feared, gentlemen, that so long as absenteeism which is the principal feature of British Rule, exists, it is not possible to see any improvement. The abstraction from year to year to foreign parts of the national produce to the extent of thirty or forty crores without any hope of return, is considered the greatest obstacle in the way of national prosperity. The fact cannot be denied that the sterling obligations have increased from ten millions in 1874 to eighteen millions sterling. It must be admitted that the annual resources of the Indian people to that extent are drained away to foreign parts for which there is absolutely no return. Whatever the causes which lead to these obligations, there can be no gainsaying the economic results of that process of abstraction. The obligations we all know consist of pensions and allowances to European officials, interest on railways, stores, and so forth. But it should be remembered that the payments are compulsory, that is to say, they have not been voluntarily incurred by the people. In fact, the consent of the Indians has never been taken in the matter. Secondly, the payments by themselves are considered excessive. Nowhere in the civilized world are higher salaries and pensions paid than in England. But as a matter of fact the salaries, pensions and allowance paid to European agency in this country are even greater than those allowed in England. So far they are unparalleled. The difference between the present rulers of India and their predecessors consists in this that, while the latter employed the indigenous agency and lived in the country, the former govern by their own, which is imported. However heavy or burdensome or tyrannical the taxation may have been in the case of the former rulers, the economic effects were not so disastrous as they are at present. I do not here raise the question even

of the justice of the payments. That, again, would lead us to another branch of the controversy. My object here is to point out, solely and exclusively, the mischievous economic aspect of the costly foreign agency. Let us, for argument's sake, admit that the payments are just; but I ask every enlightened and fair-minded person, official and non-official, whether or not a country must grow poorer for the ceaseless drain of 30 to 40 crores of its annual wealth—the fruit of the children of the soil—without any return. Just consider the aggregate amount of this drain since 1860. It comes to 624 crores, without taking into account all private remittances in the shape of profits of merchants, traders and planters. At the very least these should come to 300 crores, say, a total of 900 crores. But I entirely leave the last out of account and confine myself to the officially recorded figures of the Government's Home only, and I appeal to the economic sense of our rulers to say whether such a colossal abstraction from year to year is not the real the cause of the poverty of India.

If these 624 crores had remained in the country, what might have been the condition of the people today? Capital accumulates capital. Take a single instances of a specific character. Here are 180 indigenous cotton mills; of these 81 are in the city of Bombay. How have they multiplied? Is it not the case that the very earnings or savings of capital made by the dozen or two dozen at the beginning have tended to a large extent to multiply the concerns? But if capital accumulates capital, how may it be possible without any accumulation worth mentioning that India can grow richer, that it can embark on new and profitable industrial enterprises? It is superfluous to refer to the axiom of the economists that industry is limited by capital; that where there is lack of capital, it is not possible to foster arts and manufacturers and industries. If, then, the fountain source instead of being replenished, is annually being drained away, is it an exaggeration to say that the time may come, unless other intervening factors neutralize their effect, when the process of exhaustion must bring its own nemesis. The fact is, India is not free to choose its own administrative agency. Were it free, is there

the slightest doubt that the entire administrative agency would be indigenous living and spending their monies in the country? India, I repeat, is not free, and, therefore, it has no choice in the matter. The governing authorities, in the first place, have most strangely willed that almost all the higher posts shall be held by men, who live a while here, and then retire to their own country. Even another great modern Asiatic power, Russia, is not known to import wholesale Russian agency to carry on the work of administration in the distant provinces of Central Asia! But we are told that the European agency is extremely limited. It counts no more than 17,300 persons. True. But contrast the annual expenditure of 16 crores incurred on their account with the 2.75 crores earned by Indians. Did England sit quiet while the Plantagenets were filling all the high offices from France to the great disadvantage of the English themselves? Was not England pauperized when the Papacy was rampant and abstracted millions from it annually, as history has recorded? Would England refrain from complaining, supposing that the position of India and England was today reversed?

Asiatic Poverty

The grievous error is, that the present system of administration is not regulated by economic laws. Again, while India is characterized by what may be called Asiatic poverty, our rulers govern it on principles of what may be called Asiatic immoderateness. In Asia, everything is on a colossal scale, its mountains and rivers, its seething population, and so forth. In fact, as an accomplished writer has observed :

“Nothing in Asia is sufficiently restricted; empires are too big, populations are too vast; all features of Nature are too huge; the arts are too gigantesque; the powers entrusted to men are too powerful; calamities are too widespread; all things have in them a truce of immoderateness as if gods and men alike had lost the sense of wise limitation. . . . Everything from the powers of kings and the conceptions of men to the forces of Nature is gigantic, enormous, fatiguing to the brain.

In fact, when measured, as all things must be measured, all things by a standard of which man is the unconscious unit, is immoderate.”

While the country is poor, it is ruled at a cost unheard of in any part of the civilized world. It is thus that poor as India is, it is being made poorer by the economic anomalies which our Western Rulers have unfortunately introduced into the country. It is, of course, argued on the other side that though the administration is costly, it is of a superior character to that which the Indians, had they been free, might have had. True. But the Indians then would have cut their coat according to their cloth. And as they grew richer by commerce and manufactures, they might have, in a natural way, aspired to higher standards of civilized government. But it would have been folly for India to have risen at once to a pitch of the highest form of civilized government without counting the cost—millions which it could not have afforded and which must have eventually ruined it. In short, no country can with impunity continue to offend the laws of economy, which are based on Nature herself. The justification urged, therefore, can hardly stand. As an able economist has observed in the *Statesman* on this question, I will say :

“Admitting, for argument’s sake, that the defence of the existing system, so far as it rests on facts, is a good one, it is good in respect only of payments to Europeans made for such services as could not be performed by Indians consistently with the country’s welfare, and in respect of such payments only so far as they are not excessive. Any other payments made for the services of Europeans are clearly payments made for the benefit, not of India, but of the ruling race.”

But I cannot further expatiate on this burning question. All I can say is, that England is doing the greatest injustice in this matter to India for which she shall have one day to pay most dearly. The whole question of the agency of administration demands radical reform. As Mr. N.N. Ghose shrewdly observed in his able Provincial Conference address, at

Midnapur, the two great branches of the Service are now an anachronism, and the time must come, however it may be artificially protracted, when there will have to be a fundamental change based on justice and equity, in spite of monopolies and powerful vested interests. Meanwhile, it is our duty to press this subject from time to time before the British public and educate it to realize the enormity of the economic evils arising from the erroneous policy pursued at present and the incalculable advantage of economy and efficiency for the welfare of the masses, certain to accrue from the full and free employment of Indians in the higher grades of the Services.

Indian Finance

This brings us to the question of Indian Finance generally. At so late an hour, it would be tiring your patience to dilate at length on it. But when we are exultingly told of the recuperative resources of India, and the miracles which a succession of Finance Ministers are supposed to have wrought, we cannot but smile at the complacency of those who indulge in such high-coloured optimism. Our attention is directed to fat surpluses, than indirect transfers of property from the pockets of the voiceless tax-payers to the coffers of the omnipotent tax-eaters. It may be an ingenious, but not an ingenious, way of raising the wind—this device of creating a surplus by debasing the currency and putting into circulation the rupee at 16 pence when it is only worth 11 pence. It is further observed that this nostrum has steadied exchange and relieved in a measure the Indian treasury of the heavier burden of the Home remittances. It is, however, curiously forgotten that not all the steadiness of exchange in the world can reduce by a feather's weight the true burden of the taxpayer. He has, anyhow, to remit 18 millions sterling annually. As things go, the remittance has to be made in the shape of exports of produce, which is part of the annual wealth of the country. In reality, produce equivalent in value to that amount has to be sent year after year, be the exchange what it

may. Be it 12 or 24 pence, it makes not the slightest difference to the tax-payer in the burden he has to bear.

No True Surplus

But apart from the meretricious methods of balancing the annual Budget, whereby deficits are converted into surpluses and *vice-versa*, let me enquire whether India has anything like a true surplus of revenue. Such able and accomplished Finance Ministers as Sir John Strachey and Lord Cromer have placed on record their deliberate opinion that there is none. When the State incurs debt from year to year, and has managed to pile quite an Ossa of loans, whether for productive or non-productive purposes, amounting to 317 crores without the slightest attempt at repayment of it by means of a sinking fund, it is idle to talk of surpluses, more especially when the "assets" do not represent "the commercial value of the undertaking"—mostly your losing railways—as the Secretary of State is obliged to remind members of Parliament in this annual "explanatory memorandum."

Taxation, Artificial Currency and its Multifold Evils

Moreover, it is forgotten that the so-called surpluses of recent years have been obtained by means of extra taxation, which has been raised from time to time since the era of the Penjeh scare and the seizure of Upper Burma. The licence tax was converted into income tax in 1886; next, the salt duty was enhanced by 8 annas per maund; later on, the import duty of 5 per cent on all articles of merchandise, save coal and machinery, was levied; and lastly, the 3.5 per cent duty on cotton fabrics. Each time the taxation was levied or enhanced, the plea put forth was low exchange, though it was pointed out that the plea was a hollow one. The annual average increase in this new and enhanced taxation comes to 7 crores of rupees. It was all ear-marked, successive Viceroys having openly promised, as may be ascertained on a reference to their speeches in the Council, that it would be remitted as soon as the finances permitted. Exchange was the continuous burden of their song; but exchange, according

to their own boast, is now stable. The necessity, therefore, of the enhanced taxes has ceased to exist. But it is a matter of regret to have to state that the public faith in the matter of this taxation has not been kept. Public faith has been greatly shattered by the additional indirect taxation that has now been levied by means of the artificial appreciation of the rupee, against which the whole country has protested. While millions have to pay dearly for a pinch of salt, a handful of fat people are still allowed to draw exchange compensation on the principle, it is presumed, that 'to him that hath shall be given'. The evil effect of the artificially managed currency on the producers were fully pointed out by me on this platform at the time and even before the closure of the Mints. I had forecasted the evils which have been now realized. Those engaged in industrial pursuits, chiefly tea and cotton, have not been slow to point out how the evil effects have told tangibly on their earnings. Their spokesmen and recognized organizations have publicly drawn attention to the injury entailed on them. In the Bombay Presidency, the wail is that Japan has benefited by the closure of the Mints. The yen has still a better purchasing value than the Chinese dollar. Hence, Japan is better able to compete with, if not undersell, Bombay yarn in the common markets of China. The tea-planters of Calcutta and Assam, too, have similarly complained. Their grievance is, that the artificial rupee gives a poorer return for their sales in gold-using countries, and that this poorer yield is in no way compensated for by cheaper cost of production. An intelligent controversy is still going on in the Press, specially in the *Capital*. In Bombay, Mr. J.A. Wadia, a shrewd millowner, has been inditing a series of letters on the subject. Again, we have the outside independent testimony of Mr. Kopsch, late Commissioner and Statistical Secretary of Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs, as related in the pages of the *Empire Review*. He observes there that : "The marked falling off in Indian textile fabrics suggests a rise in price owing to the fictitious value of the Rupee, and consequent decline in demand, whereas the Japanese exchange still remains about *par*." Again, speaking of the falling off of British export trade generally with the

Far East, Mr. Kopsch remarks that the "real explanation appears to be that the enhanced silver price of our goods, due to the demonetization of the white metal, completely nullifies every advantage acquired by extended and free markets, as one example will show. Our shipments to China in 1890, when exchange averaged 5s. 2 1/4d. aggregated £ 9,138,000, and ten years later (1899) when the rate only yielded 31/8, our exports for the year, remained the same, say £9,038,000, though possibly larger in bulk, notwithstanding that we have now a vastly greater field to supply. But if we convert these sterling shipments to Chinese currency, it will be found that merchandise of the same sterling value which cost 35,232,497 taels in 1890 now requires a payment of 60,046,186 taels, or an increase of 70 per cent—an impost calculated to stunt any possible growth."

These remarks are worthy of serious consideration. Mr. David Yule, of your city, has in more than one speech of his as Chairman of the Calcutta Bank referred to this evil effect of the artificially inflated Rupee. The opinion of so sound and level-headed a critic of the Government policy of currency demands consideration and is entitled to respect. But while this is the complaint of those who lay the principal cause of the depression of the tea and cotton industry principally at the door of recent currency legislation, I am not unaware of the arguments urged on the other side, namely, by those who refuse to accept that proposition. It is urged that much of the depression of which both tea-planters and cotton manufacturers complain, has its origin in over-production and other causes. As far as the former are concerned, a statement prepared by Mr. George Seton, touching forty-five tea companies and their price has been published to demonstrate what little foundation there is for attributing the depression in the trade to the artificial Rupee. To me it seems that both causes have combined to bring it about. I cannot bring myself to the belief that the altered currency has rendered no injury whatever. The injury has been done though possibly not to the exaggerated extent alleged by the complainants. In the case of the Bombay cotton mills, it may be worth while

inquiring, how much of the depression is owing to over-production, how much to improvident management, how much to heavy interest on a debt beyond the original capital outlay and how much to short time consequent on plague and famine. A careful survey of the earnings of Bombay cotton industry will show that the average profits do not go beyond 5 per cent, and a greater portion of the earnings of weaving mills is swept away by the excise duty brought into force by the currency nostrum. In the case of the planters, too, it may be enquired how much may be due to the currency nostrum, how much to the condition of the tea soils themselves, as Mr. Horace Mann observes, and how much to over-production. It will be thus seen, that the subject is an arguable one from both sides. That the producers and manufacturers have been hit cannot be gainsaid. The former, the bulk of whom are our impoverished agriculturists, are now paying a larger amount to the State treasury by way of their land revenue in the shape of indirect taxation. For every Rupee now paid into the Treasury by the ryot represents at least 30 per cent more of the produce of his land. All other taxes are similarly raised; so, too, all debts. Practically there is a sweeping transfer of property from the working millions who create the wealth and make the prosperity of the empire to the tax eaters. But, on the other hand, it is observed that the producer in turn is benefitted in his purchasing power by the same enhanced Rupee. The question is where lies the greater advantage—on the side of the State or the producer? Again, what about the silver ornaments of the masses? What are their losses today when silver is sold for Rs. 67 instead of 100 Rupees per 100 tolas? These are questions which have to be duly weighed. As I have just remarked, the matter is perfectly arguable and could be well thrashed out by a committee of really competent and disinterested experts. Meanwhile, it may be noted that the coinage of over 14 crores of new Rupees last year for British India has completely exploded the fallacy of a former Finance Minister as to the “redundancy” of that coin. The stringency of the monetary market, from the date of the closure of Mints till late, clearly demonstrated, apart from the factor

of famine expenditure, that the redundancy argument was a romance of our currency doctrinaires. The Rupee is indispensable to millions of the population, and it is impossible that it can be driven out from the ordinary transactions of business-people and the domestic economy of the masses, and so long as the huge amount of the coin in circulation remains unabsorbed by our new-fangled currency, the policy of the Government can hardly be pronounced a success. With an increasing population, an increasing number of Rupees will have still to be added to the existing circulation. What has happened in the case of Germany as regards *thalers*, after the demonetization of silver in 1873, is actually happening in India with regard to Rupees. For fully twenty-six years the German Government did its level best by all kinds of makeshifts to drive away the *thalers* from circulation and substitute gold, but was repeatedly foiled. At last that Government has had to increase rather than diminish the coinage of *thalers*, owing principally to the fact that the people could not do without them and the demand per head of the population had greatly increased. Whether the demand in future in India will be larger per head may be questioned. It depends on the greater material prosperity of the people. But the growth of the population itself must oblige the Indian Government to coin at the very least at the rate of 4 crores per annum. Had they continued to coin at that rate during the last seven years, there should have been an additional circulation of 28 to 30 crores. But the panic-stricken shortsightedness, which closed the Mints could not see its way to this coinage. Meanwhile, stringency during the busy season became chronic, till the different Chambers of Commerce eventually compelled the Government to coin afresh. The fact conclusively demonstrated the fallacy of redundancy, and established the necessity of an annual coinage in proportion to the popular demand. We have already about 17 crores of additional circulation which has had the effect of allaying the stringency. But these facts inform us how far the State is behind in matters of finance and currency, and how its ignorance and stubbornness entail incalculable injury on all classes of the community, save the tax-eaters.

Military Expenditure

Reverting to finances again, it is a matter of regret that military expenditure, against which the Congress from the very date of its inception has vigorously entered its protest, and against which your representative as well as the Chairman of the British Committee made a strong fight before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, has undergone no diminution. I pointed out in my evidence before that body that but for the increased military expenditure which has steadily grown since the seizure of Upper Burmah and the Penjdeh scare, there might have arisen no necessity for additional taxation; and that the pretext of low exchange was utterly unfounded. The increased burden of exchange by reason of the fall in the value of silver, at which the Government was needlessly alarmed, could have been easily borne without a pie of additional taxation. The expenditure of 25 crores per annum against the former one or 16 has only been made practicable by this taxation. The question is whether there is necessity for the large increase in the army which has been witnessed since 1886. The Government of India itself has been of opinion that it is not, and that India is made to maintain so large an army for British Imperial interests. In the latest despatch which was submitted by that authority itself to the Royal Commission, it is observed: (Para, 21 of Government of India Despatch of 25 March 1890, Appendix 45, Vol. II, Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure.): "Millions of money have been spent on increasing the army in India, on armaments and fortifications, to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent the incursions of the warlike people of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British power in the East. The scope of all these great and costly measures reaches far beyond Indian limits and the policy which dictates them is an Imperial policy. We claim, therefore, that in the maintenance of the British forces in this country a just and even liberal view should be taken of the charges which should legitimately be made against Indian revenue. The people of India, who have no voice in the

matter, should not be able to complain that an excessive military tribute is demanded from the revenue of this country, while on her side, England, with whom rests the final decision, should be able to show that this settlement has been effected in a spirit of justice and consideration."

*Recommendations of the Minority of the Royal Commission
on Indian Expenditure*

It is clear from the above extract that it is owing to the maintenance of British supremacy in the East that this army is maintained. Equity, therefore, demands that the British Treasury should bear all the expenses. What we have to incessantly urge on the Government and Parliament is the injustice of making India pay the piper while the British nation calls for the tune. No doubt some relief has been given to Indian finances by carrying out the recommendations of the majority of the Royal Commission in reference to capitation grants. But we should never lose sight of the fact that the majority's recommendations under this head are of a flea-bite character and that they have ignored the larger question of the equitable appointment of all military charges. We have to look, therefore, to the recommendations of the minority, who have made their report from the Indian point of view. The principle propounded is a very reasonable one and ought to commend itself to those who are anxious to see that there should be absolute financial equity in the matter of all England's relations with India. Since British Imperial requirements and British supervision are urged as absolutely essential, it is but fair that Great Britain should share equally with India all expenses of British agency, Civil and Military. As the minority report recommends: "The cost of all European agency, wherever employed, might be divided half-and-half between India and the Imperial Exchequer." The British tax payer, would thus, equally with the Indian tax-payer, become interested in checking the excessive employment of costly imported agency and a useful spirit of inquiry would be aroused with reference to efficiency and economy of the Indian administration. The salary of the Secretary of State himself would thus come under purview, which would

at least have this effect; that all the inflated optimism, which is often aired at Budget debates and elsewhere in matters of Indian finance, would find no place in that functionary's recitation. On such a broad and equitable principle, it is alleged, is needed for Imperial purposes in which England alone is interested, to agree to the recommendation of the minority that "the revenues of India should be relieved of their entire charges, and that they should be treated as part of the reserve forces of the Eastern portion of the British Empire generally, and borne in future upon the army estimates in that capacity." It should be remembered that since 1885-86, the Military expenditure has shown a growth of nearly 33 per cent. In other words, it may be said that the army expenditure absorbs the whole land revenue of the empire. It is the principal obstacle in the way of all other domestic reforms of vital importance to the welfare of the masses. The separation of judicial from executive functions hangs fire, though Mr. Stephen Jacob observed that the increased expenditure on this account will only cost half a crore per annum. Similarly with the crying reform in the administration of the police, on which there is a universality of opinion. Again, there is the necessity of a liberal expenditure on education, on which the different Provincial Governments spend just one crore of rupees, which, to say the least, is miserable compared with the immense sums spent in Europe and America. To us all it is a matter of profound regret that the State expenditure on education is hardly commensurate with the reputation of the British for enlightened liberality.

Economy of Public Expenditure

But, gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to say that expenditure depends on policy, and so long as the policy in this country is erroneous and calculated to promote Indian interests only in a secondary degree, it is not expected that we could have a chance of reduction in the expenditure. Economy and efficiency are nowhere, though we, no doubt, hear of the Government constantly saying that economy is practised to a remarkable degree. It has to be remembered that this assertion

emanates from the tax-eaters, who are aliens and masters of the situation. Indians have no voice in the expenditure and taxation of the country. Otherwise they may show how, with a minimum of taxation, the maximum of economy and efficiency may be established. But there is the overweening conceit of the governing classes that we are an inferior race and hardly capable of carrying on the government, much less of steering State finance. Monopolists as they are, it is natural that they should view all Indian matters from their own selfish point of view. Hence, they think that all monopoly of State wisdom and State finance is concentrated in them alone; and that we are no better than mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. In this connection, however, it may be most instructive at this juncture to quote from that famous letter which Turgot addressed to Louis XVI on 24th August 1774 : "The question, Sire, will be asked incredulously, 'on what can we retrench' ? and each one speaking for his own department will maintain that nearly every particular item of expense is indispensable. They will be able to allege very good reasons, but these must all yield to the absolute necessity of economy Your Majesty is aware that one of the greatest obstacles to economy is the multitude of demands by which you are constantly besieged. It is necessary, Sire, to consider whence comes to you this money which you are able to distribute among your courtiers, and to compare the misery of those from whom it has to be extracted (sometimes by the most rigorous methods) with the situation of the class of persons who push their claims on your liberality....It may reasonable be hoped, by the improvement of cultivation, by the suppression of abuses in the collection of the taxes, and by their more equitable assessment, that a substantial relief of the people can be attained without diminishing greatly the public revenue, but without economy being the first step all reforms are impossible. So long as finance shall be continually subject to the old expedients in order to provide for State services, your Majesty will always be dependent upon financiers, and they will ever be the masters, and by the manoeuvres belonging to their office they will frustrate the most important operations....When you have recognized the justice and necessity of these principles, I

implore you to maintain with firmness their execution, without allowing yourself to be dismayed by the clamours which are absolutely certain to arise on such matters whatever system we adopt, whatever line of conduct we pursue." It is to be hoped that those in the highest authority will bear constantly in mind these wise saying of Turgot, between every line of which has to be significantly read. Indian finance would then certainly undergo a vast change for the better. At present. it is neither here nor there. We are not even fortunate in having trained financiers with the grasp of the first principles of public finance at the head of our finances. But it would be well if those in power and responsibility not only bore in mind Turgot's memorable counsel to his King, but the sage declaration of the far-sighted and practical Sir Robert Peel on the same question. Speaking of Indian finance, he observed that it is "a superficial view of the relations of England with India," that there is no direct immediate connection between the finances of India and those of England. "Depend upon it," observed that thoughtful Chancellor of the Exchequer, "if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support, and the collateral and the indirect effect of disorders in Indian finances would be felt extensively in this country." I presume that not until such a financial catastrophe occurs that the responsible authorities in England and India will ever learn to practise economy in State expenditure.

Industrial Development

This address would be incomplete without mention of another cognate topic, namely, the industrial development of the country. The subject is vast and demands not only a paper but a ponderous volume by itself. I can even hardly touch the fringe of this great problem, on the solution of which many a person and Government itself have been intent for some time past. How to revive old industries, already extinct or on the verge of extinction, and to foster new ones—these are the two questions. The revival of the former may be most problema-

tical for the simple reason that steam and electricity have entirely revolutionized arts and industries of the old fashioned type, which almost wholly depended on manual labour. The arts and industries of India, which flourished and prospered so well prior to the period which wrought the industrial evolution of Europe, and especially of the United Kingdom, where all attended to by manual labour, especially the finer class of cotton fabrics. So long as this country was on a par with Europe previous to the age of steam and mechanical science, it was no doubt able to hold its own. But it so happened that with the introduction of those two elements in the economy of the older Continent of the West, there was simultaneously wrought a change in India's political destinies. There was a change of rulers, who first came of traders, but stayed to remain as masters. The instinct of the shopkeeper was, of course, predominant; so, too, was that of self-interest, which, as moral philosophers say, is the motive of all action in the domestic economy of human affairs. Those instincts had a powerful influence on the industrial situation as it existed, say a century ago. With the aid of steam they were able to manufacture and import goods slowly, of course, at first, which could be undersold in competition with the handwork of the Indian skilled artisan. Self-interest and supreme power combined, however, to accelerate the process, which ultimately had the economic effect of diminishing to a vast extent the indigenous manufactures. The early traders, who were also politicians and masters of the situation, killed the industries by means of tariffs at both extremes. Heavy import duties were levied by British Government of the day, on many goods and manufactures of India. There is ample evidence of the fact in the numerous petitions which Indians and non-official Englishmen, who were allowed to trade in the country, presented from time to time to Parliament and the King. These may be read in the voluminous reports of the several East India Parliamentary Committees which sat between 1813 and 1853. On the other hand, comparatively light duty was imposed on cotton manufactures and other articles imported into India. Thus, it was that year after year, as steam helped new inventions, and successfully applied science to practical use, Indian manual

industries, which once flourished and brought home profits from foreign parts, languished till at last most of them became extinct. This is the net economic result to India of a century of the progress of science in the West. Whether India would have worked out its own native issues is a speculation on which it is not necessary to enter. Suffice to say that those who could not prosper by their handicraft, were necessarily driven to agriculture. Railways partially drove many more, who plied their trade as carriers, to the same industry. Thus it is that India is now almost an agricultural country. The hand of the dial was set back for a century. But a century of British rule and a century of practical science have wrought new ideals, one of which is the industrial generation of the country, without which it is impossible that wealth may be stimulated in a greater degree. It is universally admitted that if the disheartening phenomena now to be seen are at all to undergo a change for the better; if, in short, prosperity, is to be induced among the vast masses of the population, the only solution is the development of industries and manufactures.

How is that object to be achieved? The more we think on the subject, the more we are driven to the conclusion that capital is the first essential. And where may capital be? Imagine, gentlemen, for a moment the following situation: Suppose that the English withdraw from the country bag and baggage, that is to say, that they withdraw all their capital and retire. What may be the condition of the trade and the people? And what may be the amount of capital left in the country? If, as I have already stated, there have been in operation for years past economic laws which are opposed to Nature, the net effects of which is the drain of the surplus national wealth, which ought to be laid out for greater progress in this country in industries and manufactures, to foreign parts, without any hope of return, is it possible that under the hypothetical event I have asked you to consider, there could be anything left by way of capital to work out our industrial regeneration? Thus what India is suffering from is want of capital, which at present is nowhere. What little there is, is undoubtedly of much use and is greatly prized. We feel all

the better for it. Otherwise it is certain that the country would have been in a worse plight. As a proof of the extreme paucity of capital, you have only to refer to the "Financial and Commercial Statistics of British India" and the combined amount invested in cotton and jute mills and other industrial concerns, including tea plantation and coal mines. Deduct therefrom the sum of foreign capital and compare the residue with the capital of the rest of the commercial countries of the world.

You will then have some definite notion of the immeasurable depth of India's poverty. And since economists tell us that industry is limited by capital, I have to ask you further whether any very serious hopes can be entertained of industrial regeneration, as you all earnestly wish, so long as this is the condition of affairs, want of adequate capital? It has of late been pointed out how Japan fares and how the Japanese have displayed remarkable industrial development. True. None can gainsay the fact. But it should be remembered that both China and Japan are independent nations, and that there is not that exhausting process going on in those two countries, of the annual abstraction of the national surplus of wealth to the extent of 30 to 40 crores as has been the fact in India for half a century and over. You may send the most intellectual and practical of your countrymen to instruct themselves in the mechanical arts, industries, and manufactures of Europe, America and Japan; but of what avail will their knowledge and exercise be if, on their arrival, private capital and private enterprise be not forthcoming or will not help them? As a matter of fact, I am one of those who think that the chill penury of the land has to a certain extent repressed even the mental faculty, though, no doubt, we have occasionally such trained men as Mr. Bose and others. It freezes the currents which ought to flow. The mournful truth must be acknowledged that slow rises the country which is depressed by poverty which has for its root political causes.

But having said so much, [we should not despair. Be the causes of India's economic condition what they may, we are

bound to put our shoulders to the wheel. It would not do to cry over the past. It is more manful to tuck up our sleeves, gird up our loins and work like heroes to regenerate our country by arts and industries, and raise it once more to a zenith of prosperity. There are undoubtedly formidable lions in our path, the foreign exploiters and the monopolists in place and power; but we need not be deterred by them. We cannot allow ourselves to lie in the Slough of Despondency or take up a permanent residence in the Castle of Giant Despair. We have under existing conditions a double duty to discharge. Firstly, by our legitimate and reasonable agitation of a persistent character, to after the economic policy of the Government, which has proved so fatal to our prosperity hitherto, and, secondly, to work out by all means in our power, to the last atom of our physical and mental energy, our own economic salvation. Increased means and increased leisure are the two prime levers necessary to achieve the object. But it is essential at first to have distinct and clear ideas on the subject. A variety of loose talk has been going forward for sometime past, and technical education is suggested or recommended as a panacea for industrial revival. But it is disappointing to get no satisfactory answer from those who talk of that education when we ask them to practically propound what they mean. For instance, when we ask them how even six per cent of the agricultural population, say a crore, may be diverted to industrial occupation there is no rational reply. Hence I entreat you all, gentlemen, not to be carried away by the parrot cry of the reformer, be he Parliamentary or any other, who talks superficially of technical education without pointing out the practical means whereby even six per cent of the masses can be weaned from agricultural pursuits. The question of technical education so glibly talked now is nothing new. It was originally mooted some twenty years since, and one of the very first to draw up an elaborate and practical paper was Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji himself. It was as early as 1885 that he wrote that paper and submitted it to Lord Reay. The late Mr. Justice Telang had also said a great deal on the subject. But, gentlemen, do not be carried away by the catch phrase. **Technical education, which shall result in large and profitable**

industrial development, signifies higher education, specially of Sciences. What has made Germany, which was poor a quarter of a century ago, so advanced, above all other countries on the Continent and brought it in the front rank of industrial and manufacturing nations? Why is it now surpassing England? The answer is, that Germany has paid the greatest attention to the machanical sciences. The country is a network of laboratories. Are you prepared to have Technical schools of the highest grade as they have in Germany? Why those who talk tall about technical education are the very persons who decry higher education? It is idle to talk of mere small industries in carpentry and brick-making and so forth. If there is to be an industrial revival of a practical character which shall change the entire surface of this country, you will have first to lay the foundation of teaching in the Applied Sciences. You cannot have the cart before the horse. Higher education must precede industrial development. But let alone higher education. Where is even mass education in the humbler sort of industries? When not even five per cent of the population is literate, do you expect that there can be any industrial development without education, even assuming that capital be forthcoming? The subject is not so simple as is light-heartedly imagined. It is most difficult, and the best way of apprehending the difficulties is to ascertain the views of those who are most capable of advising on it. Many a vague idea is now floating in the air which requires to be definitely formulated, and many crude and ill-digested recommendations need to be put into the crucible of the practical, with a view to bring, thoroughly tested before we can all agree upon a common basis on which a fair attempt at industrial development might be made. Let me request you also to remember the sage counsel of Mr Morley "that the interest of human progress is bound up with man's willingness to strive after ideals which seem to be attainable." The mere fact of stiving exalts the character, disciplines and develops the faculties, and by gradual and almost imperceptible degrees approaches always more nearly to the goal. First and foremost, then, let us be so prepared by a close study and consideration of the question as to be able to equip

ourselves with the ideals we wish for. That is the fundamental essential.

Concluding Remarks

And now, gentlemen, I must bring this address, already lengthened out beyond what I wished and expected, to a close. You will pardon me if I have taxed your patience overmuch, and you will pardon me still more if I have left out of my purview many other important topics on which the Congress has been incessantly attracting the attention of the ruler, such as the separation of Judicial from Executive functions, the reform of the Police, of Excise and Forest laws, the question of juries, the further modification of the constitution of our Legislative Councils, which are still a solemn mockery, higher education, provincial finance and other equally important matters. But with a session limited to three days and with the orthodox hour and a half for Presidential address, it is not practical to do justice even to a title of the topics enumerated in the way they ought to be, despite all efforts at condensation. But I trust I have this time endeavoured, in pursuance of the general voice of our enlightened countrymen, to rivet your attention on such topics alone as are of absorbing interest at present. They are topics on which the attention of the Government is greatly concentrated. And if any Viceroy could listen to our prayers on these special subjects with the respect and attention that they deserve, I am sure you will agree with me that that Viceroy is Lord Curzon, whose zeal for the advancement of the general welfare of our people is beyond all praise and whose uniform sympathy and burning desire to hold the scales even and render us all that justice on more than one matter, which is our due and for which we have been knocking at the door of Government these many years, are unquestionable. May it be the good fortune of his Lordship to render this country lasting good before he lays down his exalted office, and earn the gratitude of its people. The course of a wise and just Government in this matter is straight, ~~be~~ the opposition what it may. The Government has neither to

look to the right nor to the left. It has one goal straight before it to reach. It has to discharge its duty to the people, how to promote their contentment and prosperity. It would repeat here what I stated in my Presidential address at the Belgaum Provincial Conference. It is needful, nay imperative, in order to stimulate the Government to action, to have the motive power of well informed and disinterested public opinion. This can only be created by arousing the British people, through the influence and instrumentality of Englishmen, sympathizing with our aspiration as the British Congress Committee has been strenuously doing these few years, with an energy, capacity, and self-sacrifice, which are beyond all praise. It is needful to strengthen the hands of that Committee, extend its operations and enlarge the scope of its undoubted utility in this direction. For such a purpose heavy sacrifices will have to be made. For, it would be absurd to attempt to achieve such an object without any sacrifice at all. Hence I repeat, we shall never be able to bring the reforms we ask for within the range of practical politics till the English are sufficiently and correctly educated as regards our demands. We are at present in a transition state. We are passing from the old order of things to the new. But the process of transition, as history teaches us, is invariably beset with obstacles. Thus it is that the broad and liberal statesmanship, which characterized British rule in India till late, has been somewhat arrested. "Insane Imperialism," to use Mr. Morley's phrase, with its mischievous policy of retrogression and repression, is in the ascendant for the moment. But this policy of political insanity, I am firmly of conviction, must sooner or later give way to the former policy of sound liberalism, modified in conformity with the march of time and the irresistible logic of events. The policy should be constructive, having for its foundation the material and moral improvement of the masses. All else is doomed to failure. Indians have never been slow to recognize the benefits of British rule. But it would be unreasonable to ask them to sing eternally its praises and transform themselves into its unqualified panegyrists. No doubt we have a good Government, but it is not unmixed with

many an evil. The desire is that the evil may be purged away, and that in the course of time we may have a better Government. So far we are not asking for the impossible. The impossible will be asked only when, as Mr. Lowell says, the reasonable and the practicable is denied. For, it is only when the possible is made difficult that people fancy the impossible to be easy. I repeat, gentlemen, that the liberal statesmanship of the nineteenth century has infused a new life into us. It has made the national pulse throb quicker. It has raised aspirations which can never be allayed till they are reasonably satisfied. I have enough faith in the virtue of time and in the stern sense of British Justice. Patiently we should await the fruition of those efforts which the national party all over the country have been putting forth these many years. Time, as the poet says, is the artificer of all nations. It is only when our demands are fairly fulfilled that the existing dissatisfaction generally prevailing will cease. Then alone will contentment on the foundation of which alone rests the permanence of British rule, prevail. There is a providence watching the destinies of this hapless and helpless country. May that providence inspire its rulers with wisdom, justice and sympathy to add another but brighter and purer page to the history of India. In the burning words of the eloquent Macaulay, let it record in the maturity of time that the British found a nation sunk in the lowest depths of degradation, ignorance and superstition, and raised it to the highest pinnacle of freedom and civilization which it was in their power to confer.

2

SELF-RULE WITHIN THE EMPIRE*

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you with all my heart for the great honour which you have done me by electing me as President of this Congress. An honour, such as this, is all the more gratifying to the recipient when he is reminded of the tenure by which he holds it, *viz.* the love, the esteem, the confidence of his fellow-countrymen. For us Indians the highest earthly honours, no matter by whom conferred, pale before a distinction which bears upon it the stamp of the approbation and the unstinted confidence of united India. Whether I deserve the honour or not, this I will say that the sanction by which I hold it is the highest, much higher than most sanctions by which authority is exercised here or elsewhere *viz.*, the choice of my fellow-countrymen. Here if anywhere, there is the right divine for the exercise of authority.

This is the second time that you have summoned me to this great office. When I received your mandate, I obeyed it, but not without hesitation. For however partial I might be to my own merits—and who is not—I could not shut my eyes to the fact that there were many distinguished men who by their great public services and by their still nobler self-abnegation in the national cause had fully established their claims to the honour of the Presidential office. But the choice lay not with me. An expression of your wishes, firmly and authoritatively conveyed to me by those who are entitled to speak in your name and on your behalf, is and has always been to me a command. I overcame my scruples. I bowed

* Presidential address delivered by Surendranath Banerjea at the Ahmedabad Congress held on 23-26 December, 1902.

to the national will. I appealed to the sympathies of my friends, and I invoked the blessing of Almighty providence to sanctify our work. And here I am today, ready to cooperate with you to bring to a successful issue the labours of the Eighteenth National Congress.

This is the first time that Congress is held at Ahmedabad. We knew your difficulties, and we admire the dauntless courage with which you faced them and the noble persistency with which you overcame them. Gujarat is but slowly emerging from the throes of one of the greatest calamities of the century. Since 1899 it was in the grip of a famine which, to use the words of the Viceroy, "has been the severest that India has ever known." The story is one of the darkest in Indian history, relieved only by the noble patience and fortitude of the sufferers and the strenuous efforts of the British Government to alleviate their distress. Your difficulties were realized by us, and now that you have overcome them and have held this session of the Congress, which bids fair to be one of the most successful, we applaud the public spirit which has been triumphant over obstacles so formidable and we hasten to offer you the felicitations of all India.

When the Congress was last invited to the Bombay Presidency, it was held at Poona. The capital of the Deccan, Poona is the intellectual centre of the Western Presidency. It is the focus and the starting point of those forces which have shaped the aspirations and have determined the intellectual and political life of this Presidency. No longer the capital of the Peshwas, it aspires to a higher dominion—it seeks to assert its empire over the hearts and convictions of men. Along with this sovereignty is associated an honoured name, held in universal esteem throughout the length and breadth of this wide, wide continent. Who can speak of Poona or think of it without being reminded of Poona's greatest son, whose loss we all deplore, whose memory we cherish with a pious and reverential affection? The foremost man of his generation, next to Ram Mohan Roy, the mightiest product of English education, the life, character and achievements of

Mahadeo Govind Ranade constitute a national heritage, and if it be true, as indeed it is, that great men never die, he live with us and amongst us with an immortality which is co-extensive with the life of the race—the inspirer of our noble achievements, our comforter amid distress, he speaks trumpet-tongued from amid the death-like silence of nothingness.

The Ahmedabad Congress—Its Special Features

The last Congress in the Bombay Presidency was held at Poona, a great intellectual centre. The Congress of this year is held at Ahmedabad, a great industrial centre. Having regard to the recent expansion of our programme, (I will not call it a departure) and to the interlinking in our minds of the industrial and the political movements, it seems to me that there is a special appropriateness in holding the present session of the Congress at Ahmedabad. It is an open declaration that we, the men of the Congress, regard the industrial and the political movements as indissolubly linked together—we hold that that they are interdependent and that they act and re-act upon each other and by their mutual interaction swell the volume of both. If we cannot claim to be the originators of the industrial movement, this at any rate may fairly be laid to our credit that we have stimulated those forces and deepened those impulses which have brought it about. When the human mind is roused in one particular direction, the impulse is felt along the entire sphere of human activities. The industrial movement was bound to follow in the wake of the political movement. The industrial precedes or follows the political movement. In England it preceded it. The Reform Bill of 1832 was the outcome of the enormous expansion of manufacturing industries which was witnessed during the close of the 18th century. In India the order has been different, but here again the intimate relationship between two movements is illustrated, and the political movement preceding the industrial, we claim, that we have communicated the Promethean spark which has vitalized the dying embers of Indian national life in all its spheres; we claim that we have fanned them

forth into a living flame, full of warmth and brightness and radiance.

The industrial movement is flowing deep, fraught with national ideals. It partakes of the character of the parent movement. It follows in its footsteps with a truly filial piety. A widespread feeling has been roused in favour of the growth and expansion of indigenous arts and industries, and the distinguished men who organized the Industrial Exhibition in connection with the Calcutta Congress of last year have still further carried their high endeavours by opening a store-house for Indian goods. Our infant industries need protection. But the Government, wedded to the traditions of free trade, will not grant them protection. If however protection by legislative enactment is impossible, may we not, by the fiat of the national will, afford them such protection as may lie in our power, if we resolve in our heart of hearts to avail ourselves, wherever practicable, of indigenous articles in preference to foreign goods. Has not the time come when the scattered national impulses may be focussed into an organic and organized whole for a supreme effort for the promotion of our industries? May we not obtain a complete and comprehensive list of Indian articles available for our varied requirements and seek to encourage their manufacture and stimulate their expansion? I quite agree that the process is expensive. But it is of the essence of protection to incur present pecuniary sacrifice in view of future gain; and our national industries, placed on a sound and satisfactory footing, under a moral protection, evoked by a lofty spirit of patriotism, will, in their own good time, bring in an abundant harvest of gold. All sacrifice, incurred for high national purposes and towards the attainment of great national ideals, is repaid with compound interest. Such is the ordering of nature, the dispensation of Divine Providence; and the sacrifices we now make to restore our lost industries and to establish new ones will compensate us a hundred-fold by enabling us to supply our own wants and to check in part at least that depletion of the national wealth which more than anything else has contributed to the appalling poverty of our people. Our industrial helplessness is

even more deplorable than our political impotency. And if the Congress can do aught to stimulate the forces which would improve our industrial condition, it would add one more to the many titles which it already possesses to the enduring gratitude of the people of India. Nay more, it would render a great service to the Government. It would relieve the Government, in part at least, of those serious administrative difficulties which have their roots in the deplorably straitened conditions of Indian life. It is therefore with all thankfulness I note that the Industrial Exhibition has come to be regarded as a necessary adjunct to the National Congress. Your Exhibition has been a magnificent success. It has been opened under distinguished auspices by a Prince, whose enlightenment and culture, whose broad and statesmanlike views and deep sympathy with all high endeavours for the public good have not only placed him in the forefront among the Sovereign Princes of India, but have won for him the unstinted homage and admiration of the educated community of India who are proud to reckon him as one of themselves. It must be the heart-felt hope and prayer of every well-wisher of his country that the Industrial Exhibition which was opened by His Highness the Maharaja of Baroda may still further stimulate the industries of this great town and that this session of the Congress may for ever be associated in the minds of the people of Gujarat with a new epoch of industrial development tempered by deep and rational political convictions, prompted by unswerving loyalty to the British connection. Let it never be forgotten that political rights minister to material progress and that an unenfranchised people can never work out their industrial salvation.

The Delhi Durbar

The one feeling which is predominant in the breast of every true Congressman, which shapes and colours his political convictions and might be said to constitute the key note of his political creed, is love and reverence for his Sovereign and his country. He loves his Sovereign, because he loves his country and because his Sovereign is the Head of the State and is the

embodiment of those constitutional principles which it is his aim and endeavour and the aspiration of his life to introduce into the government of his own country and which when recognized as principles of Indian administration he firmly believes will conduce to the prosperity of his native land and the permanence of British rule in India. Inspired by this feeling of love and reverence for the Head of the British constitution, our august Sovereign, we heard of His Majesty's illness with profound sorrow—we watched the progress of the disease with the utmost-anxiety—and we rejoiced beyond measure on His Majesty's recovery and from our temples and our mosques and our churches there went forth one great chorus of thanks-giving to the Great River of all Good, for his abounding mercy in sparing to us our Sovereign the embodiment of all our hopes and with whose reign are identified the fulfilment of our most cherished aspirations and the redemption of the solemn promises contained in the Queen's proclamation. The coronation postponed by His Majesty's illness took place in August last. It was an event of Imperial, of world-wide significance. The eyes of the civilized world were fixed upon it, it is an event which proclaimed to the nations of the earth the formal assumption of regal authority by the Sovereign of an Empire whose watchword is freedom and which has extended to the remotest corners of the world the blessing of constitutional liberty. To the people of India, the Coronation was an event of unique importance. For the first time in the history of our relations with Britain, a King of England was crowned Emperor of Hindustan. For the first time in the history of our relations with Britain, Indian representatives were present at the Coronation of an English King, though, if the truth is to be told, it must be said that the representation of the educated community was most inadequate. It is proposed to celebrate the Coronation by a great Durbar to be held at Delhi in the course of the next few days. The Durbar has been the subject of animated controversy both here and in England. It has been fiercely assailed by critics whose utterances are entitled to respectful attention. One of them has described it as "an act of uncalled for extravagance," specially out of place at a time which the country is just emerging from

the throes of a great famine, when despite the grateful rains which have done so much to improve the situation, there is still a large number of people who are in receipt of famine-relief and when it is proposed to saddle the Indian revenues with the charge of nearly a million sterling to meet the cost of the efficiency of the reformed British army in India. Of course, there are others who have come forward to defend the Durbar. The *Times* has lent to it its thunderous support and has recorded a vigorous protest against the protestants. His Excellency the Viceroy has himself entered the arena, and in a speech conceived in his best style has defended the Durbar and the policy which it embodies. His Excellency has given us the assurance that the cost of the ceremonial "will be immeasurably less than the dimensions which a too tropical imagination has allowed it to assume and that a great State ceremonial will never have been conducted in India upon more economical lines" I am not here concerned to defend the possessors of "a too topical imagination" among whom, be it observed, are several Anglo-Indian journalists of note, one whom at least has not lived in the topics for many a long year. They are well able to defend themselves and have done so. Despite their protests the Durbar will soon be an accomplished fact, and I do not know that it will serve any useful purpose to refer at length to a controversy which has not altered the course of events and now possesses more or less an academic interest. It is fast receding into the past and will soon vanish out of the domain of contemporary politics. But the rulers of India may learn a lesson and may take a warning from the statesmanship of the past. History has condemned with unequivocal emphasis the Delhi Durbar of 1877 as an expensive pageant of doubtful utility. The time has passed by when a mere pageant, calculated to dazzle and to astonish, can leave an enduring impression upon the public mind of India. Thanks to the educational efforts of our rulers, to the wise, the sagacious and beneficent policy which they have followed, we have long since passed the stage of childhood and have entered upon a period of vigorous adolescence when we are able to discriminate the substance from the shadow. Let no one lay the flattering function to his soul that the educational move-

ment which has brought about this result is confined to a microscopic minority. The movement is becoming wider and deeper day by day, and while we are foolishly talking of a microscopic minority, the social forces, noiselessly but steadily working in the bosom of society, are developing results which promise to bring the entire community, the classes as well as the masses, within those educational influences which have leavened the upper ranks of the social system. The ideas of the educated few, says John Stuart Mill, are bound to filter downwards and become in the course of time the ideas of the uneducated many. The process is in vigorous operation in India, and let the rulers of the land take note of the fact. A mere pageant will not satisfy public opinion. It will emphasize the complaints that have been made. It is indeed an acceptable feature of the Durbar that there is to be an Industrial Exhibition in connection with it where the products of indigenous arts and industries will be displayed. We are grateful to His Excellency for his interest in the development of our national arts and industries, and we may be permitted to express the hope that it may lead to abiding results. But that is not enough. The Durbar needs to be consecrated by the touch of a higher statesmanship. If it is to be a great historic event, as it is intended to be, it should form a landmark in our annals—it should be commemorated by some boon which would remind us and our children for all time to come of the occasion and of the principal actors therein. The pomp and glitter of the show, the fine dresses and equipages, even the Oriental magnificence of the scene, set off to the best advantage by the choicest rhetoric which the resources of the English language can supply, will not avail to rescue the Durbar from the corroding influence of time and oblivion. These things will be swept out of view amid the onward rush of events. They will be forgotten; the historic recollection will retain no trace of them; but the popular concession which enlarged the sphere of a people's rights and enhances their self-respect, or which exalts the purity of the system under which justice is administered and improves its quality, or which once again commemorates the grand old precept that righteousness exalteth a nation will constitute an enduring monument of the

ceremonial, worthy of the highest traditions of British statesmanship in India. Such a concession would be in entire accord with precedent and the recognized policy of the British Government on similar occasions. When Her Gracious Majesty the late Queen assumed the direct Government of India, a Durbar was held at Allahabad under the presidency of Lord Canning. A Proclamation was issued at that Durbar—it is the Proclamation of the 1st November 1858, the Magna Charta of our rights, which has been affirmed by successive Viceroys and has been accepted by Lord Curzon as the golden rule of his conduct. It removed all racial disabilities and made merit the sole test of qualification for high office in India. It wiped out the badge of our political inferiority. It declared that whatever might have been the state of things in the days of the East India Company, a new regime had now dawned, and that under the direct government of the Crown there were to be no inequalities, based upon distinctions of race or creed, and that all British subjects in India were to enjoy equal rights and possess equal facilities for serving the State. The next ceremonial associated with the Sovereign was the great Durbar of 1877 at which Her late Majesty assumed the title of Empress of India. Lord Lytton presided at that ceremonial, and speaking as the representative of his Sovereign, he once again affirmed the principle of the Proclamation of the 1st November 1858. "But you the natives of India," said he, "whatever your race and whatever your creed have a recognized claim to share largely with your English fellow-subjects, according to your capacity for the task, in the administration of the country you inhabit. This claim is founded on the highest justice. It has repeatedly been affirmed by British and Indian statesmen and by the legislation of the Imperial Parliament. It is recognized by the Government of India as binding on its honour and consistent with all the aims of the policy. "This authoritative declaration of imperial policy, this solemn reaffirmation of the principle of equal treatment was followed by the creation of the Statutory Civil Service which sought to render partial justice to the claims of the children of the soil for high and responsible office in the service of their own country.

Then came the Jubilee of Her late Majesty. It was celebrated by a great Durbar held in Calcutta in February 1887 just ten years after the Delhi Assemblage. Lord Dufferin presided at that celebration. Speaking as Viceroy and the exponent of British policy in India, he foreshadowed the great boon which was soon to be bestowed and for which we hold his memory in grateful regard. He said in his Durbar speech : "Glad and happy should I be, if during my sojourn among them (the people of India) circumstances permitted me to extend and to place upon wider and more logical footing the political status which was so wisely given a generation ago by that great statesman, Lord Halifax, to such Indian gentlemen as by their influence, their acquirements and the confidence of their fellow-countrymen were marked out as useful adjuncts to our Legislative Councils." This was said in 1887, and in 1892 the Legislative Councils were enlarged and reconstituted, and for the first time in the history of India were placed upon partially representative basis.

Thus since the direct assumption of the Government by the Crown, every ceremonial held in connection with the Sovereign and commemorative of her grace has been signalized by a substantial concession to the people. This has been the uniform, the invariable, the traditional policy of the British Government in India for a period of nearly half a century. It is associated with great and illustrious names and has been consistently followed, irrespective of party considerations, whether the Viceroy was Liberal or Conservative. And if one party more than another was pledged to this policy, one might say that it was the Conservative party that was so pledged; for all these Durbars were held and all these boons were conferred while a conservative Ministry was in power, as if the great repositories of Conservative traditions wanted to proclaim to the people of India their firm and unalterable conviction that a policy of cautious but continuous progress was essential for the highest purposes of Imperial conservation. Having regard to the traditional policy of the British Government, the people of India look forward with confidence to the bestowal of some boon, the concession of some popular right, as commemorative of

of the affectionate interest which His Majesty feels in the welfare of his Indian subjects. To the people of India it would be a grievous disappointment if, on this the first and the greatest ceremonial occasion in connection with the new reign, the traditional policy of the British Government, consecrated by illustrious names and followed with unvarying consistency for nearly half a century, were to be departed from. The traditional policy of the British Government in this matter is in entire keeping with the immemorial usage of the East where royal celebrations, especially those which commemorate the assumption of sovereign authority, are proclaimed to the people by beneficent gifts which evoke their gratitude, strengthen their loyalty and secure their attachment to the new Sovereign. It is therefore with confidence that we would appeal to Lord Curzon to follow precedent and the immemorial usage of the East and convert what, it has been so confidently predicted, would be a mere pageant, into a great historical event which will excite the love and reverence of the people, cement their loyalty, draw them closer to Britain and strengthen those ties of attachment between the two countries, upon which the greatness of the British Empire and the prosperity of India alike depend.

The Universities Commission

Brother-delegates, it is useless to disguise from ourselves the fact that the question which of all others looms largely on the view, which has more or less thrown into the shade all other considerations and before which even the attractions of the Delhi Durbar seem to fade from view is the question of University Education. The report of the Universities Commission was till lately the one all-absorbing topic of discussion. It excited a measure of interest such as no other public question within living memory has done. I am old enough to remember the controversies of the last quarter of a century. I have in my own humble way been associated with them. My contributions to them were indeed insignificant; but my interest in them was deep and abiding: and this I will say that I do not remember any proposal, emanating from responsible authority, which has more profoundly stirred the hearts of the Indian community,

or has caused deeper alarm, or evoked more strenuous opposition than the Report of the Universities Commission.

The opposition to the Vernacular Press Act, to the Calcutta Municipal Bill, the Bombay Land Revenue Bill or even the Sedition Bill pales before the agitation which the Report of the Universities Commission gave rise to. There was a sense of alarm, deep, genuine, all-pervading, felt by all sections of the educated community throughout India, by Hindus and Musalmans alike. Retired servants of Government, when the Government delighted to honour, whom they have loaded with titles and distinction and who have led their quiet lives, away from the storm and stress of political agitation, felt themselves constrained under a sense of overwhelming duty and in response to the general feeling of their community, to emerge from the seclusion of their quiet lives and place themselves in a line with those who condemned the Report. Old men, bent down with the weight of years, the representatives of an older school of thought and culture, the products of our pre-University system, came tottering to the Town Hall meeting to place on record their protest against the recommendation of the Commission.

Professional men who had never before spoken at a public meeting and who had never identified themselves with any movement of any kind, but had earned their laurels in the quiet and undisturbed pursuit of their own professions, which were far too remunerative to permit them to think of anything else, for the moment forgot their professions and their profits and joined the general community in the universal protest against the recommendations of the Commission. The Mohammedan community, unhappily for themselves, unhappily for us, have been somewhat backward in our public movements. They have been most forward in condemning the Report. They have promptly disavowed the representative character of the only Musalman member of the Commission and denounced him for signing a Report which they rightly believed would be fatal to the educational interests of their community. And if out of evil cometh good, it may truly be said that the Report of the Commission has furthered in an unforeseen and unexpected fashion the general interests of the community, by bringing Hindus and Musal-

mans upon the same platform and linking them together by association in a common cause. It has thus helped to promote that solidarity between the two communities which it has ever been the steadfast aim of the Congress to secure and upon which the interests of both the communities and the prospects of Indian advancement so largely depend. The feeling of alarm was genuine, widespread and universal, and well might it be; for the noblest gift which British rule has conferred upon India is the boon of high education. It lies at the root of all our progress. It is the main-spring, the motive-power, the germinal source of all those forces which make for progress. The three great boons which we have received from the British Government are High Education, the gift of a Free Press and Local Self-Government, supplemented by the reform and expansion of the Councils. But high education is the most prized, the most dearly-cherished of them all. It is high education which has made Local Self-Government the success that it is admitted to be. It is again high education which has elevated the tone of the Indian Press, has made it a power and has rendered it possible for us to look forward to the time when in the words of Lord Ripon it will become, as in Europe it is, "the irresistible and the unresisted master of the Government." It is English education which has produced a splendid galaxy of distinguished men who have done incalculable service to morals and manners, who have ennobled the literature of their country and have made it a rich vehicle for the expression of the noblest sentiments of the most abstruse reasonings in philosophy and science and of the varied and complicated requirements of modern life. It is English education which has overcome the barriers of race, religion and language, has dissipated the prejudices and misunderstandings of ages and has created those unifying influences which find a living expression in this vast, this stupendous, this majestic organization of the National Congress. Could the educated community submit to the curtailment of this boon—to the restriction of its beneficent area? They are naturally anxious that nothing should be done to check the spread of that system of education which has produced such splendid results in the past and which is fraught with infinite possibilities of progress for future generations. English education is a precious boon which has come down to us as a

heritage from the past. If we cannot extend and broaden it, it ought at any rate to be our most sacred concern to safeguard it against encroachment and limitation, and so transmit it, with its beneficent area undiminished, to those who coming after us will bear our names. These are the feelings which inspired the agitation, intensified its volume and impressed upon it its distinctive tone and character. In our anxiety we appealed to Lord Curzon. It was united India which preferred its appeal to the Viceroy. Every province took part in it. Every section of the educated community was represented in it. Whatever differences of opinion may exist with regard to the merits of Lord Curzon's administration—and the time has not yet come for the final judgment—all will agree, even those who see nothing good in it, that His Excellency is keenly responsive to the intimations of public opinion, and we felt convinced that His Excellency would not ignore public opinion of educated India, expressed with singular unanimity and unequalled emphasis and upon question which to them was a question of life and death. In this hope we have not been disappointed. His Excellency has recognized the truth, in the letter of Government to which I shall presently call attention, that no reform can be successful without the sympathetic cooperation of the community concerned, and that any reform, forced upon an unwilling community, no matter how promising it might be, no matter how influentially supported it might be, is doomed, foredoomed to failure. We desire to offer our congratulations to His Excellency, upon his circular letter upon the Report of the Universities Commission. We may not be able to agree with all the suggestions of the Viceroy, but it is a frank and straight-forward recognition of public opinion—it is a praiseworthy attempt at compromise and conciliation; and effective compromise which ensures steady progress along the line of least resistance and which conciliates and enlists the social forces on behalf of Government is, to my mind, the highest function of statesmanship. His Excellency has always felt a personal interest in the educational problem. Himself a distinguished University man, His Excellency has told us that the instinct of the educationist is deep down in his nature. The educational problem is one of his twelve chosen problems, and His Excellency has applied himself with characteristic ardour to its

solution. So far back as the summer of 1901 a conference was held at Simla to which some European educational experts were invited. The proceedings of that Conference have not been published. I fail to understand why they should be withheld from publication. If there is one class of considerations more than another in regard to which the public should be taken into confidence it is those who relate to the problem of education. Here if anywhere, popular sympathy and cooperation is necessary. No useful purpose is served by investing educational problems with quasi-political character and raising them to the dignity of State secrets. A suspicious public, barred out of the confidence of the authorities naturally interpret their proceeding in their own way and ascribe to them a sense and significance which they perhaps will not bear, and thus between them and the Government there arises a misunderstanding when their mutual sympathy and cooperation is needed for the satisfactory solution of the educational problem. I can quote no higher authority against this policy of concealment in educational matters than that of His Excellency the Viceroy. Thus did His Excellency denounce the policy of secrecy, in educational matters at the Conference whose proceedings have been withheld from publication: "Concealment has been no part of my policy since I have been in India and the education of the people is assuredly the last subject to which I should think of applying any such canon."

The Constitution of the Universities Commission

The Conference was followed by the appointment in January 1902 of the Universities Commission. The Commission was appointed "to enquire into the condition and prospects of the Universities established in British India; to consider and report upon any proposals which have been, or may be, made for improving their constitution and working, and to recommend to the Governor-General in Council such measures as may tend to elevate the standard of University teaching, and to promote the advancement of learning." The Report of the Commission has long been before the public; and the views of the Government thereon have recently been published. His Excellency the Viceroy, while according a general support to the

Report of the Commission, has not been to accept all its conclusions. If there is one quality more than another which distinguishes the Viceroy, it is that he is the keeper of his own conscience, that he does not surrender his judgment of his convictions to the authority of names, however distinguished. I am bound to say that the constitution of the Commission was such, its method of procedure was such, that it was impossible that its recommendations could command the general approval of the public or the unqualified assent of the Government. The Commission originally consisted of six members, with Mr. Raleigh, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, as President.

Not a single representative of the great Hindu community who had the largest stake in the educational problems under consideration was included among the Commissioners as originally nominated. Let us however thankfully note that when attention was called to this omission in the columns of the public prints, His Excellency was graciously pleased to nominate the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Guru Dass Banerjee as a member of the Commission. The appointment of Mr. Justice Banerjee was received with universal approbation. One of the most brilliant graduates of the Calcutta University, he has long been honourably associated with the work of the University. He was twice appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University, and he was among the most distinguished of our Vice-Chancellors, regarding his office not as an ornamental adjunct to the high position which he held, but a new field of activity and usefulness, and setting an example of unflinching devotion to duty and of statesman-like concern in the interests of the University, of which he was so fine a product. Who will say that the Calcutta University has been a failure or has not fulfilled the high ends of its existence when it has produced men like Mr. Justice Guru Dass Banerjee. The Commission, as now constituted, consisted of seven members, of whom five were officials, the sixth was a missionary gentleman, and the last but not the least was the Mohammedan member of the Viceroy's Council, whose experience of educational matters is confined to the Nizam's Dominions. His representative character has been disavowed by his community, and he has been described by my friend the Hon'ble Mr. Mehta and his colleagues of the Bombay Presidency Association in their memorial to the

Viceroy as being disqualified to represent the views and feelings of the educated community, by reason of the avowedly hostile attitude he has taken towards them in his public writings and speeches.

*A Contrast between the Education Commission of 1882
and the Universities Commission of 1902*

In our Presidency, private effort covers a large area of the field of education. The total number of colleges affiliated to the Calcutta University is 78. Out of these, so many as 59 are private unaided colleges which were founded and are now maintained by Indian gentlemen. It is unfortunate that the interest of the unaided colleges were not represented on the Commission; and the omission is all the more regrettable in view of the recommendations of the Commission, some of which so seriously affect their position and status. The Government educational interest and those of the missionary bodies were represented on the Commission but not those of the unaided colleges. The conclusion is forced upon us that the constitution of the Commission was defective, and this view is emphasized by a reference to the personnel of the Education Commission of 1882. On that Commission, to use the words of Mr. Buckland, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, were "departmental and executive officers of Government and representatives of the educated community of each province (except Burma to which the enquiry was not extended)" (Buckland's Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, Vol. II, page 766). No such principle has been followed in determining the constitution of the Universities Commission; and yet it must be admitted that if the representatives of the educated community were qualified to advise the Government in framing its educational policy in 1882 they must be presumed to be far more qualified for the task in 1902. To hold, otherwise would be to assume that in the twenty years which have since elapsed, the educated community have retrograded, despite the earnest efforts of the Government to stimulate their progress. Such an astounding assumption has not been made even by our worst detractors. We are justified, therefore, in holding that the non-inclusion of provincial representatives of that community among the members of the Universities

Commission was a departure from the policy followed by the Government of India in 1882, and it was a departure which, I have no hesitation in saying, is largely responsible for a Report which has caused so much stir and dissatisfaction. I will even go further and add that the policy followed in this case is in entire conflict with the principle laid down by His Excellency the Viceroy in the constitution of Commissions and Committees appointed by the Government. Referring to the difficulties attending the constitution of Indian Commissions, His Excellency in his Budget speech of March last observed: "There is the reference to be drawn up, involving long and anxious study, the Secretary of State to be consulted, the consent of his Council obtained, the members to be selected by a careful balance of the interests, and merits, not merely of individuals, but of provinces, races, and even of creeds." Where, may I ask was the careful balancing of interests in the constitution of the Universities Commission not only as regards individuals, but also as regards provinces, races and creeds; I am well aware that at each University centre a local member was attached to the Commission for the purpose of the enquiry at that centre. But these gentlemen did not sign the Report, and as the Commissioners themselves say, "they are in one way responsible for the substance of the Report."

Not is this the only point of difference between the two Commissions—the Education Commission of 1882 and the Universities Commission of 1902. The care and the deliberation which the Education Commission brought to bear upon their task are striking contrast with the hurry, and I was going to add, the precipitancy with which the Universities Commission finished their work. The Universities Commission was constituted on the 27th January 1902; Dr. Guru Dass Banerjee's name was added on the 12th February, so that we may fairly assume that, barring perhaps the settlement preliminaries, no work had been done till the 12th February, and the Report was submitted on the 9th June. Thus the work of "enquiry into the condition and prospects of the Universities established in British India (of which there are five), the consideration of proposals for im-

proving their constitution and working and the recommendations calculated to elevate the standard of University-teaching and promote the advancement of learning" were all finished in four months, time! Now contrast this hurried work the prolonged and careful enquiry of the Education Commission. The Commission was appointed in February 1882. They submitted their Report in September 1883. They took nearly eighteen months to finish their work. The Universities Commission submitted their Report in less than one-fourth the time taken up by the Education Commission. There is yet another point of comparison which cannot escape observation. The Education Commission, like most other Commissions, drew up questions which had been carefully thought out, and which were sent to the witnesses for them to consider and draw up their answers. The Universities Commission did no such thing. No questions were drawn up by them; but in Bengal a Note was circulated (and I presume the same procedure was followed elsewhere) calling attention to the points upon which the witnesses were to be interrogated, and it is remarkable that in the Bengal Note not the smallest reference was made to some of the proposals which gave rise to so much controversy, such as for instance the abolition of the 2nd grade Colleges and the Law Classes; and not one of the witnesses, so far as I am aware, was asked to give an opinion regarding these proposals. Here again I must confess to a sense of disappointment that the evidence of the witnesses who were examined before the Commission has not yet been published. The public ought surely to know whether the drastic recommendations of the Commission are supported by evidence, and if so, what the nature of the evidence is. Nothing is gained by secrecy in a letter of this kind. Trust begets trust, and great as are the difficulties which surround the educational problems, they are aggravated by a policy of half-confidence which is apt to create suspicion and mistrust. I am not one of those who believe that any sinister political motives lies veiled behind the Report of the Commission. I do not regard the Report as a political manifesto in an academic guise; but I am bound to say that if any such feeling is entertained in any quarter, the hesitating policy of half trust and half mistrust is mainly

responsible for it. Liberalism has been defined by Mr. Gladstone as trust in the people tempered by discretion. I am afraid the policy followed in this case must be described as one of mistrust, tempered by discretion. I rejoice to find that the letter of Government on the Report of the Commission sounds a different note. Here a genuine attempt is made to take public into confidence.

The Report of the Commission

In approaching the consideration of the Report of the Commission it will at once be conceded that the University system in India is not perfect, any more than any other human institution is; and a cautious and well-devised scheme of reform, calculated to promote the advancement of learning without interfering with the spread of high education, would be welcomed by the educated community; for they realize the truth that their future progress largely depends upon a sound system of education which would qualify them for the hard and increasingly difficult competition of modern life. As His Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda has observed with great truth in his admirable article in *East and West*, education will be the watchword of the twentieth century and the diffusion of education, the great object upon which will be concentrated the energies and the statesmanship of the century. Could we persuade ourselves to believe that the recommendations of the Commission would secure the advancement of learning without restricting its area and that it would combine height with surface there would go forth a mighty voice from educated India, supporting the Report of the Commission and offering to the Commissioners our cordial congratulations. But the Commissioners themselves admit—and the scope of their Report leaves no doubt on the subject—that the effect of their proposals would be to narrow the popular basis of higher education and to restrict its area. It is against the policy and the recommendations which lead to it that we desire to record our respectful but emphatic protest. We cannot accept a policy which would deprive our great middle class who are far from being well off, from whom come our intellectual classes who,

with their keen hereditary instincts have from time immemorial furnished the intellectual leaders of the community, to be deprived of some of those opportunities of high education which they now enjoy. The recommendations of the Commission which embody this policy may be summarized as follows : (1) The fixing of a minimum rate of college fees by the Syndicate; (2) the abolition of the 2nd grade colleges and (3) the abolition of the Law Classes. All these proposals involve the direct discouragement of private effort which had done so much to stimulate the spread of high English education and they are in entire conflict with the educational policy of the past. That policy is embodied in the great Education Despatch of 1854 which has been followed with unvarying consistency by the Government of India for the last fifty years. The cardinal features of that policy may be described as the extension of "the means of acquiring general European knowledge" and the encouragement of private effort by a system of grants in-aid, wherever necessary. Let us here gratefully acknowledge that the Government of India in their circular letter on the Report of the Universities Commission emphatically disclaim any intention of receding from the policy of 1854; and as a necessary corollary they do not support some of the proposals of the Commission which must seriously impede the sustained movement of private effort. The Government recognize that the second grade colleges occupy a definite place in our educational machinery and perform a useful function. Again in the matter of legal education, the Government claim no monopoly, though they are inclined to support the establishment of a Central College at each University centre which would serve as a model. Both as regards the Law Classes and the second grade colleges, so long as efficiency is maintained, the Government of India are not inclined to interfere with them. Thus in regard to two very important questions which elicited the unanimous protest of the educated community, the Government of India make a definite concession to popular opinion, for which we are truly grateful. The Government indeed declare their firm adhesion to the policy of the Education Despatch in regard to the encouragement of private effort, but object to the qualification that "the sole condition upon which

private enterprise can be encouraged is, that the education which it offers is reasonably efficient." Evidently the Government of India are of opinion that the time has come when private effort should be restrained rather than stimulated, when its exuberance should be pruned down rather than that it should be encouraged to shoot forth into a vigorous growth. Far different was the spirit in which the Government of India approached the consideration of this question in 1882. They despatched any uniform system of education which would, in their felicitous language, "cast the youth of the country in the same official mould," and they went on to observe that "it is not in the opinion of the Governor General in Council, a healthy symptom that all the youth of the country should be cast as it were in the same official mould. The Government is ready, therefore, to do all that it can to foster such a spirit of independence and self-help. It is willing to hand over any of its own colleges and schools in suitable cases to bodies of native gentlemen who will undertake to manage them satisfactorily as aided institutions. All that the Government will insist upon being that provision is made for efficient management and extended usefulness."

It will be seen that the method of enunciation of the same policy is substantially different, and the spirit is different. While in 1882, the Government was anxious to do all that it could to foster a spirit of independence and self-help; in 1902, it lays special stress upon the need of restraining the efforts of private enterprise. In 1882, the Government did not ignore considerations of efficiency; in 1902, it dwells upon them with great emphasis. We are at one with the Government in insisting upon a standard of efficiency. But it should not be of the ideal order. It should be fixed with reference to the circumstances of a people who are notoriously poor. The Government indeed recognize the fact "that the standard of efficiency, which it is proper and possible to enforce in India is admittedly not so high as that which is attained in more advanced countries". Public opinion will support the Government in all reasonable efforts to check the growth of institutions which are both cheap and worthless; but do not the results of Univer-

sity examinations afford a good test of efficiency, and is there not the self-acting principle, inexorable in its operation, that things nasty and cheap must disappear from a world where the survival of the fittest is the universal law? The process may be slow, but it is sure, and moving as it does along the line of least resistance, it is attended with the minimum of disturbance. There seems to be an idea in official quarters that the aided, and in a still larger measure, the unaided colleges are not as efficient as they might be. But what about the Government colleges? Are they always models of excellence and efficiency? Do we not occasionally hear in connection with them of serious breaches of discipline and of drastic measures enforced to ensure respect for authority? If there is to be a standard of efficiency, let it be of uniform application, and not judged solely by reference to external appliances, such as libraries and laboratories, but by the larger, though perhaps more impalpable, moral results, which it is the aim and the end of all education to secure. The efficiency of the affiliated colleges is tested by the annual examinations of the University. It is to their interest that their students should be successful and occupy high places at the examinations. They have thus to study efficiency from the point of view of self-interest, and efficiency is best ensured when it is associated with a motive which so powerfully appeals to our strongest impulses.

I may say that I attach considerable importance to the university Examinations as a test of efficiency. They are now practically the sole test upon which the Universities rely. They were deemed sufficient by the founders of the Universities and those who, inheriting their traditions, worked upon their lines. Are they not an exceedingly efficient test, if the examinations are properly conducted and suitable question papers are set? If the tests which are now applied were tests of general intellectual capacity rather than memory, than we should hear less of the inefficiency of our Universities. But the general impression is that the examination papers are not what they should be; and no one has been more eloquent or more incisive in their denunciation than His Excellency the Viceroy. Yet through the whole of the Report of the Universities Commission, we look

in vain for a single suggestion or a single definite recommendation, by which the system of University Examinations might be improved.

The Rate of College Fees

It is considerations of efficiency which have determined the attitude of the Government in regard to the question of college fees. On this question the Government are apparently inclined to support the recommendation of the Commission. Efficiency, they say, is difficult to measure, its estimation is open to dispute, and the principle that with a fee scale below a certain limit, efficiency in a college without considerable endowments or subscriptions is impossible is one for which there is much to be said. But if the scale is so fixed as to substantially reduce the number of students, the increase in the rate of fees would defeat its object and diminish the total receipts of the college from that source. Further, the raising of the fees would throw difficulties in the way of the higher education of the deserving poor. The diffusion of education among the people, including the deserving poor, has been the steadfast concern of Governments in the past. This policy has received the sanction of the high authority of His Excellency the Viceroy. "Care must be taken," said the Government of India in the Resolution on the Report of the Education Commission of 1882, "that no unnecessary obstacles are thrown in the way of the upward progress of really deserving students of the poorer classes. The Governor-General-in-Council has no wish to close the doors of high education to all but the wealthiest members of the native community." His Excellency Lord Curzon emphatically endorses this policy and says in the letter of Government that nothing can be further from the wishes of the Government of India than "to initiate a policy which would make education the monopoly of the rich." But if heavy fees are levied, higher education must necessarily become the privilege of the few. If the fees are now adequate, any addition to them would operate in the nature of a restriction imposed upon the poorer sections of the community who supply the bulk of our students. The whole problem therefore resolves

itself into this—is the present scale of fees adequate or not? The question was carefully considered by the Education Commission of 1882, and they were of opinion that the rates then levied were generally adequate, regard being had to the fact that the majority of the college-students belong to the struggling middle class. They did not indeed write without chapter and verse; for they observed : “The great landed proprietors are scarcely, if at all, represented (in our colleges). In Bengal the income of more than half the parents is assessed at sums varying from £20 to £200 a year.” If the college fees were adequate in 1882, having regard to the then condition of the middle class, they cannot now be considered as being inadequate or insufficiently low. The condition of the middle class has not improved, which the prices of provisions and of the necessary articles of life have risen. If anything, the condition of the middle class has become worse.

The salaries of Government servants are fixed, and the Indian servants of Government receive no exchange compensation allowance. The income of lawyers in 1902, is, I am afraid, much less than what it was in 1882. There is thus no reason to assume that the fees paid in 1902 which are slightly higher than those paid in 1882, are insufficient or inadequately low; and if not, any attempt to raise them must necessarily restrict the area of high education. There is indeed an upward trend in the direction of fees, and the movement may be left to itself without the stimulus of external pressure. Scholarships and endowments may indeed help the poorer students. But scholarships must be available only to a few of the deserving poor, and they will also be open to the deserving rich.

And where are the private endowments in aid of education? Nature is not rich in her choicest productions; and a Tata and a Carnegie and a Wadia who divests himself of his all for the benefit of mankind, are as rare as they are the noblest types of their race. I very much fear endowments would not be forthcoming for educational purposes, unless a movement in their favour were started under such distinguished auspices

as have crowned the Victoria Memorial and the Lady Dufferin Fund with success.

Educated opinion is in entire accord with Dr. Guru Dass Banerjee's views of the question, viz., "that the minimum rate of college-fees should be left to adjust itself according to the circumstances of each province and the Universities should not interfere in determining it unless there are very strong reasons for doing so." We are naturally anxious that nothing should be done to interfere with the diffusion of high education among the great middle class community. The noblest products of English education have all come from this class, the deserving poor if you like. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Kristo Dass Pal, Dadabhai Naoraji, and others too numerous to be mentioned here, were all sprung from the middle class. Their education made them the benefactors of their country. They were an honour to the educational system under which they were brought up. Are the doors of high education to be closed against men of this class by the imposition of prohibitive fees? As the *Statesman* newspaper which has done yeoman's service in this controversy and to which the grateful acknowledgements of the Indian community are due, says with great force: "If a certain standard of efficiency is insisted on, what need is there for the Government to go behind that condition and concern itself about the cost and the way in which it is defrayed."

We trust that His Excellency the Viceroy, whose attitude throughout this controversy has been so eminently conciliatory, will be graciously pleased to accept the views of Mr. Justice Banerjee who, by reason of his knowledge of local conditions and intimate touch with the middle-class, or which he is so bright an ornament, was really far more competent to advise the Government on this matter than any other member of the Commission. I can only express my surprise that Mr. Syed Hossain Balgrami should not have associated himself with Mr. Justice Banerjee in this part of his Note of dissent, for the community from which he comes is far less able than almost any other community, in India to

pay a high rate of fees. The replies given by the Secretary of State to the questions put by Mr. Caine in the House of Commons will have a reassuring effect on the public mind, for Lord George Hamilton said that he had no doubt that the interests of the poorer students would not be ignored by the Government.

How Efficiency is Best Secured

Efficiency is the keynote of the letter of Government. We should be false to ourselves if we did not cordially cooperate with the Government in securing the efficiency of our educational institutions, consistently with the pecuniary circumstances of our people and the diffusion of high education. But it seems to me that no great forward stride towards educational efficiency is possible without distinct improvement in the efficiency of the professoriate. "What is vital for the highest function of a University", says Mr. Sidney Webb, "is professoriate and its environment." The late Dr. Thring one of the greatest educationists that England has produced remarked (and the remark is quoted with approbation by His Excellency the Viceroy) "that education is the transmission of life from the living through the living to the living." But I am afraid that in many cases the professors here have no life to communicate, no generous impulse, no noble enthusiasm, no soul-stirring ardour for truth and freedom to impart to those who sit at their feet and derive from them the pulsations of their intellectual and moral life. Is there a nobler profession than that of the teacher? To them are entrusted the destinies of youth. They are the up-builders and the architects of the future. They make or mar the fortunes of a country. But how many teachers are there among us who realize their grave responsibilities or rise to the height of their truly divine mission? Raise the status of the teacher—dignify and elevate his calling—draw to the professoriate those of countrymen who will embrace it, not as a mere bread-earning profession, but a high calling, a heaven-appointed task, a self-dedication to a sacred purpose, and you will not need Commissions and Committees, Reports and Resolutions to secure the efficiency

of our Universities and the advancement of learning. The names of great teachers form landmarks in the educational history of this country. They have done more for the cause of education than all the Resolutions, all the Regulations, all the fine maxims and even all the pious aspirations which have emanated from responsible authority. DeRozio, the Eurasian youth, who fired with apostolic fervour communicated a new life and a strange impulse to the youth of Bengal in the early days of British rule; Pyari Churn Sircar who loved his students almost as dearly as he loved his children; Ramtanu Lahiri, and in a lesser sense, Rajnarain Bose, who led them onwards and upwards to a higher and diviner life, have rendered a service to the cause of learning and of morals which will be remembered as long as the history of English education in India is treasured up in our minds. In Bombay, you had your great Dr. Wordsworth and Sir Alexander Grant; in other Presidencies there are familiar names. We want men like them to leaven the professoriate and the cause of education and the advancement of learning will be secure. But the Report and, I regret to say, the letters of Government are silent about this most important consideration. Not even the semblance of a suggestion is thrown out for the improvement of the professoriate, without which educational efficiency would be all but unattainable. For this purpose the improvement of the status of the Educational Service is necessary; and nowhere is such improvement more urgently required than in the subordinate branches of the Service, where the pay is small and the duties grave and the responsible.

For purposes of efficiency I maintain that the diffusion of education is necessary; for an appropriate environment must be created. Height is only possible where the foundations are broad and deep, suitable to the noble edifice that is sought to be raised thereon. Advancement of learning is best secured and under conditions which guarantee permanence where the general culture of the community is maintained on a high level. A cultured public opinion, sustaining and stimulating the advancement of learning, is a more effective ally of knowledge than all the artificial pressure which the

most enlightened Government, aided by the resources of unlimited power, may exert. But the formation of such opinion presupposes the wide diffusion of knowledge. Let there be efficiency, but let it never be forgotten that efficiency involves, not the restriction, but the expansion of the educational area—it is a double movement, combining height with surface. Writing on the lines on which the London University should be organized, Mr. Sidney Webb, a high educational authority to whom I have already referred, thus comments on the importance of the spread of education among the general community:

“Being as regards its undergraduate class, essentially a University for the sons and daughters of households of limited means and strenuous lives, it will not, like Oxford, and Cambridge set itself to skim from the surface of society the topmost layer of rich men’s sons and scholarship winners. Wisely organized and adequately endowed, it must live deep down through every stratum of its seven millions of constituents, selecting by the tests of personal ambition and endurance, of talent and “grit,” for all the brain-working professions and for scientific research, every capable recruit that London rears. Hence it must stand ready to enrol in its under-graduate ranks not hundreds a year but thousands. If we remember that Paris and Berlin drawing from much smaller local populations and exposed each to the competition of a score of other universities in their own countries have each actually twelve thousand university students, we can see that any equally effective London University might easily number twenty thousand.

Cram

I am in strong sympathy with those who wish to discourage cram. I do not indeed believe that little learning is a dangerous thing. To me it seems that it is much more dangerous to the community that the rulers of men should be the victim of such a mischievous hallucination. Little learning is certainly better than no learning as well-digested knowledge which

strengthens the judgement and invigorates the understanding is infinitely preferable to the ill-assimilated stuff which is not incorporated into the intellectual system and does not strengthen its fibre or enrich its texture. In the discipline of the mind, the cultivation of the memory is of course not to be neglected. The memory is the hand-maid of the understanding and often supplies to it the materials upon which its pronouncements are based. But the understanding is the sovereign faculty in the intellectual system, and it should not be sacrificed for the sake of a subordinate power. But how is cram to be discouraged and the understanding strengthened? I regret to have to say that the Report of the Universities Commission supplies no answer to the question. It is the multiplicity of books and the multiplicity of subjects which produce a bewildering confusion and tempt the student to rely upon his memory rather than upon his understanding. He must anyhow pass the examination. The subjects and the books are too many and the time is too short to permit him to master them and to assimilate into his intellectual system the food which they supply. If the subjects and books were fewer, he would have leisure for careful study, and would reap those great intellectual benefits which careful study confers. As it is, he races through his books and subjects at railway speed—and like the carrier, glad to be relieved of his burden, he flings them away as soon as the destined goal of the examination is reached, rejoicing that he has at least obtained his release, vowing that he will not come within a measurable distance of the examination-hall, or of his books or his studies, if he can possibly help it. To anticipate that under such a system there could grow that generous enthusiasm for knowledge, that craving for learning for learning's sake, which it is the object of all education to foster and promote is to indulge in the wildest dream. Often under the strain, the unhappy student breaks down, physically and mentally—a complete wreck in every sense of the term. What is to be the remedy? Reduce the number of books; reduce the number of subjects; give more breathing-time to the teacher and the taught; let them rejoice in the company of the celestials of the earth; let the company of the celestials be to them a pleasure and not an inflicting;

let them drink deep their spirit, and the sovereign remedy against cram will have been found and the highest ends of education served.

But the Commission, instead of reducing the already heavy burden on the student, proposes a sensible addition by recommending an additional subject for the B.A. Examination of the Calcutta University. In the Calcutta University it was after a hard fight that the number of subjects for the B.A. Examination was reduced from four to three by the almost unanimous vote of the Senate. A Teacher's Conference which recently sat in Calcutta unanimously protested against the proposed increase in the number of subjects for the B.A. Examination. There is too great a disposition in some quarters to forget that a wide area of surface in academic instruction often involves a sacrifice of depth. The practical teacher is confronted with this difficulty every moment of his life, but the *doctrinaire*, safe in his ignorance, is apt to overlook a consideration, so simple and yet so imperative. And here I must be permitted to deprecate the application of the same hard-and-fast system to all the Indian Universities, such as the University Commission apparently contemplates. It is very obvious that a uniform system applied to a whole continent, to populations in varying stages of progress and separated by wide differences in condition and circumstances, in intellectual capacity and aspirations, must end in failure. The Commission seemed to have ignored this obvious consideration and have framed a scheme of educational reform, which takes no cognizance of local needs and circumstances and the widely divergent conditions which prevail in the different provinces of India. Surely the question as to what should be the right curriculum for the B.A. Degree Examination in the different Universities is a matter which might be left to the Universities themselves to decide and to determine.

Mr. Syed Hussain Belgrami has signed the Report, but another Mr. Belgrami, (Mr. Syed Ali Belgrami) makes the very complaint which I have here ventured to urge. Mr. Belgrami institutes a comparison between the courses of study in the

English Universities and those of the Universities here. He finds that from the Entrance Examination to the end of his course, the student in India has to study more subjects than the English student. Not only has the English student to pass in a smaller range of subjects to enter a University; but after he passes he is allowed to specialize, and if the English University has an intermediate examination, it is rather designed to serve as a guide to his special aptitude, as a preparation for his pass examination than as a test for his general knowledge. As the *Pioneer* observes the Indian student has to spend his time and industry over many subjects and in the words of Seneca he learns merely to speak with others and not with himself. Despite these facts we are told that our degrees are cheap, and that educated India is interested in keeping them cheap. Never was a more unfounded calumny uttered, and the marvel is that it should have been given currency to by so well-informed and so responsible an organ of public opinion as the *Times* newspaper.

The Teaching of English

The Commission attaches considerable importance to the teaching of English. Considering that English is to us the key to the learning and culture of the West, I may say that I am in sympathy with this view. But it must be observed that the methods suggested by the Commission admit of considerable differences of opinion. They are (1) that candidates must obtain forty per cent of the marks for English in order to pass the Entrance Examination, (2) that it is undesirable that textbooks should be prescribed in English at the Entrance Examination. As regards the first of these recommendations, I am well aware that it has been unanimously recommended by a Committee of the Calcutta University, consisting of distinguished educational experts whose views are entitled to the highest respect. Will it raise the standard of knowledge of English, possessed by candidates for the Matriculation generally? It will certainly reduce the number and percentage of successful candidates, but it will not raise the knowledge of English of the candidates, generally. That must depend upon

the teaching and upon the general efficiency of our schools. Here again the supreme importance of an efficient tutorial and professorial staff forces itself upon the attention.

As regards the proposal for the abolition of text-books for the Entrance Examination, I understand there are no text-books for the Matriculation at Madras and Bombay. In Calcutta the system was tried some years back and was abandoned. It seems to me that the best means of teaching English at the stage of progress at which the candidates has arrived when he prepares himself for the Entrance Examination is to prescribe for him suitable text-books. They should be limited in their number and he should be well grounded in them. He should have time to read them over and over again, so that he may be in a position to master the vocabulary, the idioms, the grammar and appreciate and admire, not only the literary beauties, but the pregnant moral lessons which may abound in his text books. To leave him without text-books at this stage of his progress is to leave him without rudder and compass—it is to leave him to the unknown and unknowable chapter of accidents in the arduous task to master one of the most difficult languages in the world. The questions set at the examination need not be confined to text-book. They should be a test, not of memory, but of his real knowledge of the language

Teaching Universities

The Commission, in the opening words of their summary of recommendations, say : “The legal powers of the older Universities should be enlarged so that all the Universities may be organized as teaching bodies. The Commissioners devote a few paragraphs of their Report to the consideration of the question of Teaching Universities. To recommend “that the Universities may justify their existence as teaching bodies by making further and better provision for advanced courses of study. They suggest that the Universities should appoint their lectures and provide libraries and laboratories, the Colleges being required to contribute, by means of scholarships or otherwise, to the

maintenance of those students who take advantage of the University courses. One of the advantages of this plan, says the Report, is that it can be worked out gradually and without the great initial expense which the creation of a complete professoriate would involve. I fail to understand why the Government should not take the entire responsibility of maintaining at each University centre a central school of advanced study which would draw into the best graduates of the University, animated by a thirst of knowledge and eager for the pursuit of more advanced courses of study. Such a central school would stimulate the pursuit of higher knowledge and exercise a healthy influence upon our educational system. There is no reason why the Presidency College in Calcutta should not at once be converted into a University College of this kind, dealing exclusively with post-graduate courses of study. The State is deeply interested in the higher education of the community, and the State must find the means for providing facilities for such education. The Tokyo University, maintained by the Japanese Government, is a teaching University. Surely the British Indian Government is not going to proclaim to the world that it is unequal to the educational responsibilities which the Japanese Government has assumed. The question is one of finance, but when our Government is as rich as the richest in the world in the readiness with which it adds to the military expenditure of the Empire, we have a right to expect at least an equal measure of generosity in dealing a problem which so intimately affects the happiness and the progress of the people. The Government in its letter on the Report of the Universities Commission recognizes the fact that the whole question of University reform is one of finance; and the foremost of these reforms, for which no expense should be grudged, is that which relates to the provisions for University teaching for the higher courses of knowledge. Here indeed is a splendid field for private liberality; but Government must set the example, and private liberality, in this country at any rate, flows with added impetus under the fostering care of Government.

The Constitution of the Universities

There is no part of the Report of the Universities Commission which has elicited a stronger protest or evoked more wide-spread dissent than that which deals with the constitution of the Universities. The cry has been raised—and there is abundant justification for it—that if the recommendations of the Commission in this respect were to be accepted, the Universities would be reduced to so many Departments of the State. A correspondent writing to the *Times* from India (and the *Times* gave special prominence to his letter) says that a popularly controlled University is anomalous and impracticable, and State-control can alone ensure efficiency; and he has the hardihood to assure the British public that the tentative policy of placing the Universities, under more or less popular control, has nowhere given satisfaction and has in many instances led to results which may be described as scandalous. A more malignant libel has never been uttered against our Universities. I am not here to defend the Universities, but we should like to have chapter and verse. We should like to have a categorical enumeration of alleged scandals which the present system has given rise to. Let indictment be framed—if indeed it can be framed—and we shall know how to meet it. In the meantime, I will take leave to record my personal protest against the condemnation of our Universities by an appeal to calumnies which will not stand a moment's scrutiny. But whatever the irresponsible writer in the *Times* may say and whatever support the *Times* may accord to him, it is very evident that His Excellency the Viceroy attaches considerable importance to the public protest with this part of the Report has elicited. His Excellency does not apparently accept the proposal of the Commission that the Director of Public Instruction should be *ex-officio* Vice-Chairman of the Syndicate. The Senate will continue to be the final authority in the matter of the recognition of schools. The elective principle will be definitely recognized in the constitution of the Senate. May we not appeal to His Excellency to continue and broaden the policy of the past and till further popularize the University by providing that at least one-half of the members of the Senate

should be elected by the graduates of the University of a certain standing. The graduates have a permanent and an affectionate interest in their Universities, and in all that conduces to their credit and reputation. Their participation in the affairs of their Universities would inspire them with a sense of responsibility and would enlist on behalf of educational reforms the sympathy and support of the educated community. There is no desire on the part of any one to divest the Universities of Senate-control. Such control, however, should be in the nature of general supervision rather than of indirect and active participation in the every-day work of the University.

The letter of the Government of India embodying their suggestions has been circulated among the Provincial Governments for their opinions. I have no doubt that the Universities and the various recognized Associations of the country will be consulted. The educated community throughout India will watch the further progress of this controversy with keenest interest. To them the issues raised are of supreme importance. The whole of their future might be said to be at stake. Are they to have their present educational system strengthened, invigorated, and adapted to modern requirements, combining height with surface, the steady expansion of the educational area with the gradual advancement of learning, or are they to have an emasculated system, shorn of the principle of growth and expansion, confined to an infinitesimal section of the people, without influence on the life of the community and without power to mould it for the highest purposes of human progress? We have made our choice—we have proclaimed it with all the emphasis that we could commend—and the latest official pronouncement seems to convey the assurance that the sympathies of the Government of India are with us.

The Economic Problem

Next in importance to the educational problem is the question of the economic condition of the people. The educational problem does not usually occupy a large place in our

discussions in this Congress. Not that its importance is overlooked, but we are content to rely with implicit confidence upon the slow and steady expansion of those educational efforts which have never been interrupted and which form a permanent feature of British policy in India. Circumstances, to which I have already referred, have given to the educational problem the prominence which it now possesses. But the statesmanlike attitude of the Viceroy gives us the assurance that the grave issues which have been raised will be settled ere-long, and they will be settled in a manner which will reconcile conflicting schools and divergent interests and ensure the diffusion as well as the advancement of learning. The economic problem is a more contentious one and affords ground for wider differences of opinion, coloured, I am afraid, by official and party bias. Here we enter upon an altogether more difficult sphere, where the atmosphere is surcharged with the heat of partisan controversy and where the combatants have already taken up definite side, to which they are attached by interests and passions which must seriously interfere with the impartial consideration of the problem. On the one hand, we have the Government and the adherents, of the Government, who, jubilant over the fat surpluses of the last few years, invite an admiring world to congratulate them on their work. On the other, we have Mr. Digby and his friends who shake their heads in stolid incredulity and producing their facts and figures from official sources, challenge the optimism of the opposite school. They maintain, not upon "a plausible syllogistic formula" (whatever that may mean), but upon data supplied by official authority that India has undergone steady material retrogression under British rule, and they appeal to the Secretary of State for "a searching examination" of their position. Your President is not called upon to act as an arbiter in this controversy. He does not indeed feel himself qualified for the task. He has responsibilities sufficiently grave to think of adding one more to them. But the controversy is one in which this Congress must feel the deepest interest. Is it the case—we ask—that the country is getting poorer day by day? The question is so momentous that Lord George Hamilton was forced to admit that if it should be

answered in the affirmative British rule must stand self-condemned and British must be relieved of her imperial responsibilities in relation to India. I am not prepared to admit the soundness of the inference which the Secretary of State derives, as necessarily following from the acceptance of the position of the pessimist school. Admitting that there has been steady material retrogression under British rule, it would involve the condemnation of the policy which has hitherto been followed in the Government of this country—it would be a plea, not for the severance of British connection, but rather the strengthening of it by a new bond—by the inauguration of a beneficent departure which has been insisted on by some of the greatest of Anglo-Indian administrators, by men like Munro and Bentinck and Elphinstone, and the soundness of which, at least in theory, has never been disputed. The pessimist school, I use the term in no offensive sense, do not indeed call for the withdrawal of British rule, but for the reversal of that policy which has impoverished the country and has been attended with disastrous economic results. India is under British rule, and they insist upon a policy which, in its spirit and in its temper, in its sacred regard for justice and fairplay, in its deep anxiety for the extension of British freedom along with the British flag, should be truly reflective of the beneficence of British greatness. It is no exaggeration to say that behind the economic controversy lies veiled the entire problem of Indian administration. Is the country to be governed for the benefit of the people, for the development of their industries, the accumulations and the husbanding of their resources, or is it to be administered in accordance with those principles which have brought about the terrible impoverishment of the people and all that it implies? Thus with the economic problem is wrapped up the gravest administrative issues.

Is the country getting poorer day by day? The question can be set at rest by an open enquiry stated under the auspices of the Government. Why is not such an enquiry held? Ours indeed has been a Government of Commissions and Committees. We have had Commissions of all sorts. One more

Commission to enquire into the economic condition of the country would be seriously aggravate the situation or dislocate the administrative machinery. The Famine Union in England which include public men of all parties and which have an economic rather than a political object in view, have been pressing for an enquiry into some typical villages. It is no hostile spirit that they approach this question. Their object is not to find fault, but to get at the truth. The Union desire an answer to the question whether it is true that the cultivator has been sinking deeper and deeper into poverty during recent years. But the Government will not give an answer. The Government will not hold an enquiry. Why does the Government decline to institute an enquiry for the settlement of what may justly be regarded as the problem of problems? Has it any reasons to believe that such an enquiry would be fatal to its optimistic creed? It cannot indeed be said that the Government is without any information on the subject, or that it ignores the gravity of the problem. On two separate occasions it held two separate and confidential enquiries. There was an enquiry held in 1880-81 by Lord Ripon. Sir David Barbour was entrusted with it. There was again an enquiry held during the viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin.

Now these enquiries either prove or disprove the allegation that the country is becoming poorer under British rule. If they disprove the allegation, nothing would be more natural than the rulers of India should hasten, by their publication, to refute a charge which involves so serious a reflection upon their own administration. If these enquiries do not disprove the charge, nothing would be more natural than that they should keep the evidence, of which they are in possession. To withhold from the public the results of these enquiries and the evidence on which they are based, raises a presumption against the roseate view of the economic situation. The presumption is strengthened by the steady refusal to hold an open enquiry, and it assumes more or less the complexion of definite proof, in view of facts, the significance of which cannot be overlooked.

Famines

The great, broad fact of recurring famines which grew in frequency and intensity during the last quarter of the last century stands out in striking prominence as the infallible index which powerfully appeals to the popular imagination of the growing impoverishment of the people. The story is a dismal one. By a moderate calculation the Famines of 1877 and 1878, of 1889 and 1892, of 1897 and 1900 have carried off fifteen millions of people. Another calculation estimates the mortality at 26 millions. If this terrible mortality had taken place in any European country the conscience of mankind would have received a shock from which it would not have recovered, until the means to prevent so fearful a calamity had been found and applied. If the Mohammedan rulers of European Turkey had permitted such a record of mortality to swell, and that from a preventible cause, in any of the European Provinces, subject to their rule, their expulsion from Europe bag and baggage would have been insisted upon with passionate vehemence, and no punishment would have been deemed too great for them. But India is beyond the pale of civilized opinion, and her calamities do not apparently stir the conscience of even the great nation into whose hands her destinies have been consigned by an all-wise Providence. But the record of our famine-mortality is even gloomier than what the above figures imply. Let us, for the purposes of this enquiry, divide the century into four periods 25 years each. During the first period, there were five famines with an estimated mortality of one million. During the second period, there were two famines with an estimated mortality of 500,000. In the third period, there were six famines with a recorded mortality of five millions; and as we come to the fourth and the last period, we notice the increasing gravity of the situation and the terribly high record of mortality. There were eighteen famines during this period with an estimated mortality of twenty-six millions; and the last famine of the last quarter of the expiring century was, in the words of so high an authority as the Viceroy himself, the severest that the country had ever known. It will thus be seen that famine was an ever-constant calamity during the whole of the century, that

it counted its victims by millions and that as the century drew near to its close, it became more frequent in its recurrence and more severe in its incidence. Will anybody explain to me why the famines of the last half of the century were severer and more frequent than those of the first half—why the famines of the last quarter were severer and more frequent than those of the preceding quarters—and why the last famine of the last year of the expiring century was the severest of them all? Do they not point to the growing impoverishment of the people? Let alone the carefully-drawn circulations, determining the income per head of the population which, though based upon official figures, the Secretary of State now repudiates as conjectural. Is it possible to overlook the significance of these famines, with their increasing severity and frequency and the silent but conclusive testimony which they bear to the material retrogression of the people? The public have not the time to verify intricate calculations, and they cannot be expected to follow the writer on Indian economics through the mazes of his figures, but these famines with their ever-increasing severity and recurrence leave most painful impression on the public mind and point, with convincing force, to the soundness of the position of those who hold that the country is steadily retrograding in material prosperity.

But we are told that famines are due to drought; to the operation of natural causes, and Governments and human institutions are powerless to avert them. We ask—is drought confined to India? Nature is impartial in her dispensations—in the distribution of her favours and disfavours. Other countries suffer from drought; but they do not suffer from famine. We must therefore look deeper for the causes of Indian famine. Drought alone will not account for it. Destitution is the root-cause of Indian famine. If the people were comparatively prosperous, if they did not suffer from chronic poverty, they would, in the event of local failure of crops, make their purchases in the markets of the neighbouring provinces. or they would have a reserve stock upon which they might fall back. But they are absolutely resourceless, sunk in the deepest depths of

poverty, living from hand to mouth, often starving upon one meal a day, and they die in their thousands and hundreds of thousands upon the first stress of scarcity, and as the situation deepens they die in their millions, despite the efforts of a benevolent Government to save them.

Nor will it avail to seek for an explanation of Indian poverty in the increase of our population or in the spend-thrift habits of our people. The census returns of 1901 disclose the fact that practically there has been no increase of population and that the increase in certain areas has been counter-balanced by decrease in other parts of the country. It is a well-ascertained fact that the population has not increased in India at the rate it has done in England and some other European countries. As for the alleged spend-thrift habits of the people, I will say this—that there is not a more abstentious or a more frugal race of people on earth than the peasantry of India. Their sobriety, their strong family affections, their deep concern for their children are the best preservatives of those thrifty habits which are all the more assured when they have their roots in impulse rather than in interest and when the combined operation of both impart to them an added strength. If they occasionally indulge in an extravagant *shradh* or an expensive marriage, they live from day to day, from month, to month and through the recurring years with a rigid parsimony which is but the reflex of their ascetic instincts. Have they not thus lived in the ages past and gone? Empires have come and gone; dynasties have been over-thrown; the face of external nature itself has been changed, but the deep-seated habits of our people have remained the same unchanged and unchangeable amid the vicissitudes of time and fortune. But they were not thus famine-stricken in those days, despite their expensive marriages and *shradhs*. Why are they famine-stricken now? Oh no—this theory of the alleged extravagance of the Indian peasantry will not do. It will not stand the test of scrutiny. Upon a closer examination, it disappears like the baseless fabric of a vision.

The effect of recent currency legislation has been still

farther to deprecate the condition of the agricultural classes. I am not here discussing its general effect and with adequate regard for all interests; but the artificial fixity of the exchange has entailed heavy loss on the cultivators. The extent of this loss can be calculated with some approximation to facts. The value of the raw produce of the soil, such as grain and pulse, seeds, raw jute and cotton, the proceeds of which directly benefit the cultivators, was in 1901-2, Rs. 61.30 crores. (p. 10 of Mr. O'Connor's Review of Trade). The equivalent of this at 1s. 4d. per rupee is £40,860,000, which is paid by the importers. If the exchange value of the rupees were 1s. 2d. at the present day, the cultivators would have received, as the equivalent of this sterling amount Rs. 70,04,57,000, or Rs. 8,74,57,000 more than what they now receive. The cultivators therefore annually incur a loss of about 8.75 crores as the result of the recent currency operations.

The tale of India's growing poverty does not indeed rest upon any syllogistic formula, or upon calculations which though made from official sources are now repudiated by official authority—it is supported by facts, the significance of which it is impossible to overlook, and by the testimony of high authorities, official and non-official. What explanation is there of the fact that in 1886-87 the consumption of salt per head of the population was 13.9 lbs. and that in 1889-1900 the consumption had gone down and was 12.7 lbs. per head of the population? How again do you explain the shrinking of the deposits in the Postal Savings Banks which in 1889-90 amounted to Rs. 164 and in 1899-1900 to Rs. 125 per head of the population? Do not these facts bear eloquent testimony to the steady material retrogression of the people? The evidence of competent authorities is equally conclusive on the subject. I will make three extracts from a Government Resolution, dated the 19th October 1888, which will throw considerable light on the economic condition of the people in some of the great Provinces in India :

Bihar —“The picture which I have drawn does not, however, show any great prosperity, and shows that the lower

classes, which, including the weaving classes, amounting to 25 per cent of the population, have little chance of improving their position and that they would have no resources to fall back upon in time of scarcity.. The conclusion to be drawn is that of the agricultural population, a large proportion, say 40 per cent are insufficiently fed, to say nothing of clothing and housing. They have enough food to support life and to enable them to work; but they have to undergo long fasts, having for a considerable part of the year to satisfy themselves with one full meal in the day.”

N.W.P —“The Commissioner of Allahabad remarks in a general way that there is very little between the poorer classes of the people and semi-starvation; and the Collector of Banda writes that a very large number of the lower classes of the population clearly demonstrate by their poor physique that either they are habitually half-starved or have been in their early years exposed to the trials and severities of a famine.”

Mr. Holderness, writing of the Pilibhit District, says that the landless labourer's condition is not all that could be desired. The united earnings of a man, his wife and two children cannot be put at more than Rs 3 per month. When prices of foodgrains are moderate, work regular, and the health of the household good, this income will enable their family to have one good meal a day, to keep a thatched roof over their head, to buy cheap cotton clothing and occasionally a thin blanket. The small cultivator is slightly better off, but he has not always enough to eat, or sufficiently warm clothes.

Bombay—“Poverty amongst the labouring classes of the mofussil most certainly exists, but not only does it exist, but represents the normal condition of these classes. Their houses are poor, their belongings are poor, their food is poor, their clothing very poor. ‘Poverty’, however, and ‘want’ at any rate in India are two very different things, and after many years, residence amongst the people of the country, I have no

hesitation in saying that while poverty is the rule (I still speak of the lower classes) actual want is the exception."

Central Provinces—"Mr. Tawney shows that the ordinary cost of food for a man, his wife and one child is 7.5 pice a day and if broken rice (kanki) be substituted for rice, the cost can be reduced to 4.5 pice a day. This sum will provide the family with 2.5 lbs. of grain and a small quantity of pulse having 1.5 pice over for salt, vegetables and firewood." Mr. Mackenzie's general conclusion on the whole enquiry is that—"there is no doubt in these provinces a great deal of poverty, but there is very little distress. The people are well-fed, and the only section of them who can be said to be hard pressed for bare substance are the hill tribes, who are but little more provident than the beasts of the forests and have to undergo similar vicissitudes in daily food."

These extracts are remarkable. They throw a flood of light upon the economic condition of the people. It is no critic of the Government, but the Government and the officers of Government who speak. And what do they say? In Bihar 40 per cent of the people are insufficiently fed. They have to undergo long fasts and for a considerable part of the year have to satisfy themselves with one full meal in the day. In the Allahabad Division, says the Commissioner, "there is very little between the poorer classes of the people and semi-starvation." In Bombay poverty amongst the labouring classes is their normal condition. As regards the Central Provinces, we are told on the authority of Mr. Mackenzie, Chief Commissioner, than whom there was not a greater optimist in financial matters, that there is a great deal of poverty, though very little distress. This was the state of things in 1888. Has there been any improvement since then? There has been no change for the better. On the contrary, the economic condition of the people has become much worse seeing that since then Bombay and the Central Provinces have passed through famines which have been described as the severest of the century, and the North Western Provinces have suffered from widespread distress. Having regard to the

appalling poverty of the people, as disclosed in the Resolution of Government from which I have quoted, it was only to be expected that they would succumb on the first appearance of scarcity, and it is no wonder that they died in their millions when they were over-whelmed by the greatest famine of the century. Their poverty added to the intensity of the famine-conditions and swelled the record of famine-mortality. As the century expires, the picture becomes even deeper in its sombre hue. The Famine Commission of 1901 say in their Report:

“On the extent of the indebtedness of the Bombay cultivators no precise official information, we believe exists; but there are materials for a probable estimate. We know that the Deccan Ryots Commission of 1876, found that “about 1/3 of the occupants of Government land are embarrassed with debt; that their debts average about 18 times their assessment; and that nearly 2/3rds of the debt is secured by mortgage of the land.” We also know that the money-lenders, in the villages, visited by the Commission paid about 1/8th of the whole land revenue—their property having been acquired within the preceding 20, and for the most part the preceding 10 years—while it was notorious that the private transfers of land were, in most cases, not recorded. The Commission of 1891 found that within the preceding 8 years, land paying 10 per cent of the revenue in the districts which they visited had been sold, 2/5ths going to the money-lenders: while lands paying 17 1/2 per cent of the revenue had been mortgaged, 4/7th going to the *sowcars*. In his evidence before us the Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government said that 28 per cent of the land in Broach had passed into the possession of the moneylending classes, and from a report of the Collector of Ahmedabad it appears that in his district expropriation of the old owners has also made considerable way. Taking all these statements into account, and comparing them with the evidence we have recorded, we think it probable that at least 1/4th of the cultivators in the Bombay Presidency have lost possession of their lands; that less than a fifth are free

from debt; and that the remainder are indebted to a greater or less extent."

It will be seen from the above that in the opinion of the Famine Commission, and they consisted of some of the highest officers of the Government, one-fourth of the cultivators in the Bombay Presidency have lost possession of their lands, that more than four-fifths are indebted to a greater or less extent and that only one-fifth of the population are free from debt. Non-official opinion entirely supports this dismal tale of the growing impoverishment of the people. No one will suspect the Pioneer of being prejudiced against the Government. Commenting on Mr. Grierson's statement regarding the economic condition of the various sections of the population in Gaya, the Pioneer remarks:

"Briefly, it is that all the persons of the labouring classes and ten per cent of the cultivating and artisan classes of forty five per cent of the total population, are insufficiently clothed or insufficiently fed, or both. In Gaya district this would give about a million persons without sufficient means of support. If we assume that the circumstances of Gaya are not exceptional—and there is no reason for thinking otherwise—it follows that nearly one hundred millions of people in British India are living in extreme poverty."

Thus according to one of the accredited organs of Anglo-Indian opinion which often is the exponent of official policy and measures, and is generally their staunch supporter, nearly one hundred millions of people in India are living in extreme poverty. This was said in 1893; in 1901, an Indian publicist of great experience and knowledge describing the state of things in India says: "The poverty and suffering of the people are such as to defy description. In fact for nearly 15 years there has been a continuous famine in India." It is necessary to produce further evidence in support of the growing impoverishment of the country? Lord George Hamilton himself says that India "is poor—very-very poor." If this is the official admission, we have a right to expect that it shall

be followed by corresponding official action. Statesmanship can address itself to no higher function. It is no more sacred calling than the devising of measures which would reclaim a great people from the depths of poverty and the physical misery and the intellectual and moral degradation which follow in its train. And if it is true that the greatness of the British Empire, the position of England among the nations of the earth, is largely due to her Indian overlordship, then the obligation to save India from her present critical situation assumes the character of a great national duty—of a truly imperial function—emphasized by considerations of mutual interest and the consciousness of past obligations. We desire to cooperate with the Government in the performance of this duty. We wish to associate ourselves with the rulers of India as co-adjutors, if they will accept our help in the spirit in which it is offered. For we feel that in this matter the Government needs and is entitled to the sympathetic cooperation of the community. It is in this spirit and with no desire to criticise and to find fault what we would venture to suggest some of the remedial measures which the Government may with advantage adopt. The situation is so grave that the adoption of these measures can no longer be postponed with safety to the best interests of the country. Let not the words “too late” be written upon British policy in India. As in the case of the stricken-down patient, so in the case of afflicted country, there comes a time when remedial measures, however promising, may be too late to be applied with advantage. In the physical as well as in the moral world, nature takes her revenge upon the dilatory who neglect their opportunities or misread her clear unerring intimations. The remedial measures which should be adopted in view of the steady material retrogression of the country may be summarized as follows :

(1) The revival of our old industries and the creation of new ones, (2) the moderate assessment of the land-tax, (3) the remission of taxes which press heavily upon the poor, (4) the stoppage of the drain and the adoption of the necessary administrative measures in that behalf.

The Industries

All will admit that the expansion of agricultural at the expense of manufacturing industry is a serious economic evil, for which, so far it prevails in British India, British rule is largely responsible. "No one who considers the economic condition of India," said Lord Dufferin, at the opening of the Exhibition of Industrial Arts in Calcutta, "can doubt that one of its greatest evils is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people of the country are dependent almost exclusively on the cultivation of the soil." This was not the state of things in the past. It was the manufactures of India which drew European nations to the shores of India. The European traders were first attracted, not by our raw produce, but by our manufactured wares. The fame of the fine muslins of Bengal, her rich silks and brocades had spread far and wide in Asia as well as in Europe. Where are they now? They have practically disappeared. "The arts of spinning and weaving," says Sir Henry Cotton, "which for ages afforded employment to a numerous and industrious population have now become extinct. Families which formerly were in a state of affluence have been reduced to penury." "There is no class of men," exclaims Sir James Caird, "whom our rule has pressed harder upon than the Indian weaver and artisan." What was it that brought about the extinction of our manufactures? What destructive force was in operation to produce this dire result? I will not answer the question myself, but will allow an Englishman to speak; and he shall be no other than the distinguished Orientalist, whose knowledge of eastern countries in general and of India in particular, was so unique "The British manufacturer" said Horace Hayman Wilson, "employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms." It was the fixed policy of the British Government and of the East India Company in the early days of British rule to discourage Indian manufactures and to encourage the growth of Indian raw produce. "This policy," says Mr. Dutt, in his *Economic History of British India*, "was followed with unwavering resolution and fatal success. Orders.

were sent out to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of weavers. Prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England. English goods were admitted into India free of duty, or, on payment of nominal duty". These measures produced a disastrous effect on Indian manufactures. Let us look at the figures. In 1794 India imported from England only £156 worth of cotton goods; in 1800 the imports had swelled to £19,595; in 1806 they had increased to £48,525; and in 1812 to £107,306. Cotton goods and silk goods were the national manufactures of India. They were subjected to a heavy tariff. British cotton goods paid a duty of 3.5 per cent on being imported into India; Indian cotton goods paid a duty of 10 per cent on being imported into England. British silk goods paid an import duty of 3.5 per cent in India; Indian silk goods paid an import duty of 20 per cent in England. This was the state of things in 1840. Our cotton manufactures had then practically died out. The import of Indian goods into England had dwindled to one-fourth in twenty-one years (from 1814 to 1835) from 12 lakhs of pieces to 3 lakhs of pieces, while the import of British cotton goods into India had increased fifty times within the same period, *viz.* from less than a million yards to over fifty million yards. But Indian silk goods still maintained their footing, and, though heavily weighted carried on an unequal competition. But even this was not to be. In vain did Mr. Larpent, Chairman of the East India Company, plead in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1840 for the reduction of the duty on silk goods to save it from the fate which had overtaken Indian cotton goods. It had been the settled policy of England in India, ever since her rise in political power, to convert India into a land of raw produce for the benefit of the manufacturers and operatives of England. And one of the members of the Select Committee, Mr. Brocklehurst, openly avowed this policy when he said :

"It would be more desirable perhaps that India should produce raw material, and this country, show its skill in perfecting that raw material." "The course of things in India",

replied Mr. Larpent, "is leading to that. But I submit that as this is the last of the expiring manufactures of India, the only one where there is a chance of introducing the native manufactures, at least let it have a fair chance." The chance was not given. British silk goods and Indian silk goods were both imported into France. In fair and open competition, the Indian silk goods commanded a wider sale at the French market. The jealous susceptibilities of the British manufacturers were roused. The importation of Indian silk goods into France was prohibited, "and British goods had in consequence a preference with French buyers." But as soon as the prohibition was taken off, the British trade to France was practically annihilated. This was too much for the British manufacturers. They would not stand it. They were resolved to drive Indian silk goods from the only foreign market that was open to them. The prohibition was renewed, and the last of the expiring manufactures of India was crushed out of existence. Could there be a more melancholy tale of unfeeling selfishness and cruel injustice which destroyed our manufactures and drove the great mass of our population upon the soil, to wring from it a bare subsistence when they could and to die in their millions when they could not. I am free to admit that the application of steam to the development of manufactures completed the downfall of our industries. But selfishness rather than science is responsible for our industrial ruin. Can it even now be said that this policy has received its last *quietus*, with the growth of progressive and imperial ideas and the closer relationship between the two countries? The old jealous is still dominant in the counsels of our rulers.

Or else how are we to account for the excise duty levied upon Indian cotton fabrics which handicaps them in competition with other countries? Is it too much to hope that the Delhi Durbar will mark the inauguration of a new era of equal justice, pervading every branch of the administration? Are we not indeed entitled to this paltry boon of equal justice, seeing how greatly indebted England is to India for her commercial and industrial expansion? Not to speak of the market which India offers for English goods, it is Indian wealth which to-

wards the close of the eighteenth century communicated an extraordinary impulse to the growth and development of British commerce and manufactures. Thus writes Mr. Brooks Adams in his *Law of Civilization and Decay*, a book written with no political object in view :

“The influx of the Indian treasure, by adding considerably to the nation’s cash capital, not only increased its stock of energy but added much to its flexibility and the rapidity of its movement.

“Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed. In 1760 the flying-shuttle appeared, and coal began to replace wood in smelting. In 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning-jenny, in 1779 Crompton contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the powerloom, and chief of all, in 1768 Watt matured the steam-engine, the most perfect of all vents of centralizing energy. But though these machines served as outlets for the accelerating movement of the time, they did not cause that acceleration. In themselves inventions are passive, many of the most important having lain dormant for centuries, waiting for a sufficient store of force to have accumulated to set them working. That store must always take the shape of money, and money not hoarded, but in motion.

“From 1694 to Plassey the growth had been relatively slow for more than sixty years after the foundation of the Bank of England, its smallest note had been for £20, a note too large to circulate freely, and which rarely travelled far from Lombard Street. Writing in 1790 Burke mentioned that when he came to England in 1750 there were not “twelve bankers’ shops” in the provinces, though then, he said, they were in every market town. Thus the arrival of the Bengal silver not only increased the mass of money, but stimulated its movement; for at once, in 1759, the bank issued £10 and £15 notes, and in the country private firms poured forth a flood of paper.”

Having regard to the past policy of the Government, we

feel that we are entitled, both by reason of that policy (for wrong must be redressed) and the substantial help which Britain derived from India in establishing her industrial pre-eminence, to claim a sympathetic treatment of the industrial problem. England destroyed our manufactures by prohibitive tariffs and by the pursuit of an industrial policy which all fair-minded Englishmen must condemn. England has benefited enormously from Indian wealth and commerce. Will she not lend us a helping hand and cooperate with us in the blessed task of working out our industrial salvation? If we had a potential voice in the Government of our country, there would be no question as to what policy we should follow. We would unhesitatingly adopt a policy of protection. That was indeed the policy of England before her industries attained their maturity. England reared her manufacturing power by protection; and then she turned a free-trader and invited other nations to accept free-trade principles. To other nations, including the British Colonies, knew better, and are now rearing their manufacturing power by protection. "But in India," says Mr. Dutt "the manufacturing power of the people was stamped out by protection against her industries; and then free-trade was forced on her to prevent a revival."

But we fear protection is out of the question. May we not at least hope for a fair and equitable treatment of our industries, without reference to other interests than our own and without their being handicapped by duties which must interfere with their expansion? We have heard a great deal in these days about State-encouragement of our arts and industries—about technical institutes which are to minister to our industries. But where is the technical institute maintained by Government which serves this great purpose? The mining industry in Bengal has made great progress. A mining college would be serviceable to the industry. The proposals was actually made last year in Congress. But the Government as yet shows no signs of moving in the matter. There is a proposal to organize a Commercial Department. Will it help the national industries and guide them along a beneficent channel? Will it call forth and develop a spirit of enterprise among our

people? We know not—but this we do know that we have a solemn duty in this matter. We have a high commission which we cannot ignore. As the guides and the instructors of our people, we have to tell them what is best for them. If the Government will not listen to our appeals, they at any rate will not turn a deaf ear to our words of counsel and advice; and we desire to tell them in all seriousness and with all the emphasis that we can command that if they wish well to themselves and to their country, they must turn their thoughts to commercial enterprise and the development of the marvellous resources of their country.

The bread-problem is the problem of problems and must be solved. The professions are crowded. The services cannot provide a place for all of us. Agriculture will not save our people from the terrible visitations of famine. The masses are starving, and when famine comes they die in their millions: the middle classes are carrying on an arduous struggle to maintain body and soul together. Everywhere poverty and destitution stare us in the face. What is to be the solution? The gorgeous India was the fable-land of wealth. Are we alone to be excluded from the rich treasures of untold wealth which our mother-earth shelters in her bosom and which she has sheltered through the ages past, so that her children in their own good time may reap the fruits thereof? Who has ever been deprived of a mother's choicest gifts? If the country is to be saved, we must leave the beaten track of the services and the professions, and be the pioneers and organizers of a vast industrial movement, which will secure to us the possession of that wealth which nature has ordained for us, and which, when so secured, will lead to the final and the satisfactory solution of the industrial problem. Let us guide the public mind of India along this beneficent channel.

The Land-Revenue Assessment

In an agricultural country the land-tax is necessarily a question of great importance. The success of agricultural operations depends upon fixity of tenure, assessment—upon

the assurance given to the cultivator that he will be permitted to enjoy the fruits of his labour and of his improvements. It is the Permanent Settlement which lies at the root of the great prosperity of Bengal, and if we cannot have a Permanent Settlement in other parts of India, we should at least have a moderate land-tax fixed for a reasonably long period. The question has been the subject of keen controversy and has elicited an authoritative pronouncement from the Government of India. In non-permanently settled estates where the land-tax is paid by the landlord, Lord Curzon has practically limited the state-demand of one-half the actual rent; but where the land-tax is paid by the cultivator, no clear limitation of his kind has been imposed. Nor does Lord Curzon accept the principle of Lord Ripon's Government that an enhancement of the state-demand at periodical revisions is only to take place when there has been a rise in the price of crops. In the older provinces His Excellency would fix thirty years as the limit during which an assessment would be in force. Some of these concessions are in accordance with the Memorial which was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 20th December 1900 by some distinguished men who had long served Government in high and responsible offices. Among the signatories were Sir Richard Garth, Sir John Jardine, Mr. Garstin, Mr. Reynolds, Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. R.C. Dutt. They advocated, among other things, that where the land-revenue is paid directly by the cultivators, as in most parts of Madras and Bombay, the Government demand should be limited to 50 per cent of the value of the nett produce, after deducting charges of cultivation. They recommended that a limit should be fixed in each province beyond which it may not be possible to surcharge the land-tax with local cesses. These local cesses, I understand, are a heavy burden on landlords in the North-Western Provinces. I fear that in the existing state of official opinion it is impossible for us to obtain a Permanent Settlement for all India, however much we may wish it and however much we may be justified in making such a demand, having regard to the past pledge of the Government. Three Governors-General under the East India Company, three Viceroys under the Crown, men

like Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence and Lord Ripon, exerted their great influence with a view to impose a permanent limitation on the land-tax in India. But they were over-ruled by the authorities in England. It is not likely that any appeal which we might make for the extension of the Permanent Settlement would command greater attention. But a moderate land-tax, fixed for a reasonably long period, is absolutely essential to the prosperity of our agricultural population, and we must insist upon it, in season and out of season, alike in the interests of the Government and of the people; and it seems to me that the wisest course for us to follow would be to take our stand upon the Memorial of the distinguished men, to which I have referred, and appeal to the Government for the very moderate concessions which they suggest. Such an appeal, urged with moderation and persistency, is bound to bear fruit, even in the near future.

Remission of Taxation

Among the remedial measures which I have suggested is the remission of taxation. An unanswerable case was made out in its favour by Mr. Gokhale in his Budget speech which has won for him the gratitude and the admiration of his countrymen. An overflowing treasury with a starving population is an anomaly which will strike every one. The conclusion is inevitable that more is taken from the tax-payer than what may fairly be required of him, and when the tax-payer, as he usually is in India, the starving ryot, the remission of taxation becomes a matter of paramount obligation on the part of the rulers of the land. For many long years we have patiently submitted to a heavy burden; and now that since 1898-99, despite frontier wars and heavy famine expenditure we have had years of uninterrupted surpluses, we are entitled to look forward to the remission of taxation. Since 1884-85 we have had a number of new taxes imposed upon us, yielding, roughly speaking, an annual revenue of 9 crores of rupees. Since 1884-85 we have had 12 years of surpluses amounting to over 28 crores and 7 years of deficits amounting to about 14.5 crores and since 1898-99, our surpluses have not been interrupted.

Thanks to the statesmanlike policy of Lord Curzon, the prospects of peace on the frontiers have become more assured, and thanks to the bounty of nature which has been somewhat deferred, the grim spectre of famine does not darken the view. The currency has been steadied, though by the adoption of a policy which has given rise to serious differences of opinion, and the fluctuating rupee no longer frightens the rulers of India or robs them of their peace. From all sides therefore we have indications which justify the hope—the very reasonable hope—that the strain on our finances is at an end and that our surpluses will be continued (leave alone the question as to whether they have been under-estimated or not). May we not therefore plead for relief—for the mitigation of that burden which has pressed upon us so heavily, and must press with crushing weight upon our starving peasantry? We are grateful for the remission of the arrears of land revenue—in the famine-stricken areas. But it is not enough: it does not go to the root of the matter. What is wanted is not temporary alleviation, but permanent relief. If the Government, for the benefit of its European servants could initiate a policy of granting exchange compensation allowance at the time of deficit—if in 1893.94, it could pay 62 lakhs of rupees as exchange compensation allowance when its deficit was a crore and a half—the Government might surely, for the benefit of a half-famished people, remit taxes which press heavily upon them, and at a time when it has a large surplus and when it may be reasonably hoped that its financial embarrassments are at an end.

I have heard a great deal about India being the most lightly-taxed country in the world. Even in the domain of romance there is not a prettier picture, but the illusion quickly disappears when the search-light of scrutiny is turned upon it, when the stern and grim figures which reveal their own tale are marshalled in their proper places and are permitted to bear their silent but eloquent testimony. Lawyers say that circumstances cannot lie. The financier says that figures are even more veracious witnesses. Let us for a moment turn to the testimony of figures. In India the total pressure of taxation is

about 85 crores which distributed among a population of 232 millions gives an incidence of Rs. 3.10-6 per head, or a percentage of 12.29 on the average income. The total taxation income in the United Kingdom in 1898-99 (the normal year before the War) was 90 millions sterling. The population being 41.5 millions, the incidence of taxation is £2-3s. per head. Now the average income per head is £36 and the pressure of taxation on the income of an Englishman is therefore only 6 per cent against 12.2 per cent in the case of the native of India. These figures disprove the oft-repeated declaration of the Government that "India is the most lightly-taxed country in the world." It is, of course, true that the amount of taxation, *per se* is light; but if taxation means pressure on the income, India is more heavily taxed than England, or perhaps any other country in the world.

But if taxation is to be remitted, the practical question to consider is what is the tax which should have a preferential consideration? I have no hesitation in saying that the duty on salt is the first that should be dealt with. It is one of the primary canons of taxation that the necessities of life should not be taxed. But salt is a prime necessary of life, and it is taxed. Nay more; the duty on salt has been enhanced, and when it was enhanced in 1888, Lord Cross, then Secretary of State, declared in a despatch to the Government of India that the increase in the salt duty should be looked upon as temporary, and that no effort should be spared to reduce the general duty as speedily as possible to the former rate. Lord George Hamilton took the same view of the matter in his Budget speech in the House of Commons in 1895 when he emphasized the necessity of reducing the salt duty as early as possible. Lord George Hamilton in his recent speech on the Budget in the House of Commons expressed the opinion that it was the enhanced duty which interfered with the consumption of salt. The reduction of the duty therefore is an obligation which the rulers of the land cannot ignore.

I find that an agitation has been set on foot for the total repeal of the income-tax. I cannot say that I am in sympathy

with this agitation. In a general scheme for the remission of taxes, the salt-tax must have the first place; and if the Government is able to proceed still further with the reduction of taxation, the minimum of taxable income for the income-tax should be raised. The minimum is now fixed at the sum of 500 rupees a year. It should be raised to 1,000 rupees a year, or if you like to a still higher-figure. The poor man must claim our first consideration, not because he is a poor man. but because the measure of sacrifice must be even, and society has no right to call upon him to make a heavier sacrifice for the general purposes of the State than what is required of the rich man. The necessities of life and the income necessary for the bare maintenance of the bread-winner and his family must be relieved of all taxation. In England the minimum of taxable income is £150 a year. The requirements of the Englishman are no doubt more numerous; his standard of living is higher. But, on the other hand, it is to be borne in mind that the Englishman lives for himself and his wife and children; whereas the Indian, under the operation of the joint-family system has a large number of relatives to feed and support. In any case I trust the minimum of taxable income will be raised.

In this connection I desire to call the attention of the Government to a special appropriation of the income-tax which was made when the income-tax was first levied. The income-tax law of 1860 set apart one per cent of the proceeds of the tax for expenditure locally on public works. In the five years during which the Act was in force, the sum which occurred from this source to local public works funds amounted to £1,611,410 or 161 lakhs of rupees. Why should not such a course be followed now—why should the income-tax be entirely merged in the general revenues of the Empire? How many useful and beneficent public works which are now starved or are abandoned would, if such a policy were in force, be carried out for the general benefit of the country?

The only objection that I can think of the remission of taxation is the possible increase of the military expenditure of

the Empire. There are two proposals before us—one is the addition of nearly a million sterling to our military expenditure to meet the cost of the efficiency of the reformed British army in India. The other is in the nature of a suggestion thrown out by the Secretary of State in the course of his Budget speech to the effect that there might be an addition to the European army in India. Against both these proposals, we ought to record our emphatic protest. Lord Curzon will not consent to the withdrawal of a single European soldier from India. But will His Excellency permit the Home Government to trust upon the Indian taxpayer the burden of a bloated army, far in excess of his requirements? Recent events have demonstrated the fact that our army even as now maintained is really in excess of what the country needs and that it is maintained on a footing which more or less serves the purpose of an imperial reserve. We could spare 20,000 British troops for the recent military operations without risk to our interests. It is not the case of the loan of a water-dog as pithily put by His Excellency the Viceroy. The watch-dog was lent for such a long period and was so long absent that we did not miss him at all, and we felt that we could do without him. There cannot be the smallest objection to the location of British troops in India to serve as an imperial reserve; but it is only equitable that the cost should be borne by the British Treasury.

I contend that the incidence of the military expenditure is heavier in India than it is in the United Kingdom, and we are therefore entitled, if not to relief, at any rate, to exemption from the imposition of further burdens. If the taxable wealth of a country is determined by the proceeds of the income tax then we find that for every rupee of such tax the Government of India spends 14 Rs. upon the army; whereas the British Government for every pound of such tax spends about £4. The total cost of the defence of India is as follows :

Army	26.50 crores
Military works	1.20 „
Marine	.75 „
Total	----- 28.45 crores -----

The expenditure of the United Kingdom on the Army and Navy is about 60 millions. In India the revenue from income-tax is about two crores of rupees. In the United Kingdom the revenue from the income-tax on the basis of a 6d. rate (corresponding to the 2.5 per cent rate in India) is about 15 millions. The proportion therefore of income-tax to expenditure on the defence of the country is as 1 to 4 in the United Kingdom. In India it is as 1 to 14. If, moreover, we deduct the greater portion of the charges for the Navy which is maintained for the defence of the colonial possessions of the Empire, the proportion for the United Kingdom will be much less. Thus India pays proportionately to her national wealth 3.5 times more than what the United Kingdom pays towards the cost of the country's defence.

However that may be, we ought to record our strong protest against any further expansion of our military expenditure. "Millions of money have been spent," wrote the Government of India in their despatch of the 25th March 1890, "on armament and fortification to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent the incursion of war-like peoples of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British power in the East". They urged that "in the maintenance of the British forces in this country, a just and even liberal view should be taken of the changes which should legitimately be made against the Indian revenues." We press the same view. A small instalment of justice has been done by the very paltry relief which has been afforded to the Indian exchequer by the annual grant from the British exchequer of about £250,000 a year in accordance with the recommendations of the Welby

Commission. But that is not enough, and we appeal to the Government of India to press upon the Home Government the statesmanlike views which it urged in 1890. Let it not be said that because we the people of India "have no voice in the matter," "an excessive military tribute" is demanded from us. In asking for an equitable adjustment of the military charges we have the high authority of the Government of India behind us; and our claim founded upon the highest justice is strengthened by the magnificent services which India rendered to the Empire during the recent wars and to which no one has borne more eloquent testimony than His Excellency the Viceroy. We appeal for financial justice, and I am sure we do not appeal in vain.

The Drain

One of the chief causes which have contributed to the impoverishment of the people is the annual drain which, says a writer on Indian economics "has tapped India's very heart-blood." Lord Salisbury has himself observed that "much of the revenue of India is exported without a direct equivalent." The drain of the last thirty years of the 19th century has been estimated at £90,000,000 without interest, at the rate of £30 000,000 a year. This drain represents a distinct loss of national wealth and resources. As Sir George Wingate has observed: "The taxes spent in the country from which they are raised are totally different in their effect from taxes raised in one country and spent in another....In this case, they constitute no mere transfer of one portion of the national income from one set of citizens to another, but are an absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount drawn from the taxed country."

What is to be the remedy? It is simple enough, if the Government will only adopt it. The revival of old and the introduction of new industries, the wider employment of the people in the higher offices of State, a more equitable adjustment of charges between England and India in matters in which both countries are interested, would go a long way to

check the drain and the material exhaustion consequent thereon. British rule represents the Government of India by one of the most civilized nations of the world. It is a proud and glorious record. In point of culture and enlightenment and in its ideals of Government it is far removed from most Governments which preceded it. But the conquerors of old soon made the conquered country their own, and returned to the people the money which they had wrung from the people. They thus stimulated the springs of domestic industry and contributed to the material prosperity of the people. Might we not ask the English rulers of India, whose proud mission it is to govern India for the benefit of India, to return to the people the people's wealth and thus lay broad and deep the foundations of our material prosperity?

The Remedy

What are to be the means for enforcing the remedial measures for checking the growing impoverishment of the country? How is economy to be enforced—how are the taxes to be imposed without hampering the springs of industry—how are the sources of national wealth to be deepened and widened—how is agriculture to be improved and the arts and manufactures stimulated? The sovereign remedy is to be found in the practice of the British constitution. Give the people a potential voice over the control of the public expenditure, and economy will follow as surely as the night follows the day. When people spend their own money, the strongest motives of self-interest enforce economy. When they spend other people's money and are responsible only to their consciences, they soon make the discovery that they can satisfy their consciences somehow—that the divine monitor within is keenly responsive to the promptings of interest and passion—and so they grow careless and extravagant. The British constitution has recognized this truth and has enbalméd it in the constitutional usage of the land. The British constitution, one of the finest products of human wisdom and genius, has always shown the utmost solicitude to ensure to the representatives of the people and to them alone the full and absolute control over the public purse.

A money bill becomes law when it has passed the House of Commons and without reference to the House of Lords and without the assent of the Sovereign. It seems to me that the time has come when a definite, forward step should be taken towards the recognition of a similar principle in the Government of India, subject to such checks as circumstances may suggest. It is worthy of consideration whether a further expansion of the Legislative Councils should not take place, with representatives from each District in the local Councils, armed with the power of control over the public expenditure, and whether an expansion of the Imperial Council upon similar lines may not with advantage be introduced. It is thus and thus only will economy be insured the burden of taxation lightened, the material prosperity of the people stimulated, and the financial position of the Government placed upon a sound and satisfactory footing.

The Wider Employment of our People

I have referred to the question of the economic drain, and from year to year we have appealed to the Government from this platform to stop it, or of in the present relations between England and India this cannot be done, to curtail its volume. From a return ordered by the House of Commons, it appears that the salaries, allowances and pensions to Europeans in India drawing £100 a year or more were £10,274,246 in 1889-90. It must be much more now, as exchange compensation allowance has since been added. The bulk of this vast sum of money is necessarily spent out of India. The employment of a costly foreign agency for Government of a country is, in the best of circumstances, a heavy financial burden and often a financial loss; in the case of India, it is among the primary causes of her growing impoverishment. The wider employment of the people in the public service of their own country is one of the chief remedial measures which will naturally suggest itself. Racial disqualifications have long been abolished. Merit is the sole test of qualification for public employment. This principle has again and again been affirmed; but there is as yet very wide divergence between principle and practice. The noble principle of equality affirmed

by the Queen's Proclamation has been accepted with unhesitating assent by a long line of distinguished Viceroys. Lord Curzon has declared it to be the golden rule of his conduct. We have for many long years looked forward to the complete redemption of pledges, so solemnly given, by authorities so distinguished, and associated with the honoured name of a Sovereign whose memory is cherished with grateful affection by the people of India. But as yet we are far removed from this blessed consummation. The Resolution of the House of Commons of the second of June 1893, affirming the principle of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Services, remains a dead letter. The appeal of the Indian Association praying for the wider employment of natives of India in the minor Civil Services has practically been rejected. The guaranteed appointment in the Rurki College are withheld from natives of India, coming from the Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. The appointments in Cooper's Hill are no longer thrown open to the unrestricted competition of Indian candidates. We are excluded from the competitive examinations held in London for recruitment to the Higher offices in the Police service. Are not all these distinct breaches of the Queen's Proclamation, open violations of that mandate which she laid upon her Ministers by her royal command? Those who bring about the indefinite postponement of the redemption of solemn pledges and seek to quibble away the gracious promises, enshrined in historic documents, to which the national faith is pledged, have no conception of the irreparable injury they do to the British Government in India; for in the words of the Viceroy addressed to the *Talukdars* of Oudh, it is English veracity rather than British valour or intelligence which has built up and consolidated this vast Empire. Those who shake the confidence of the people in the pledges of the Government weaken the foundations of imperial rule. In the phrenzy of power they may seek to trifle with the moral laws; but the mandate of the Almighty has made them paramount, and none can defy them with impunity.

As regards the open competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service, the prospects of Indian candidates have sensibly diminished; and well they may. The marks in Sanskrit and Ara-

bic are 500; in Greek and Latin they are 750. Roman and Greek History, each of which carries 400 marks, Roman Law and Political Science to each of which 500 marks are attached, are subjects which Indian students may take up; but they are handicapped by the nature of the questions set. In all these subjects, extracts from the Latin and Greek authors and placed before the students, and to be able to answer them they must know these classical languages. It is knowledge of the classical languages necessary for the thorough mastery of political science which is altogether a modern branch of knowledge, or even of Roman, or Greek History? So many Latin and Greek passages and quotations are introduced in the question-papers on these subjects that I think it would be no exaggeration to say that no candidate, not knowing Latin and Greek, could hope to gain even half the maximum marks in these subjects. What is most inexcusable is the free quotation from Greek authors in the paper on Political Science. It is therefore practically impossible for an Indian student to take up these subjects. Thus an English candidate has for his Latin 750+400 marks and for his Greek 750+400 marks, or a total of 2,300 marks against 500 marks only in Sanskrit or Arabic for India student. Or if the Indian student is exceptionally clever, he may take up both Sanskrit and Arabic, and in that case there will be his 1,000 marks against the 2,300 marks of the English candidate. But latter's knowledge of Greek and Latin gives him an enormous advantage over the Indian candidate; for it enables him to take up Roman Law and Political Science, each of which carries 500 marks. Thus it will be seen that Indian students, whose education is not classical, are placed at a serious disadvantage at the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service, and I very much fear that their failure is largely due to the conditions of the examination to which I have called attention. There is no reason why Indian History, like English, Roman or Greek History or why Persian, the most beautiful among the living languages of the East to which modern Urdu is largely indebted for its vocabulary, should not be included among the subjects of examination? From an educational point of view, is Indian History less interesting or useful than the History of Rome or Greece—or is Persian a less effective disci-

pline of the mind than French, German or Italian ? The considerations to which I have referred call for definite action on our part. The British Committee may be invited to initiate the necessary measures in this behalf.

In regard to this question, if we have not altogether lost ground, we have at any rate not made much progress. For the present we are confronted with the forces of reaction, and we must bide our time. But when that time comes, and there are already signs of the bursting of the new dawn, let us bear in mind that the first duty which we owe to ourselves and to the distinguished man who has worked so long and so unselfishly for India's welfare—India's Grand old man—Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, is to apply ourselves to the fulfilment of the Resolution of the House of Commons with which he has so prominently associated. We must insist upon practical affirmation of the principle of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Services; and if we insist upon it in season and out of season, our rulers will, I have no doubt, yield to the importunity of our demand what they have denied to the justice of our cause. In the long and glorious history of national triumphs, I have not yet known of the failure of a cause such as ours is, based upon the highest justice and the plainest considerations of expediency; and if we do fail, the fault will be ours.

The Military Service

As a part of the question of the wider employment of our people in the public service, it is impossible not to refer to the exclusion of our countrymen from the commissioned ranks in the army. The bravest native soldier, a born warrior, possessed, it may be, of military instinct which he has inherited from a long line of ancestors, cannot in these days rise beyond the rank of a Subedar-Major or a Rissaldar-Major in the British army. The youngest British subaltern, who was not born when the veteran won his spurs is his superior military officer, whose orders he must carry out and whose higher rank he must recognize be the tribute of the military salute. A more unnatural state of things does not perhaps prevail in any other country; and to imagine that the proud Sikh or the intrepid Gurkha warrior does not

feel the anomaly and the humiliation which it implies is to hold that he is something better or worse than human. It was not thus that Roman rule was consolidated in the most distant parts of Rome's world-wide Empire. It was not thus that the Mohammedan rulers of India established their sovereignty among hostile and alien races. It is not thus that Russia upholds her great Empire in Central Asia. Trust is the secret of successful imperial rule. Mistrust is the weapon of the weak and the suspicious, not of the brave and the generous. Caution carried to the verge of timidity is a feeble instrument of Government. A wise step has indeed been taken which represents a departure from the policy of the past. We desire to express our gratitude to His Excellency the Viceroy for the organization of the *Imperial Cadet Corps*. We hope it represents the inauguration of a new and beneficent policy. Might we not appeal to His Excellency to follow it up by throwing open the commissioned ranks in the Indian army to the representatives of the military races in India and to those who, by an adequate training and test, prove their fitness for military command? It would be a substantial recognition of their loyalty which would be more acceptable to them than all the honours which titular distinctions may confer. There is no name more honoured in Indian history than that of Henry Lawrence who died in the performance of his duty. Thus wrote Henry Lawrence in the early fifties: "If Asiatic and Africans can obtain honourable position in the Armies of Russia and France, surely Indians, after a tried service of a century under England's banner, are entitled to the same boon, nay justice."

The Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions

Among the reforms which have occupied a prominent place in our programme is the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions in the administration of criminal justice. We claim to have brought it within the range of practical politics, and the question is now pending for final decision by the Government of India. A memorial was presented by Lord Hobhouse and several other distinguished men praying for the speedy introduction of this reform. The memorial has been forwarded to the Government of India; but no orders have yet been passed. It is with some little disappointment we notice that this question

has not been included among the twelve administrative problems which Lord Curzon has selected for solution; but if it is true that justice is the bulwark of thrones and States, then there can be no more urgent or pressing consideration than a proposal which seek to improve the administration of justice in India and to relieve it of the scandals which are inseparable from the present system.

The soundness of the principle which underlies the reform is admitted, but the practical difficulties in the way of giving effect to it are said to be great. In the early stages of the controversy the reform was objected to, on the ground of expense. But Mr. Perozeshah Mehta and Mr. Dutta have satisfactorily disposed of the objections which have been raised on this score. Let me ask—has the British Government in India been never deterred from the pursuit of any scheme upon which it set its heart, on the ground of want of funds? In a year of deficit it paid exchange compensation allowance of 62 lakhs of rupees to its European servants. In the face of heavy deficits, it kept up a military expenditure which was out of all proportion to its resources. If the security of the country against foreign invasion and domestic dissensions is a matter of supreme concern to the Government, hardly less so is the efficiency and the purity of the system under which justice is administered. But the financial objection is manifestly untenable in these years of overflowing surpluses. For the purposes of an experiment in selected areas, it never was tenable. In Bengal the administration of justice brings in clear profit of nearly 25 lakhs of rupees a year. In the natural order of things the necessary expenditure for the improvement of the system of justice would be the first charge upon this surplus. The proposed reform is admittedly an improvement, whatever might be the executive reasons which stand in the way of its adoption. A portion of the surplus might surely be applied towards the inauguration of this experiment. But the truth is that it is not financial reasons which block the way. There are, we are told, considerations of administrative expediency, whatever that may mean—which render the separation of executive and judicial functions undesirable; and there is the fetish of prestige, to which due worship must be rendered. But prestige which is divorced

from justice—which perpetuates a system which often defeats the ends of justice—is not true prestige and can never conduce to the strength or stability of Governments. The prestige theory however, though influentially supported, vanishes on the slightest examination. Commissioners of Divisions, Secretaries to Government, Members of the Board of Revenue exercise no judicial functions, and yet their prestige is much higher than that of District officers. It is altogether an irrational sentiment, the remnant of an ancient prejudice, which stands in the way of this reform. Who have destroyed the outer barriers; the citadel will soon fall. Reason and equity and the conscience of the community are with us. It is the unreasoning clamour or an exclusive bureaucracy, jealously guarding its powers and its privileges, which for the moment has silenced the voice of reason. But the last word in the controversy has yet to be pronounced by the Viceroy, and we know that His Excellency is the keeper of his own conscience.

The Police

The reform of the police is one of Lord Curzon's twelve chosen problems. His Excellency has rightly accorded to this question the prominence which it occupies. The Police is the one department of State which is in constant touch with the people, and the attitude of the people in relation to the Government is largely determined by the character of the Police. Its efficiency therefore is a matter of supreme importance. At the present moment, a Commission is sitting and is collecting evidence with a view to suggest measures for the reform of the Police. For the President of the Commission I have great respect. His consciousness, his sympathy with the people over whom he is placed in authority and his desire to serve them have won for him their respect and esteem. At the same time, it must freely be admitted that the representation of the Indian community on the Commission is inadequate, and the Commission evidently has not been constituted in accordance with the broad and salutary principle laid down by Lord Curzon himself. In accordance with that principle, the selection of members should have been regulated "by a careful balance of the interests and

merits, not merely of individuals but of provinces, races and even of creeds". In the selection of members of the Police Commission, it is evident there has been no such careful balancing of the interests and merits of individuals and of provinces and of races and creeds, as laid down by His Excellency. However that may be, I am quite sure there is no desire on the part of the educated community to add to the difficulties of the task which lies before the Commission by entering upon a criticism of its constitution. We desire to help the Commission, and I have no doubt your deliberations, conceived in a spirit of genuine friendliness and with a real desire to cooperate with the Commission, will be found useful by that body. The inefficiency of the Police is notorious. It is the weakest department of the Government, as the Post Office is the strongest. How to render it more efficient, introduce into it a higher sense of purity and invest it with greater dignity, so that to be a policeman would be regarded as a mark of social honour rather than of social stigma, is the problem, to which the country and the Government have applied themselves for a solution. The problem is not one which is beyond the capacity of Anglo-Indian statesmanship, aided by the experience and knowledge of a sympathetic community. Similar problems have been dealt with in the past and satisfactorily solved. There was a time, at least in Bengal, when the subordinate Executive and Judicial Services were not as remarkable for their efficiency or integrity as they now are. But the purity of the members of these services and their ability and devotion now place them in the front-rank among our public servants. They are an honour to themselves, to the country and the Services which they adorn. The Government of Bengal has recently recognized their worth and the quality of their services by a substantial increase of their emoluments and by the improvement of their status by the promotion of selected members to offices, reserved for the Imperial Civil Service. What has brought about this change—what is the secret of this marvellous transformation? The secret is easily learnt. Is it not one of the abstruse mysteries of statesmanship? The improvement was brought about by the introduction into these Services of educated men—the products of our University, upon suitable pay and assured prospects. Follow the same principle in the

reorganization of the Police, and the same results will follow. The reform will be expensive; but it must be faced with statesman-like resolution. As the late Sir John Woodburn, whose death all Bengal mourns for his many good qualities of head and heart, sad from his place in the Imperial Council, money is the crux of the whole question. The pay and prospects of the Police, especially of the investigating officers, the Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors must be substantially improved. The supervision must be more effective.

It is no exaggeration to say that the supervision now exercised by the class of Officers, known as District Superintendents, is inadequate and ineffective, and the Police will continue to be open to the reproach of inefficiency, so long as the higher offices in the department are filled by Europeans, imperfectly acquainted with the language and the people and having an inadequate knowledge of law and procedure. So long as these conditions are in force, the superior officers must be pliant tools in the hands of their subordinates whom they are expected to guide and control. The subordinate police-officers, subject to little or no real supervision, wield the authority of their superiors, without any sense of their responsibilities. For better it would be, if the office of District Superintendent was altogether abolished and the Magistrate made in reality as in name he is, the Head of the Police. Let him be relieved of his judicial work, and let him have one or two personal assistants for his Police work. Thus a common measure of reform would add to the efficiency of the Police and bring about the separation of judicial and executive functions. From the utterances of an influential Anglo-Indian newspaper I am inclined to believe that such a reform would commend itself to both Europeans and Indians. But if the office of District Superintendent is at all to be retained, let it not be the monopoly of the incapables of influential Anglo-Indian families—the heaven of their rest. Detection of crime is the principal duty of the Police—and detection in the long run means prevention. The Indian Police is notoriously wanting in detective ability, owing mainly to the higher offices in the Police being manned by Europeans, imperfectly acquainted with the language and the habits of the people. For the efficiency of the

Police, therefore, it is a matter of the first importance that there should be a substantial leaven of the Indian element in the higher ranks of the Police. But here again we have to respect the old complaint of the monopoly of the governing race and the exclusion of the children of the soil. In Bengal out of 80 District and Assistant Superintendents of Police, only 6 are natives of Bengal. For the whole of India, out of 471 Assistant and District Superintendent, only 25 are Indians and 446 are Europeans. This exclusion of our countrymen from the higher offices in the Police was never contemplated by the Public Service Commission who recommended that the recruitment for the grade of District Superintendent should be by—

(a) Limited competition amongst candidates selected in England for such portion of the appointments in each Province as the Government of India may decide to be necessary;

(b) Limited competition amongst candidates selected in India, such candidates being carefully chosen on grounds of good physique, the knowledge of the vernacular languages prescribed for the Provincial Service, and high educational qualifications of an English kind;

(c) Promotion from the grade of Inspectors for exceptional merit and ability shown in active service.

(1) That both the competitive examinations, referred to in the foregoing recommendation, should be conducted in accordance with the rules approved by the Government of India; and

(2) That appointments to Inspectorships should, as a rule, be made from the lower grades of the force, and that in no case should outsiders be appointed to Inspectorships merely as a training-ground for the higher offices.

From both the competitive examinations, the one in India and the other in London, natives of India are excluded, though the Public Service Commission made no recommendation to that effect. We have protested against this exclusion, but all in vain. It institutes an irritating racial distinction, in conflict with the terms of the Queen's Proclamation and the avowed policy of

the British Government in India. We look forward to that abolition of this distinction as one of the fruits of the labours of the Police Commission. Let there be an open competitive examination for admission to the superior Police service, subject to such rules regulating intellectual, moral and physical qualifications as may be deemed necessary, but let us not be excluded from it, because forsooth we are Indians!

British Indians in Natal

I feel that this presidential address would not be complete without a reference to the position of our countrymen in South Africa. They are fighting a noble battle for the removal of their disabilities in which they claim and are entitled in full measure to our sympathies. We had hoped that after their splendid behaviour in the South Africa War—they would be treated with that consideration and sympathy which would be the just reward of their distinguished services. On the eve of the Boer War, we were told by Lord Lansdowne, then Secretary of State for War, that one of the reasons of the War was the unjust treatment of British Indians, by the Boer Republics. The war is over; the Indians manfully did their part; never was their loyalty or their self-sacrificing devotion more conspicuous; but their disabilities continue, and the generous recognition of their services seems to be a remote, if not an uncertain prospect. The inventory of their disabilities is a melancholy record, galling to their self-respect and unworthy of those who permit them. No Indian can enter the Orange River Colony, except as a domestic servant. In the Transvaal, he is treated as an outcaste, one whom society barely tolerates, and every circumstance of his life is so ordained by a beneficent administration that he is reminded at each stage in almost every function of his daily life, that he is the representative of an inferior race, and that on no account should he be oblivious of the artificial status, thus forced upon him by superior authority. He cannot by law walk on the footpaths or travel first or second class on the Railways. He must live in locations set apart for him, and must possess no property except in these locations. As if the measure of his degradation was not full, he must carry a pass, and finally in the spirit of the Curfew Regu-

lations of William the Conqueror, he must not be out after 9 o'clock in the evening. Never was there a more complete code of sanitary and moral regulations than what the late Transvaal Government devised for the benefit of British Indians. It has come to the British rulers of the Transvaal as a legacy; and it is allowed to blot the statute-book and sully the fair fame of British administration. The state of things in Natal is not much better. Nothing is more repugnant to the spirit of British laws or the genius of British institutions than irritating distinctions, founded upon race or colour. Yet such distinctions are ruthlessly enforced against British Indians in Natal, under the colour of British laws administered by British officers. Indian youths are debarred from the Government schools in Natal. British Indians cannot enter Natal, unless they have a knowledge of one of the European languages. A recent measure imposes on the minor children of indentured Indians a tax of £3 per year, unless they return to India on the termination of their parents' indentures.

It is useless to pile up the list. It is a goodly catalogue of disabilities; and all Indians, be they coolies or be they princes, are treated with the same impartial justice—the same status for all—the same disabilities operative in the case of all, working with the persistency and uniformity of the dispensations of nature. It is melancholy to have to reflect that the South African legislators should have so little knowledge of India and the circumstances of Indian life as to confound the coolie with the cultured Indian, the aboriginal inhabitant, with the representative of a civilization, older than any which the memory of man can recall, and in comparison to which the civilization and culture of Europe are but of yesterday. But the darkest cloud has its silver lining. The firm attitude of the Secretary of State inspires us with the hope and the confidence that he will not permit the perpetuation of disabilities which he regards with strong disapproval and just indignation. The stoppage of the importation of Indian labour would seriously handicap the trade and industries of South Africa. Such a step is not lightly to be thought of; nor is it to be regarded as being altogether beyond the domain of practical politics. A supreme necessity may call

for a supreme remedy, the Secretary of State is in the place of the Great Moghal, with powers and responsibilities far greater than ever belonged to the most illustrious of that race. The welfare of India and the honour of the Indian peoples are entrusted to his care and keeping, and I am sure he will not permit them to be treated as worse than helots, on a par with African sages, when, by the exercise of his undoubted constitutional authority, he can ensure to them a better and more considerate treatment. We also look forward to the very best results from Mr. Chamberlain's visit to South Africa, for as Mr. John Morley has truly observed that no one is more qualified by genius and temperament to reconcile conflicting interests, to heal the animosities engendered by racial strife and to lay broad and deep the foundations of a new political structure in South Africa, where equal rights and equal privileges shall be the heritage of all British subjects.

The Congress—Its Mission

Today we begin our work for the 18th Session of the Congress. The mind is spontaneously carried back to the past—to the trials we have endured, the labours we have undergone, the disappointments we have suffered, and the triumphs we have achieved. The time has not yet arrived for the final judgment for the authoritative pronouncement of history, on the work of the Congress. We are yet in the midst of our journey, our long long journey, through the dreary wilderness, which is to carry us to the Promised Land. Many will not enter Canaan. Some choice spirits have already fallen in the grandmarch. Many more will yet fall before the journey is accomplished and the darkness of night gives place to the dawning of the new day. Some of us who cannot promise to ourselves length of days can only anticipate with the eye of hope and faith in the blessings of the Promised Land. But the faith that is in us is strong and the hope that inspires us is proof against all disappointments—all reverses. We have an undying faith, as strong as ever inspired a prophet or a priest, that the cause to which we are pledged, will, in the ordering of Providence, triumph over all difficulties, outlive all prejudices, leading us onward and upward inspiring at each stage a loftier devotion, and developing a truer manhood

until the regenerated man claims and asserts his political franchise as at once his birth-right and the just tribute of his higher nature.

For myself, I believe the Congress has a divine mission. It is a dispensation of Almighty God for the unification of our peoples and the permanence of British rule in India. Thus we are gathered together under the aegis of an organization, political in its character and in its scope, but drawing its strength and its inspiration from those ever-living fountains which flow from the footsteps of the throne of the Supreme. Shreekrishna—the divinely inspired Shreekrishna—who has his shrine at Dwarika in the Province of Gujarat, in his memorable admonition to Arjuna on the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*, said *Karma is Dharma* (good deeds constitute religion). Is there a holier *Dharma*, a nobler religion, a diviner mandate than that which enjoins that our most sacred duty which has a paramountcy over all others, is the duty which we owe to the land of our birth.

What are trials—what are delays, what are disappointments what is even the cankering worry of vexation in the presence of this consecrated task? They are the necessary incidents of the struggle in which we are engaged—the ordeal of fire through which we must pass—the purificatory stage which must qualify us for the rich blessings that are in store for us. They will strengthen our fibre, develop our manhood, ennoble our nature and call forth whatever is good and great in us. The chastening discipline of adverse circumstances is the necessary apprenticeship for the splendid heritage to which we aspire. We ought to thank God on our knees that the discipline is so mild—the sacrifice entailed so insignificant. Read the ensanguined pages of history—note the trail of blood and the hecatombs of mangled corpses, with all their attendant horror and desolation, which mark the line along which victorious movements of reform have careered their triumphant way. We live in happier times, under more fortunate circumstances, under the beneficent protection of a rule which affords the widest tolerance for the widest differences of opinion and evinces the deepest sympathy for all constitutional struggles for constitutional liberty. Yet we have

our trials and our disappointments. The forces of reaction are now in the ascendant. The cause of progress has met with a temporary check. For the moment we have been worsted. For the moment we have lost ground. But we Congressmen never confess to a defeat. We bide our time in the firm conviction that the turn in the tide will come and the forces which make for progress will once again assert their undisputed supremacy.

The New Imperialism

Imperialism blocks the way. Imperialism is now the prevailing creed. Imperialism has always been synonymous with autocracy—the rule of the despotic monarch or of the victorious general who has made his way to sovereign power. In ancient Rome, as in modern France, Imperialism meant the supersession of popular authority and the establishment of one-man authority. British Imperialism does not indeed imply the extinction of British democracy. It means self-government for Great Britain and her colonies, autocracy for the rest of the British Empire. What its latent possibilities are it is impossible to say. Whether in its further developments, it will lead to the curtailment of democratic power is one of those secrets, hidden deep in the bosom of time, regarding which even the most confident predictions may prove futile. But all history bears record that the extension of territory and power over subject-races is fatal to popular Government. Let us not however speculate about the future. British Imperialism implies the closer union—the more intimate federation between the English-speaking subjects of His Majesty. We stand outside the pale of federation. We are not admitted into this inner sanctuary of freedom. We are not permitted to enter the threshold of the Holy of Holies. We are privileged only to serve and to admire from a distance. As a part of the Empire, we sent out troops to South Africa, and they saved Natal. As a part of the Empire, we sent out troops to China, and our Indian soldiery planted the imperial standard on the walls of Peking. Our loyalty is admittedly so genuine, so deep and so intensely realistic that even the Secretary of State had no conception of it.

All the same, we are not the children of the Empire, entitled to its great constitutional privileges. We are Utilanders in the land of our birth, worse than helots in the British Colonies. Our countrymen in Natal, whose splendid behaviour during the late war was the subject of unstinted praise, are still exposed to a degrading treatment which is galling to their self-respect and discreditable to those who permit it. British Imperialism which is so sedulous in exalting British greatness is not equally sedulous in opening up to us the possibilities of our greatness. British Imperialism which seeks to draw closer the bonds of union between the mother-country and the Colonies has literally done nothing to cement the loyalty or deepen the gratitude of the Indian people. I would welcome an Imperialism which would draw us nearer to Britain by the ties of a common citizenship and which would enhance our self-respect, by making us feel that we are participators in the priceless heritage of British freedom. But we are as yet very far from this blessed consummation. In India Imperialism has accentuated the forces of reaction and has engendered a love of pomp and show which is apt to encourage extravagance and to withdraw attention from the graver issues of domestic reform. We are not therefore prepared to welcome the new Imperialism in the form and garb in which it appears to us. Mr. Gladstone's sound Liberalism, with its strenuous persistency in the matter of domestic reform, with its thorough recognition of England's grave responsibilities in relation to India, would be to us far more acceptable than the Imperialism which indulges in expensive pageants, but which turns a deaf ear to the cry of the coolies in the tea-gardens of Assam, which often subordinates our interests to other interests and which relies for the justification of imperial rule upon the pomp and circumstances of imperial grandeur than upon the solid and enduring basis of truly imperial achievements.

A Desponding View of the Situation

I have no doubt that the new Imperialism is a passing phrenzy which the robust commonsense of the English people will ere long discountenance and that it will soon pass away like so many of the varying fashions of the hour. But whether that be

so or not, we must be sleepless in our vigilance and unremitting in our efforts to stem the tide and roll it back. We have no reasons to be discouraged. The past ought to stimulate us and to stir us into new enthusiasm. Ours is a brilliant record. I claim for the Congress that it has never taken up a question which it has not brought within the range of practical politics. You took up the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. The matter is awaiting consideration by the Government of India. You agitated for the reform of the police. A Police Commission is now sitting to elaborate a scheme of Police reform. You insisted in season and out of season upon the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service. The Public Service Commission was appointed; and though much remains to be done, the impetus you communicated to the movement will produce enduring results. Last but not least, your crowning triumph was the introduction of the representative principle into the Government of the country. But your moral achievements, though less palpable and obtrusive, are a yet more enduring monument of your public spirit and your self-sacrificing devotion. You have created a new spirit and have infused a new life into our people. You have brought together the varied and multitudinous races and peoples of India upon the same common platform and have inspired them with a lofty sense of patriotism. You have established a new bond of sympathy among them and their leaders and have taught them the value of organized effort, with all the infinite possibilities of good attendant thereon.

Yet there are those who take a desponding view of the situation—who say that our methods are faulty, that we have wasted our time and our breath, or that at any rate the results achieved have not been commensurate to the sacrifices incurred or the efforts put forth. There are moments of despondency which cast their shadows over the noblest and most unselfish natures, when the spirit appalled at the sacrifices made shrinks back at the contemplation of the disproportioned achievement. In the anguish of disappointment, the question is asked—what is the good of persevering in methods and in sacrifices, when the outturn of them all is so insignificant? I confess I have nothing but respect

for those who, with the utmost good will for the Congress and ceaseless in their endeavours for the public weal, are sometimes apt to indulge in these sombre reflections. But I ask—has the time come for the final judgement? I ask—are the results inadequate? Even if they were—what are 20 years in the lifetime of a nation? The triumphs of liberty are not won a in day. Liberty is a jealous goddess, exacting in her worship and claiming from her votaries prolonged and assiduous devotion. Read history. Learn from it the inestimable lesson of patience and fortitude and the self sacrificing devotion which a constitutional struggle for constitutional liberty involves. Need I impress these lessons upon a people who have presented to the world the noblest examples of these virtues? Every page of Indian history is resplendent with the touch of self-abnegation. In seasons of doubt and despair when darkness thickens upon us, when the journey before us seems to be long and weary and the soul sinks under the accumulating pressure of adverse circumstances, may we not turn for inspiration and guidance to those great teachers of our race—those master-spirits—who, with their hearts aglow with the divine enthusiasm, triumphed over the failing spirit, faced disappointment and persecution with the serenity of a higher faith and lived to witness the complete realization of their ideas? Chaitanya and Nanak, Tukaram and Ram Das lift the mind high up to the sublimer eminence of the divine ideal. India of the past is rich in these examples. May we not hope for their successors in the India of the present, in the India of the Congress, in India under the British rule, which all the stirring influences of Western life and civilization? The responsibilities of the present, the hopes of the future, the glories of the past ought all to inspire us with the noblest enthusiasm to serve our country. Is there a land more worthy of service and sacrifice? Where is a land more interesting, more venerated in antiquity, more rich in historic traditions, in the wealth of religious, ethical and spiritual conceptions which have left an enduring impress on the civilization of mankind? India is the cradle of two religions. It is the holy land of the East. Here knowledge first lit her torch. Here, in the morning of the world, the *Vedic Rishis* sang those hymns which represent the first yearnings of infant humanity towards the divine ideals. Here was developed a literature and a language which

still excites the admiration of mankind—a philosophy which pondered deep over the problems of life and evolved solutions which satisfied the highest yearnings of the loftiest minds. Here, man first essayed to solve the mystery of life, and the solution wrapped in the rich colours of the poetic imagination, and clothed with the deeper significance of a higher spiritual idea, bids fair, thanks to the genius of the greatest Hindu scientist of the age, to be accepted by the world of science. From our shores went forth those missionaries who fired with apostolic fervour traversed the wilds of Asia and established the ascendancy of that faith which is the law and the religion of the nations of the Far East. Japan is our spiritual pupil. China and Siberia and the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago turn with reverend eyes to the land where was born the prophet of their faith. Our pupils have out-distanced us; and where are we, hesitating, doubting, calculating, casting up moral results to satisfy ourselves that our gains have been commensurate to our sacrifices. Such indeed has not been the royal road to political enfranchisement. The triumphs of liberty have not thus been won. Japan is an object-lesson which thrusts itself upon the view. Read her history; note her wonderful self-sacrifice, her marvellous power of adaptation, her patience, her fortitude, her indomitable energy and persistency, and let the most ancient of Eastern nations derive inspiration and guidance from the youngest which has solved the riddle of Asiatic life and has harmonized the conservatism of the East with the progressive forces of the West.

*Our Constitutional Struggle for Constitutional
Liberty*

In the constitutional struggle in which we are engaged, we need the cooperation of Englishmen, the sympathies of civilized mankind. It is England which has created in us those political aspirations, the fruition of which we now claim. Our minds are steeped in the literature of the West. Our souls have been stirred by the great models of public virtue which the pages of English history so freely present. Where shall we find the like of them? Their sobriety, their moderation, their lofty enthusiasm for the public good, their scrupulous regard for constitutional principles,

even amid the fervour and heat of revolutionary agitation, place them in the front-rank of political leaders for all times and all countries. Englishmen must accept the consequences of their own policy—they must cheerfully face the results which are the outcome of their own beneficent administration. They must gratify the ambitions which they have roused and adapt their administration to the altered conditions which are of their own creation. They have taught us the principle of adaptation to the environments of our situation, and they must not complain, if we, as their apt pupils, invite them to reduce to practise what they enforce by precept. We have no higher aspiration than that we should be admitted into the great confederacy of self-governing states, of which England is the august mother. We recognize that the journey towards the destined goal must necessarily be slow and that the blessed consummation can only be attained after prolonged preparation and laborious apprenticeship. But a beginning has to be made and there seems to me no more suitable time for inaugurating this new departure, for commemorating the new epoch which is to mark the birth of an emancipated people than the commencement of the new reign. The Victorian epoch, memorable in its achievements, is still more memorable in the generous impulse to human freedom which it communicated in all parts of the world. We shared in full measure the beneficent influence of that epoch. Our disabilities were removed, our rights were extended, higher ideals of Government were recognized and a loftier conception of imperial duty enforced. A succession of illustrious Viceroys imparted an impetus to this beneficent movement. To the new Sovereign, to whom on his Coronation we offer our respectful salutations, we appeal to commemorate his glorious reign by the still further expansion of those great traditions of government which have been consecrated by the example of his illustrious mother and which more than British arms have contributed to the solidarity of the British Empire. We have a special claim upon His Majesty's sympathetic consideration. The recollections of his Indian tour are to us a grateful memory. We know him. He knows us. His Majesty's feelings in relation to us are those of personal good-will. Our feelings in relation to him are those of personal attachment and devotion, emphasized by the

recollections of his general warmth, his truly kingly benignity, his royal condensation, his generous concern for all placed under his authority.

The words of the Proclamation are still ringing in our ears, consecrated by the breath of his illustrious mother, our late sovereign. We have His Majesty's assurance that he proposes to follow the traditions of his great mother, that the happiness of the Princes and the people of India would be to him matters of the highest concern and that he would endeavour to promote the general well-being of all classes of his Indian subjects and thus merit their loyalty and affection. We appeal to His Majesty to enthrone himself in the hearts of his people and to lay broad and deep the foundations of his Empire, by the practical recognition of the claims of the people of India to a just and adequate representation in the Government of their country, by the gradual extension to them of that system of self-Government which has been the invariable accompaniment of British power and civilization and which, wherever it has been granted, has been the strongest bulwork of imperial rule and has evoked the affectionate gratitude of the people. Under the beneficent influences of Self-Government, alien races, hostile to the British connection, have been transformed into loyal and devoted subjects of the Crown. We need no such transformation. We are already sufficiently loyal, sufficiently attached to the British connection. But we are anxious for the performance of British rule—for our permanent incorporation into the great confederacy of the British Empire.

All history proclaims the truth that autocratic power is devoid of the elements of permanence and that authority to be permanent must be planted deep in the affections of the people and derive its sustaining breath from the vitalizing springs of popular enthusiasm. The voice of the people is the voice of God; and the right divine to rule is based on the unchangeable foundations of the love, the gratitude, the devotion of a people, evoked by the consciousness that they share with their rulers the responsibilities of Government. Despotism represents a stage of transition, the period of which should not be unnecessarily

prolonged. But transition must give place to permanence. All signs point to the conclusion that the period of reconstruction has now arrived. The forces are there; the materials are there; they lie in shapeless masses. Where is the man of genius who will communicate to them the vital sparks and transform them into a new and a higher and a grander organization, suited to our present requirements and fraught with the hopes of a higher life for us and a nobler era for British rule in India? The statesmanship of Mr. Chamberlain bent upon the work of reconstruction and consolidation in South Africa, will place before the splendour of this crowning achievement. We plead for the permanence of British rule in India. We plead for the gradual reconstruction of that ancient and venerated system which has given to India, law and order and the elements of stable peace. We plead for justice and liberty—for equal rights and enlarged privileges—for our participation in the citizenship of the Empire; and I am sure we do not plead in vain; for the Empire, thus reconstituted and reorganized, will be stronger, nobler, richer, far in the love, the gratitude, the enthusiastic devotion of a happy and contented people, rejoicing in their indissoluble union with England and glorying in the rich promises of steady and uninterrupted progress towards their high destinies, under the protection and guidance of that great people to whom in the counsels of Providence has been assigned the high mission and the consecrated task of disseminating among the nations of the earth, the great, the priceless, the inestimable blessing of constitutional liberty.

DIVINE MISSION OF THE CHAMPIONS OF LIBERTY*

Fellow Delegates: I thank you heartily for the high honour you have done me, and I ask your permission to take this opportunity of offering my grateful thanks to the citizens of Madras of all classes and of both sexes who, rich and poor, young and old, united together last evening, to give me a welcome the warmth of which overwhelmed me with the deepest emotion. But gentlemen, although yesterday was undoubtedly one of the proudest days of my life yet from another point of view it was also a day of humiliation. For I could not but make a mental contrast between my humble labours on behalf of our common country and the splendid ovation which Madras was kind enough to accord to me.

It has pleased my Honourable friend Mr. Mehta to refer by anticipation to some observations in my inaugural address. He calls me a political *yogee*. But if political activity has its value, political *yogism* as my friend calls it, and which I prefer to describe as thought and meditation, is not without its uses. Mr. Mehta adds that having been a *yogee* for some time I have been labouring under some delusions. He assures us that there have been no differences in our camp worth speaking of. It may be so. I have no personal knowledge of these matters. But if I have laboured under any delusions, I have at least the consolation of knowing that my delusions were shared by some of the leading Indian newspapers both of Calcutta and of this city. Mr. Mehta also assures us that he himself has never been

* Presidential address delivered by Lal Mohan Ghose at the Madras Congress held on 28-30, December, 1903.

autocratic in his conduct as a leader. I freely accept his assurance. But he will also perhaps permit me to express my surprise that he should have been so ready to apply to himself Gibbon's observation with reference to the Roman Tribune Baroucelli. I shall now proceed to read my inaugural address for I do not think that it is necessary that I should go through the farce of pretending to speak a speech which was in print before I left Calcutta.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I had hoped, indeed, I had publicly declared only a few months ago in my native town of Krishnaghur, that after the storm and stress of more than a quarter of a century of political life, it was my desire to devote the remainder of my days to the peaceful worship of the goddess of letters undisturbed by the noise and bustle of the political arena. I am by constitution and temperament a student and a recluse. But our destinies are shaped by a higher Power than our own inclinations or our own natural aptitudes. Thus, it has happened that, by an irony of fate, the best years of my life have been spent in the storm and strife of politics. And it seems that even now when I was flattering myself that I might be permitted to follow the natural bent of my own mind, leaving the work of my earlier days to be carried on with greater energy and vigour by the rising generation, so many of whom I am happy to see here today,—it seems I was reckoning without my host. But since it has been your pleasure, gentlemen, to drag me out of the seclusion of my study, in obedience to your mandate, I once more appear before you on the platform of this our great National Gathering to discuss with each other some of the most important political questions affecting the well-being of our common country.

Not a Rip Van Winkle

Fellow Delegates: Although for the last few years I have not been able to take the same active part in the discussion of our public affairs as I had been accustomed to do in former years, I can truly say that I do not come before you as a political Rip Van Winkle, for these latter years, if they have not been a period of action, they have been a period of thought and reflection.

tion. I have followed every important political question with unabated interest, and perhaps the views slowly matured in the retirement of my study may be somewhat worthier of your attention than if I had rushed to the platform on every imaginable occasion. My recent abstention from active political life might perhaps also have another compensating advantage, and that is this, that I am absolutely unconnected with the factions and cliques which, I understand from the newspapers, have caused and are still causing considerable mischief by sowing dissension and discord among our public men. Far be it from me to presume to point out the path of duty to those who by their abilities and their services have justly risen to the rank of leaders, but I may perhaps be permitted to remind our young men that as the very aim and object, *the raison d'être*, of the National Congress is to introduce some little popular element into the autocratic constitution of the Indian Government so if they ever aspire to be the leaders of our people, they should be especially careful that their own acts may not be condemned as autocratic by the rank and file of our party. They should take care that it may not be said of any of them what Gibbon says of one of the Roman Tribunes that "he spoke the language of patriots and trod in the footsteps of despots." If we are really sincere in our professions of democratic faith, let us prove our sincerity not merely by mellifluous phrases, but by deeds more eloquent than words. The greatest of modern poets has told us that "words without thoughts never to heaven go." And going to the very antipodes of poetry, we find that the greatest of soldiers and the most practical of men, the Emperor Napoleon, in the zenith of his power, referring to one of the many libels published against him, prohibited his ministers from contradicting it and used the memorable words: "*Les declamations passent—les actions restent*". Next to the approbation of my own conscience I have never looked forward to any higher reward than the approval of my fellow countrymen. Nevertheless, I can truly say for myself that I have never been anxious to set my sails to catch every passing breeze of popularity. I have always considered it to be my first and most sacred duty to express my sincere and conscientious opinions freely and frankly, regardless of the frowns of the Government, and even at the risk of losing some portion

of the popularity and good opinion which must naturally be welcome to those who have grown grey in the service of their country.

Gentlemen, I hope no one will misunderstand me. It is my desire in this Presidential address, and it is my highest ambition, to hold the balance evenly between the Government and the people. Lord Curzon said the other day that he saw the hand of Providence in the extension of British Rule over distant and different people, and went on to add that there was not a single man amongst his hearers who would not admit that it was for his good. Unfortunately, gentlemen, Providence, is only too often appeals to, whether by the governing classes or by the leaders of the masses. Just as, in times of violent popular excitement, mischief-making agitators pretend to hear the voice of God in every shout of the infuriated mob, so sovereigns and rulers invested with despotic powers, from the time of the Grecian Alexander to that of the German Kaiser of our own days, find it easy to believe that every act of theirs is the direct result of divine inspiration. And coming to the case of our own country, although here is not a man amongst us who is not sincerely loyal to the British Government, yet claiming the undoubted right of British subjects to criticize the acts of the Government may we not respectfully ask our rulers—and in this connection I make no distinction between the different English political parties—may we not ask whether we are to believe that the policy which many years ago killed our indigenous industries, which even only the other day and under a Liberal administration unblushingly imposed excise duties on our cotton manufactures, which steadily drains our national resource to the extent of something like 20 millions sterling per annum, and which, by imposing heavy burdens on our agricultural population, increases the frequency and intensity of our famines to an extent unknown in former times,—are we to believe that the various administrative acts which have led to those results were directly inspired by a beneficent Providence ?

Vox Populi Vox Dei

But, gentlemen, as I have already said I desire to be strictly

impartial. It is not Governments and rulers alone who claim to seek shelter under the wide wings of Providence. History tells us that there always will be demagogues and popularity-hunters, who, whenever they are at a loss for arguments in support of their crude notions, try to take refuge behind democratic shibboleths, and “tickle the ears of the groundings” by exclaiming in season and out of season *vox populi vox dei*. Now, gentlemen, great as is my respect for healthy public opinion, and much as I desire that our Government should recognize and give effect to it, I am bound to say that never was a more grossly misleading proposition clothed with the dignity of a classical tongue. Those who have read history and read it to some purpose, will agree with me that the voice of the people, just like the voice of the despots, has very often been far from being the voice of God. When in the dark days of Queen Mary, fanatical mobs exulted over the tortures of protestant martyrs burnt alive at Smithfield, —was the voice of the people the voice of God? When towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French people maddened with the lust of blood, hunted down aristocrats and emigrants in the sacred name of liberty, when the innocence of childhood, the helplessness of the gentler sex, and the infirmities of age appealed to them alike in vain,—when the blood-thirsty mob, friends in human form shouted themselves hoarse, as the saintly Louis, the long suffering Marie Antoinette, the scholarly Bailley, the venerable and learned Malherbes, and a host of other victims were led to execution,—will any one dare to maintain at the present day that the voice of the French people during the Reign of Terror was *Vox Dei* and not *Vox Diaboli*? Let us, therefore, beware of claptrap phrases and flashy rhetoric, and whenever we advocate a particular reform let us be prepared to stand or fall on the merits of that question, and if after proving that our contention is right, we can show further that we are supported by public opinion, we should be within measurable distance of the winning post. At the same time, I do not disguise from myself the fact that we have a formidable task before us. We are not a self-governing nation. We are not able, like the English people, to change one administration for another by our votes in the polling booths. We have to depend entirely upon the justice of the British Parliament; for unfortunately it is

only too true, that as time advances, our Indian bureaucracy instead of coming into line with popular ideas, seems to grow more and more unsympathetic. Do you think that any administration in England, or France or the United States would have ventured to waste vast sums of money on an empty pageant when Famine and Pestilence were stalking over the land, and the Angel of Death was flapping his wings almost within hearing of the light-hearted revellers ?

A Pompous Pageant to a Perishing People

Gentlemen : A year has now rolled by since the great political pageant was held at Delhi against the almost unanimous protests of all our public and representative men both in the press and on the platform on what ground did they protest ? They protested not because they were wanting in loyalty to the Sovereign whose Coronation it was intended to celebrate, but because they felt that if His Majesty's ministers had done their duty and had laid before him an unvarnished story of his famine-stricken subjects in India, His Majesty, with his characteristic sampathy for suffering humanity, would himself have been the first to forbid his representatives in this country to offer a pompous pageant to a starving population. However, our protests were disregarded and the great *tamasha* was celebrated with that utter recklessness of expense which you may always expect when men, no matter however highly placed, were dealing with other people's money and were practically accountable to no one for their acts.

We are all familiar with the financial jugglery which by distributing the expenses under various, and sometimes under the most unexpected headings, makes it so difficult for ordinary men to find out the total cost of such a pageant. Still, whether you estimate that cost by a few lakhs more or less, it cannot be denied that if even half of the vast sum spent in connection with the Delhi Durbar had been made over for the purposes of famine relief, it might have been the means of saving millions of men, women and children from death by starvation. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin", and His Majesty Edward VII, the son and successor of our beloved and revered queen

Victoria, won the hearts not only of his British subjects but also of the countless millions of his subjects in this country when it became known, that of all the various functions in connection with the Coronation in England, that which specially appealed to the sympathy and interest of the Sovereign was the feeding of half a million of the poor at His Majesty's own expense. Can we doubt, therefore, what His Majesty's own verdict would have been if the true condition of his Indian subjects had been faithfully laid before him by those who represent him in this country and the Minister whose duty it is to advise him in regard to Indian affairs ?

Paying the Piper

But apart from the enormous expenditure incurred by the Government of India, what has been the result to the independent Native States ? Information is now beginning to leak out showing how little some of these States were prepared to bear the extraordinary expense,—or shall I say extravagance—which was forced upon them by the invitation to the Delhi Durbar. It is stated by a retired English covenanted Civil Servant of 28 years service that one State became temporarily bankrupt owing to three causes: (1) Famine; (2) expenses in connection with the Coronation trip to England; and (3) the still heavier outlay at Delhi. Be that as it may, it is well-known that all the Native States, almost without exception, have found the drain upon their resources so heavy that they have been obliged to curtail their expenditure by postponing many urgently-needed works of utility. Now, let us ask ourselves if anything has been gained by the Delhi Durbar which may even for a moment be balanced against these sad results. But with every desire to take a fair and impartial view of the whole question, I cannot say that this “sable cloud turns forth her silver lining on the night.” As to the masses of the people, nothing could possibly seem more utterly heartless than the spectacle of a great Government imposing the heaviest taxation upon the poorest population in the world, and then lavishly the money so obtained over fireworks and pompous pageants while millions of the poor were dying of starvation. As to the middle classes, the most representative men generally kept aloof and were conspicuous by their absence, and

of those who entered an appearance on that occasion most of them came back with bitter memories of the different treatment received by Indians and Europeans both during travelling and at the Durbar itself.

The Position of our Princes

Then how about the Princes and the Feudatory Chiefs? If it be true as I believe it is, that one of the objects that Lord Curzon had in view, was that our Princes and Nobles should meet on a common platform and thereby arrive at a better understanding and cultivate more cordial relations with each other, then all I can say is that never had good intention met with a more signal failure. The descendants of the Sovereign Princes before whom English merchants had presented themselves on bended knees, and with whom the East India Company after they had acquired sovereign rights in this country concluded treaties as allies—the descendants of those princes found themselves treated as ordinary subjects and their proud and sensitive natures were subjected to a humiliation which they had never known before under the British Government. I have said that our Indian Princes, instead of being treated as the allies and feudatories of His Britannic Majesty, have been treated like ordinary subjects, but I ought to add in order to fill up the picture, that the princes are denied the rights and privileges of British subjects. If the poorest and meanest of His Majesty's subjects in India is charged with the most heinous offence known to the law, he has the right to be tried by a jury of his peers and if found guilty he has the further right of appealing to the highest judicial tribunal of the Presidency to which he belongs. But in the case of an Indian Prince, if his enemies succeed in persuading the British Resident that he has committed some grave offence, the Government of India, endorsing the opinion of its Political Agent, directs his trial before a special commission entirely composed of British officials and the verdict of such a special commission is always a foregone conclusion. Nor is this to be wondered at, for we have it on the authority of an illustrious historians that even in Europe where there are no racial prejudices, "a military commission to which a government sends accused persons of importance, never knows how to send them

back to it absolved." And what is true of a military commission is equally true of a special commission of Civilian officials whose promotion and prospects depend upon the good opinion of the Government. On one occasion only, in the case of Mulhar Rao Gaekwar, the Indian Government tried the experiment of a mixed commission. But in that case the Indian Commissioners, consisting of two princes and a statesman of repute, returned a verdict of acquittal, but the three English officials associated with them proved the truth of M. Thiers' observation and "knew not how to send back absolved an accused person of such importance." Lord Curzon the other day at Alwar sneered at our endeavours to get better treatment for our princes as making "bad blood" between them and the Government. Gentlemen, we know how helpless our princes are, and if we, who are British subjects, endeavour to see that our princes are at least as well off as ourselves, can that be justly described as making "bad blood?" Sneers such as these may become a Brummagem Imperialist like Mr. Chamberlain, but are they worthy of a large-hearted statesman like Lord Curzon?

The Birmingham Conjuror

Speaking of Mr. Chamberlain naturally reminds me of the great Fiscal Question which is now absorbing the attention of the people of the British Isles. At a time when the great Birmingham conjurer, with two loaves made to order, is performing wonderful tricks before his simple-minded audiences—tricks which our own professional jugglers may be proud of when this great man is inviting the British people to take leave of their senses and to come to the conclusion that the excess of imports over exports instead of being an indication of increasing national wealth and prosperity is a proof of national decadence,—I say this is a fit and proper occasion to draw your attention to the converse state of things existing here. In England imports exceed exports by many millions. Mr. Chamberlain asks the country to weep over this result. Here in India our exports exceed our imports by many millions. If Mr. Chamberlain's view were right we should rejoice to find our exports exceeding our imports. But in my opinion the balance of trade is against us and it is we who ought to weep over the drain to which our

country is annually subjected. As this proposition with regard to India will be best proved by disapproving Mr. Chamberlain's allegations, I shall ask your permission to quote a few sentences from an old speech of my own delivered at Greenwich during my Parliamentary candidature, dealing with the same subject which was then raised by our Tory opponents. Remember, gentlemen, that Mr. Chamberlain was at that time one of the greatest champions of Free Trade. The cry now raised is nothing new. We were perfectly familiar with it in 1884 and the following was the substance of my reply to Baron de Worms and Mr. Boord, the sitting members for the then united borough of Greenwich. I quote from the Greenwich Observer of November 28, 1884.

Free Trade and Protection

“Both the sitting members had dwelt at great length and had encouraged the idea that the present depression and consequent distress were owing more or less to the policy of Free Trade. The leaders of the conservative party who, like Sir Stafford Northcote, were perfectly convinced of the absurdity of these doctrines still deemed it politic to profess a considerable degree of indulgence for what they regarded as pious notions. I venture to think that the whole policy of the Conservative party, in regard to this vital question consists of mere weak vacillation, of dreaming and coquetting with ignorant quacks and false prophets who believe that by merely avoiding the use of the word Protection, and by substituting some other phrase such as Reciprocity or Retaliation they would succeed in deluding the people of this country. Well, these people, the Fair Traders relied mostly upon the comparison between the imports and exports of this country. They pointed to the great excess of imports over exports and told them that that was a sure sign of national extravagance and impending ruin. It is an undoubted fact that your imports exceed your exports by a very large amount—reaching I believe the sum of something like 150 million sterling. That fact was undisputed and the only question was whether it was a sign of national decadence, whether it was a gigantic evil or, on the contrary, a matter for national congratulation. They who believed in Free Trade believed that the excess of im-

ports was a conclusive proof of national wealth and prosperity. The first thing to bear in mind was this: that if they (the English people) did not sell a single shilling worth of goods to the foreigner, they would still have to receive a large sum from various countries of the world on account of their foreign investments in every quarter of the universe, and also on account of being the largest ocean-carriers and the largest insurers of the trade of the world. Now, they all know that all international transactions of that kind were carried on chiefly by barter or exchange of goods and but an insignificant part in gold and silver. Therefore, these various sums must come to England in the shape of goods and must necessarily swell the amount of their imports. But let them look at the question from another point of view. What Fair Traders said was that almost the whole of these imports represented only what they brought from foreign countries. Well, if that was so, if the whole of their excess of imports over exports represented nothing more nor less than the excess of their purchases over their sales, then he thought it would be only fair and reasonable to suppose that these gigantic purchases had been somehow or other paid for, because they could scarcely assume that the traders of the world had been so foolish and idiotic as to sell their goods without receiving payment in any shape or form.

Reductio Ad Absurdum

“Turning to the Board of Trade returns, they found that from the year 1854 down to 1880, a period of 27 years, their imports had exceeded their exports by a sum of not less than 1,700 millions sterling in round numbers. Now how did they think that gigantic sum had been paid for? Surely it could never have been paid for by exchange of goods, for the very fact of their imports exceeding their exports by that amount was absolutely conclusive upon that point. Nor could this enormous sum have been paid in money. He had already said that international payments were never made to any appreciable extent in money, bullion, or specie. If they would allow him he would give a striking illustration of the fact. After the Franco-Prussian War, early in 1873, the French Government made a very large payment to Germany—a payment of not less than 94 millions

pounds sterling. And how was it paid ? Only six millions in gold and silver and eight millions in bank notes—the whole of the remainder, not less than 80 millions being paid by bills of exchange on various countries, which of course represented the value of the commodities which France had to export in order to pay that indemnity to Germany. But quite apart from general experience, they had a sure test in the statistics furnished by the Board of Trade as regards the exports and imports of gold and silver. So that altogether they had the astounding fact that from 1854 to 1880, they had not only received from the various countries of the world goods of the value of 1,700 millions sterling in excess of their exports but that during the same period they had also imported gold and silver amounting to over 100 millions sterling. Then how about the payment ? As they had already seen it could not have been by exchange of goods, not could it have been in money because their imports of specie had exceeded their exports by not less than 100 millions sterling; thus the whole thing was reduced to what used to be called when he studied geometry at school a *reductio ad absurdum*. Therefore, whichever way they looked at this question of excess of imports, it was no indication of national decadence but of national wealth and prosperity. The case of his own country”—and here fellow-delegates and ladies and gentlemen, I invite your special attention—“the case of India presented the reverse of the shield. Four years ago, addressing a large audience in the city of Bombay he pointed out that they in India had to pay a very large sum, amounting to something like 20 millions to the India Office, on account of what was called ‘Home Charges’, consisting of the liberal salaries and extravagant pensions paid to superannuated officials. He did not wish to go into the political aspect of the question just now. He was now more concerned with its economic aspect and he desired to tell them that four years ago he pointed out this most significant and curious fact that the Indian exports exceeded by the sum of 20 millions, which was, as nearly as possible, the amount of those Home Charges to which he had referred; in other words it amounted to this—that this tribute of 20 millions they had to pay was paid by the export of goods and commodities for which they in India received nothing whatever in the shape of imports. He said,

therefore, that whether they looked at the facts and figures in regard to this country, or whether they enlarged their vision and extended their scope of investigation and examined the circumstances of other nations, they could not but come to the conclusion that an increase of imports was not a sign of national decay but of growing wealth and prosperity.”

History Repeats Itself

Well, gentlemen, I venture to think that what I said nearly 20 years ago before that British audience at Greenwich holds equally true at the present moment. History repeats itself and we find that the same Mr. Chamberlain who betrayed his leader and split up the Liberal Party in 1885 is repeating the same process with the conservative party. We in India may look on complacently over the party conflict in England, but one or two questions remain to be answered by the advocates of this new fiscal policy.

Is Mr. Chamberlain prepared to include Indian in his scheme of an Imperial Zollverein?—Judging by his earlier speeches no one would imagine that this great statesman knew of the existence of country like India much less that it is a part of the British Empire or that it has an immensely larger population than the Colonies which he has taken under his wings. It was after having been repeatedly reminded by statesmen of the first rank that it suddenly dawned upon him at the very conclusion of his campaign that India was a factor which could not be altogether ignored even by Imperialists of the Birmingham School.—We should also like to ask Mr. Chamberlain, whether if preference is given to the wheat grower in Canada, the same preference is to be given to India, or whether Canadian wheat is to be protected against Indian wheat. But although we here as well as his critics in England may go on repeating these questions till we are hoarse, the Birmingham Sphinx is not at all likely to give us any reply; for one of his chief characteristics is an insolent contempt for all his opponents however high their personal and political reputation.

I am myself a staunch believer in the doctrines of Free

Trade. But whatever my individual opinions may be, I am aware that a large body of opinion amongst my countrymen is in favour of protection as regard our own industries. And having regard to the fact that so many of our flourishing industries were deliberately killed by heavy excise duties, Free Trader as I am on principle, I have scarcely the heart to oppose my fellow countrymen when they ask for protection on behalf of our native industries. I shall, therefore, take leave of this subject by asking one question of Mr. Chamberlain and his followers.

Plain Issues

If you succeed in deluding the people of England and inducing them to adopt a suicidal protectionist policy, what answer will you return to our people when they desire their industries to be protected against Lancashire? Hitherto while England was herself pursuing the policy of Free Trade your arm-chair politicians were able to console their consciences by saying we believe in Free Trade. We allow free imports into Great Britain and Ireland, and we as trustees for the Indian Empire cannot approve of your adopting a policy which we ourselves believe to be wrong and when we offer the best proof of the sincerity of our convictions by showing that we are sincere Free Traders and allow goods from every foreign country to come into our country without any protective duties"—That was all very fine in the old days. But if Mr. Chamberlain wins, shall we not be able to say in reply, you the people of England in your simplicity have "lent too credent ear" to the siren voice of the Birmingham tempter, and now that you have done so, when every rag of hypocrisy has been stripped off your backs and you stand exposed before the world in all the nakedness of your selfish policy, with what countenance will you undertake to justify your policy in India? One of our Anglo-Indian newspapers, the *Calcutta Statesman*, has taken the measure of this Birmingham Politician. In 1884 when Mr. Chamberlain was one of the shining lights of the Radical party, and I was a parliamentary candidate, I freely acknowledged him as one of my leaders. I shall, therefore, abstain from saying anything myself inconsistent with our old relationship and only make an extract from the *Statesman* newspaper giving a faithful description of Mr.

Chamberlain and his political programme:—"Mr. Chamberlain has the faculty of over-powering the common sense of his audience otherwise they would hardly allow him to continue the repetition of such astonishing folly. The character of the eminent campaigner's economics is already familiar, but hitherto we have not been made acquainted with any examples of his reading of history. Now that we are privileged to catch a glimpse of it we can merely marvel at its impertinence and wonder that may be coming next. As for Mr. Chamberlain's claim that he can provide work and wages for all, there seems nothing for it but to take refuge in a remark which we find in the *Economist*: The egotism of the man is growing really stupendous."

Pax Britannica

Incidentally in connection with the Fiscal Question I have alluded to the annual drain on the resources of this country. Now, gentlemen, I shall ask your leave to point out in somewhat more detail the causes of the increasing poverty of our country. A political critic or reformer has always a difficult task before him. His is not a bed of roses. The very fact of his finding fault with the existing state of things arrays all the vested interests against him. Even disinterested Englishmen are inclined to start with a prejudice against those who are not full of unqualified admiration for the acts and the policy of their countrymen in India. Still we have the consolation of feeling that many who came to scoff have remained to bless and thanks to the efforts of the Congress, and the labours of some of our large-hearted English friends such as Mr. Digby, to whom we can never be sufficiently grateful, we have the mournful satisfaction of knowing that we have succeeded in convincing a large portion of the English people that India is no longer the Eldorado which many yet pretend it is but that it is a land of ever-increasing poverty where the masses of the people hardly ever have an adequate meal during the 24 hours from year's end to year's end.

In has been said by men who ought to have known better that India is the lightest taxed country in the world, in spite of the clearest evidence that the tax per head in England amounted

to 7 per cent of the income of the people but in India it was according to one calculation 11 per cent and according to another, that is taking 20 rupees as the annual income per head, it was not less than 14 per cent *i.e.*, double that of the English people—the richest nation in the world. It is also deliberately ignored that Lord Mayo more than 30 years ago declared that the utmost limits of taxation had been reached in this country, a statement more than once re-affirmed by responsible statesmen. Apart from the normal poverty of our people when we draw the attention of the Government to the ever-recurring famines and their increasing severity, we are officially told that famines are acts of God and attributable only to want of rainfall. To those who, as rulers of this vast country, are entrusted with irresponsible power over the destinies of 300 millions of human beings, it may be very satisfactory to assign to Divine power and the operations of Nature, the consequences of their own short-sighted policy, but they cannot expect independent and intelligent observers to accept their interested and specious statements. Even officials of high rank and Anglo-Indian newspapers which ordinarily support the Government and are known to be its demi-official organs have been obliged from time to time to admit that the policy of the Government in the progressive increase of the land tax is a potent factor in the increasing frequency and severity of our famines. Referring to the fact that from the time the dominions of the Mahratta sovereign came under British rule in 1817, to the year 1823, that is to say within a period of six years, the assessment was nearly doubled being raised from 80 lakhs to 150 lakhs the Bombay Government in its Administration Report for 1892-93 thus describes the operations of that period:

Official Condemnation

“Every effort was made—lawful and unlawful—to get the utmost out of the wretched peasantry, who were subjected to torture—in some instance cruel and revolting beyond description—it they could not or would not yield what was demanded. Numbers abandoned their homes and fled into neighbouring Native States; large tracts of land were thrown out of cultivation, and in some districts no more than a third of the cultured

area remained in occupation.” One of the most conservative of English journals speaking of the condition of these ryots said: “Stupidity, blindness, indifference, greed—inability, in a word, in all its thousand forms—settles down, like the fabled harpies on the ryot’s bred and bore off with them all that he subsisted upon. Coming down to more recent times we find that in 1893 the Hon. Mr. Rogers, member of the Bombay Council, stated as follows: “In the 11 years from 1879-80 to 1880-90, there were sold by auction for the collection of land revenue the occupancy rights of 1,963,364 acres of land held by 840,713 defaulters in addition to personal property of the value of Rs. 29,65,081. Of the 1,963,364 acres, 1,174,143 had to be brought in on the part of the Government for want of bidders, that is to say, very nearly 60 per cent of the land supposed to be fairly and equitably assessed could not find purchasers.” Could there be any more scathing condemnation of this system of taxation? Passing from Bombay to Madras we are confronted with a similar merciless enhancement of taxation. The Calcutta *Englishman*, the leading Anglo-Indian newspaper of this country, wrote as follows: “The late Madras famine has raised the question as to what the Government has done to protect the agriculture of Southern India in return for the revenue raised from it. Twenty years of British rule have increased the Government demand upon the agriculture of Madras by over one million, or one-third of the whole land revenue paid by the Presidency to the Company in 1858. There are not wanting those who affirm that this increased taxation had much to do with the late calamity. The husbandmen were less able according to this view, to bear the strain of bad seasons, in consequence of the enormous increase in the revenue taken from them.” Well gentlemen, let us turn now for one moment to the state of things in the Central Provinces. Only about a year ago, the Hon’ble Mr. B.K. Bose, a member of the Supreme Council, made the following statement from his place in Council: “Proceedings with a view to a second new settlement are also in progress in Bilaspur and Raipore. The Districts, especially the former were very hard hit during the last famine. They are no less so this time. They were both newly assessed about ten years ago. The enhancement in Bilaspur was 102 per cent in some cases and 105 per

cent in others." It is important to note that this remarkable statement remained unchallenged. In Bengal, thanks to the Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis, we are somewhat better off than our compatriots in other parts of India. But even in Bengal, attempts are every now and again made to bring about a reversal of Lord Cornwallis' policy, but since an open and direct reversal would be attended with serious difficulties, indirect encroachments upon the spirit and letter of the Permanent Settlement are made by the imposition of new taxes upon the land such as the chowkidari tax, the road cess and the public works cess.

Promotion—by Result Settlements

Disparaging references are also made to our Mogul Emperors. But there again they forget that those rulers were not birds of passage like our English officials but the revenue which they gathered from the people—and theirs' was a very elastic system very favourably contrasting with the system of which we now complain—was spent in the country and the money circulating among the children of the soil remained and fructified in the country. But what is the case now with our English rulers? The revenue is wrung from the pockets of our people but the savings of English officials, both civil and military as well as their ample pensions, are spent for the benefit of their native land. The elastic modes of the Mogul and the Mahratta have given place to a castiron system worked by a host of highly paid and "promotion-by-result" settlement officers. The most recent result of the present system was prominently brought to the notice of Lord Curzon by the Hon. Mr. Smeaton in his speech at the Viceregal Council. He pointed out that according to the accounts of 1900-1901, the collections in Bombay, the Punjab and Madras were 60 lakhs in excess of the previous year which was a year of famine and these 60 lakhs were largely the arrears for that year which Mr. Smeaton declared "should not have been demanded at all." And this, he added, brought to his mind a very vital question largely raised, whether the intensity of recent famines is, or is not, largely due to poverty caused by the operation of our land revenue system as a whole."

Gentlemen, I may observe here parenthetically that candid language like that of Mr. Smeaton is not very highly appreciated by our Government, and whether it be a mere unfortunate coincidence or whether it was owing to his opinions not finding much favour in high quarters, it is quite certain that just at the time when the public expected that he would succeed to the Lieutenant-Governorship of Burmah, an extension was granted to Sir F. Fryer just long enough to oblige Mr. Smeaton to retire from the service under the 35 years rule.

Even the ordinary Government organ, the *Pioneer*, was compelled to say that the fact that "in the Supreme Council Mr. Smeaton has always given his opinion fearlessly and independently ought to have told in his favour rather than against him."

Well, gentlemen, I have already called your attention to the poverty of our country and as regards the evidence I have mostly relied upon the testimony of high English officials. And not only have I relied on their testimony but I have based my conclusions on the inexorable logic of facts. If when in Bombay out of 1,963,364 acres of land held by defaulters had to be sold by auction, no less than 1,174,143 acres had to be bought in for want of bidders, what did that mean? It simply meant this; that the land was too heavily taxed to be worth buying. If the taxation had been equitable and there had been a reasonable chance of deriving even a poor and miserable pittance from the cultivation of those lands, do you think there would have been any lack of purchasers? Well, then, gentlemen, according to all the available evidence, India is one of the poorest countries in the world. We have seen how the English Civilian Officials, through their extravagant pay and pensions and compensation for exchange and furlough allowances, drain the resources of the country. But if even after meeting their demands we might have had any vitality left, the military service steps in which all the inhumanly selfish policy of the British War Office, shamelessly supported by the Secretary of State for India and sucks the life-blood of this country. I have never been slow to acknowledge the benefits conferred upon us by the British Government, so much so that no less an authority than the late John Bright,

after the meeting in Willis's Rooms in 1879 himself assured me that the only portion of my speech of which he did not approve was where, to use his own words, he thought I was endeavouring "to sugar the pill". But, gentlemen, while none of us is insensible to those benefits, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that whenever British interests clash with ours, India is certain to kick the beam. Our Anglo-Indian friends, therefore, should not be surprised if the policy and means of our Government do not always command our unqualified admiration or render us inclined to fall down on our knees and offer our thanks to heaven for the wisdom and benevolence of our rulers. I have already referred to the tendency of some persons when they are worsted in argument to take refuge in some high sounding phrase especially if it is veiled in the obscurity of a learned language, and to consider it almost an act of blasphemy on your part if you do not immediately raise the white flag and surrender at discretion. Such is the case with the defenders of the extreme party of our Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. Argument and logic are not their forte, and, therefore, whenever they are pushed to a corner they appeal with an air of triumph to the Latin phrase "*Pax Britannica*." We all unhesitatingly admit that this *Pax Britannica* has undoubtedly put an end to the anarchy and internecine wars which prevailed here during the declining days of the Mogul Empire. But if, now-a-days, we are free from the ravages of lawless hordes, if we are no longer subject to the pillage and rapine and slaughter of domestic strife and struggles for ascendancy rival princes and chiefs we cannot forget that there is another side to the balance sheet. After all it makes but little difference whether millions of lives are lost on account of war and anarchy or whether the same result is brought about by famine and starvation.

A Reflex Jingoism

The Jingo fever which has swept over England during the past few years has had its baneful results in this country. When the British Government on the initiative of Mr. Chamberlain, who has been the evil genius of the Empire for so many years, after having embarked upon the Boer War with a light heart, which reminds one of the notorious declaration of the French

War Secretary just before the Franco-Prussian War that "the Army was ready, aye, ready to a button,"—I say, when the British Government discovered that they had entered upon a really serious and extremely costly affair, they endeavoured, in accordance with former precedents, to make India the scapegoat and in defiance of Law and Justice to throw the burden of the War upon our unhappy and unrepresented people. I am glad to think that some of the leading Anglo-Indian journals, who do not always see eye to eye with us, raised their influential voice on our behalf. *Capital*, the organ of English mercantile men in Calcutta, made the following forcible observations: "It seems that the Home Government proposed to foist upon the Indian people a charge of £ 786,000 in the shape of additional pay to the British soldiers stationed in this country. This increase of pay has been the result of the War in South Africa, where troops from India saved the situation in Natal in the early part of the conflict—a conflict with which the Indian people had nothing whatever to do, and in a country too, where the natives of this Empire are denied the full rights of citizenship, and where a Hindu has actually been fined for walking on the pavement. The Indian Government should resist this impost tooth and nail." Gentlemen, we cannot be too thankful to my friend, Mr. Shirely Tremearne, the Editor of *Capital*, for this spirited protest and for the admirable impartiality with which he discusses public questions. But then, as Mr. C.J.O'Donnel says, the Indian Government has no tooth or nails except for the native tax-payer.

Capital went on to say: "There is another charge that is to be hung round our necks, if Lord Curzon's Government is weak enough to submit to it, *viz.*, a sum of £548,000 being £7-10s. for every soldier sent to India as the cost price of recruiting him. A more unjust imposition could not be made, and it is one which could only be thrust upon a people having no representative institution. The British Army is raised at Home for Imperial purposes. A regiment may have seen years of service in other parts of Greater Britain before it comes to India, and yet it is proposed to charge the original recruiting and training charges of the soldiers to the Indian Exchequer. The whole thing is ridiculous."

Tibet and Persia

No less an authority than the late Mr. Fawcett pointed out many years ago that, by a mere change in the service and transport system and without reducing the strength of the Army by a single man it was possible to effect a reduction of at least three millions sterling in the military expenditure of this country. We also know that the late Mr. Caine repeatedly pointed out that the strength of the British Army in India was far in excess of what was necessary for purely Indian purposes. This statement is often challenged, but the *London Standard*, the leading Tory newspaper, which can never be suspected of any pro-Indian proclivities and least of all, in military matters, has unexpectedly come to our support. It declared not long ago that Ladysmith had been defended by regiments brought from India; that Indian troops had relieved the Legations of Peking; that during the South African War over 13,000 British officers and men, had been sent there from India accompanied by more than 9,000 followers and attendants: Thirteen hundred British officers and men and 20,000 Native troops together with more than 17,000 camp followers were sent to China. After giving these figures which speak for themselves, the *Standard* exultingly exclaims: Such is "the scale on which India at the shortest notice and without dislocating her establishment can contribute towards the military capabilities of the Empire beyond her own frontiers." When such a high Jingo authority has stated our case in as clear and forcible language as we could have desired to use ourselves, let not lesser Jingoës in this country presume to question the truth of the statement that the military establishment of India is far in excess of our own requirements.

Before leaving this subject of military extravagance, I desire to raise a warning voice against the pseudo-Imperialism which impels some of our prancing Proconsuls to seek new adventures beyond our proper frontiers, whether in Afghanistan or in Burma; whether in the forbidden Land of the Lamas or in another direction so close to the sphere of Russian influence as almost to invite a collision with that power. If we had an Irish Viceroy and if Persia had been Oriental Donnybrook Fair there might not perhaps have been anything so very incongruous in

the Governor-General going to the shores of the Persian Gulf and inviting all and sundry to oblige him by treading on his coat tail.

There are some enterprises which might well be called a tempting of Providence. But if it be considered presumptuous on our part to protest against any enterprise however perilous and ill-conceived which a Jingo Ministry in England might be disposed to undertake, let it, not be forgotten that under an Act of Parliament no portion of the Indian Army can be lawfully taken out for service beyond the proper frontiers of India without the previous consent of Parliament and let it at all events, be made clear to us that India is not to be saddled with any portion of the burdens which may be thrown on the Empire as the result of the vaulting ambition of vain-glorious Imperialists.

The Administration of Justice

I now pass on to the important question of the Administration of Justice and more particularly of Criminal Justice. Every one will admit that nothing is more calculated to create discontent and disaffection than the belief that justice is not evenly and impartially administered. It is equally unquestionable that it cannot be impartially administered if the functions of Prosecutor and Judge are combined in the same official. Therefore, it is that for some years past we have been asking for a complete separation of executive from judicial functions. The present combination, of these two incompatible functions has been condemned by almost every one whose opinion is worth anything. Only in 1893, Sir R. Garth declared that the present anomalous position of the District Magistrate only "tempts him to use his influence and powers for a good many improper purposes, which however much they may have been countenanced by high civilian officials, have deservedly incurred the odium of the public and brought disgrace on the Indian Administration." But, gentlemen, it is no longer necessary to fortify ourselves with the opinions of high judicial authorities like Sir R. Garth, Sir B. Peacock, Sir R. Couch, Lord Hobhouse and a host of other distinguished persons, for the justice of our contention has been admitted in the most emphatic terms by more than one Viceroy

and more than one Secretary of State for India. But the capacity for passive resistance of the Indian Civil Service is unlimited, and when beaten all along the line on the merits of the question, they have still managed to shelve this urgent reform by deluding successive Viceroys and Secretaries of State into the belief that it would involve doubling the cost of administration. The Anglo-Indian bureaucracy is not easily baffled. A Viceroy, however, well-intentioned and strong-minded, can rarely resist the steady pressure of his Civilian entourage, and especially on questions of administrative detail, he is naturally inclined to place implicit reliance upon the officials who have had long personal experience of the working of the administration. Then as to the Secretary of State, he is equally well-guarded by a band of Anglo-Indian fossils who take good care that he should be nothing more than their mouthpiece. Thus it is, that driven from all their positions of vantage, they have now taken refuge in their last entrenchment—financial difficulty. Lord Kimberley who was strongly convinced of the merits of this reform was told that it would mean doubling the staff throughout the country. His predecessor Lord Cross, similarly deceived by the same group of ancient fossils, said in the House of Lords that this reform which in his opinion would be an excellent one resulting in vast good to the Government of India, could not possibly be carried out in the existing state of Indian finances. But, gentlemen, fortunately we have had the good fortune of having some of our countrymen in the Indian Civil Service. Mr. R.C. Dutt, who had attained the rank of a Commissioner of Division, and who had filled the office of District Magistrate in most of the important districts of Bengal came forward with a weighty statement showing that the reform could be most easily carried out without increasing the cost of administration by a single rupee. Mr. Dutt's scheme has been before the authorities now for some years. He has mercilessly exposed the hypocrisy of this objection on financial grounds. Not one member of the service of which he was so distinguished a member has ventured to enter the lists and measure swords with him. Therefore, we may take it that his statements cannot be answered. But nevertheless our Anglo-Indian officials know how to obstruct the most urgently-needed reform. That they should do so while mediocrity or worse than

mediocrity was in office during the days of Lord George Hamilton is nothing to be wondered at. But we had a right to expect better things from a statesman of Lord Curzon's reputation and strength of mind.

Europeans and Indians

Then again, what about the burning question of justice as between Europeans and Indians? But as this is a most delicate matter, involving racial questions, in regard to which my own statements may not be credited with the impartiality and freedom from exaggeration with which it is my highest ambition to approach the discussion of all controversial questions, I prefer to rest our case on the deliberate admissions of English officials of high position and long experience who cannot be suspected of any undue bias against their own countrymen. With this object I shall ask your leave to read an extract from the speech of recently-retired English member of the Covenanted Civil Service who has filled some of the highest official position in this country. I refer to Sir Henry Cotton who, as you all know, was Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Member of the Viceregal Council, and Chief Commissioner of Assam and who, in all probability, would have been Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal if his conscientious and out-spoken opinions, like those of Mr. Smeaton, had not placed him out of the running. Sir H. Cotton speaking at a recent meeting in London stated as follows:

“When Englishmen were put upon their trial for these crimes what was the general result? In the great majority of cases it could only be described as a judicial scandal. He was not particularly anxious that anyone should find his way to the gallows but he was bound to say that there were innumerable cases in which men charged with most brutal murders for which no other punishment than hanging was suitable had escaped through the failure to administer justice fairly and fully. Why was that? In the first place, these offenders were tried by a jury of their own countrymen. It was, of course, a very sound principle in law that a man should be tried by his peers and equals, but it was hardly necessary for him to point out that in a country like India

where Englishmen were widely scattered, and where one of them, say a tea planter was charged with causing the death of an unfortunate coolie, and was arraigned before other tea planters in the same position as himself, it was natural and even inevitable that the jury should be biased and should find the accused guilty of the smallest cognizable offence under the law—*viz.*, simple hurt—for which a fine of a few rupees was only imposed. Decisions of that kind did not command themselves to the judgment of the Natives of India and in consequence a strong and bitter feeling was aroused by such cases. Suppose that the Government interfered and took up the prosecution, the result might be the infliction of a term of imprisonment instead of the imposition of a fine, but immediately that happened a storm of protest was raised; the greatest anger and indignation were given vent to at every European breakfast table and tea table, and no stone was left unturned to get the sentence either cancelled or modified. That was one of the chief difficulties under which the Indian administration laboured. No responsible Governor was anxious to face the wrath and anger of his own countrymen, however keen he might be to administer justice as between man and man. It required, in fact, more than ordinary courage for the heads of the Government to preserve an even tone and temper in dealing with these cases. Lord Curzon was undoubtedly animated by a high sense of justice, and he had used his best efforts to see that justice was done in these cases. He had instructed his officials to watch them carefully, and to report on them to the Government, but he regretted to say that as a result of the recent agitation his Lordship had stated that he had at no time, whether publicly or privately, officially, or semi-officially, issued any instructions which would affect the administration of justice as between Englishmen and Natives. In other words, he had withdrawn from the field, and had given rise to the impression that his previous action had been misunderstood. That was very much to be regretted.”

Gentlemen, it is impossible to add to the force of this weighty pronouncement. Sir H. Cotton concludes by pointing out that it was not very easy for Judges and Magistrates to maintain an attitude of strict fairness and impartiality in India

for they were in isolated positions and possibly in many cases their only companions were the very men they were called upon to try. I shall only venture to emphasize the truth of this last statement by a reference to two recent cases showing how even English judicial officers go to the wall when they try to hold the scales of justice evenly, and executive members of their own service come out triumphant even when they try to muddle the fountain of justice at its very source. A few years ago, a Sessions Judge in one of the Behar Districts administered even-handed justice between a native of India and some English officials. The District Magistrate and even the Commissioner of the Division took the part of the English officials. What was the result? The Judge became a marked man and was transferred to a distant district. I will not refer to his ultimate fate for that was complicated by other circumstances as to which it may perhaps be said that the Judge did not exercise the sound discretion that might have been expected. But how about the executive officers connected with the case? I do not remember if the District Magistrate was considered worthy of immediate promotion, but we all know that the Divisional Commissioner to whom I have already referred so far from being blamed for his part in the affair, was, a few years afterwards promoted to the highest office to which any member of the Indian Civil Service may aspire. The second case is equally instructive. I refer to the Rajshye Mohurrum case. In that case some poor Mohammedans had complained before the District Magistrate that they had been ill-treated by the District Superintendent of Police, but the Magistrate summarily dismissed their complaint and directed their own prosecution on a charge of bringing a false and malicious prosecution. The Sessions Judge endeavoured to do justice to these poor men but with disastrous results to himself. Not only did the Executive Government promptly transfer him to a notoriously unhealthy district but he was even snubbed by a Division Bench of the High Court which I regret to say is no longer what it used to be. Well, gentlemen, having regard to all these circumstances, I have no hesitation in saying that for my part I am growing more and more hopeless as to the prospects of obtaining justice when crimes of violence are committed by Englishmen or Eurasians against the children of

the soil, unless the British Parliament thinks fit to take up this question in earnest and deal with it boldly.

Russianising the Statute Book

Apart from the question of the actual Administration of Justice, we are every now and again threatened with new laws or amendments of old Acts, that are more worthy of Russian than of British legislators. To begin with, it should never be tried of reminding the British nation that while the scandal of *lettres de cachet* was abolished in France in 1789 amid public rejoicing, the representatives of the English people, who pride themselves upon being the eldest sons of Liberty introduced the ancient and hateful engine of oppression into this country in 1818 and 1821. Nor has it been suffered to remain idle and forgotten. Only a few years ago, two prominent citizens of Poona were laid by the heels and kept in confinement for a considerable period without any charge being formulated or any prospect of their being brought to trial before any judicial tribunal. Would any Government have dared to do such a thing in the British Isles? If it had, it would have been the beginning of the end so far as that administration was concerned. Simultaneously with the arbitrary imprisonment of the Nату Brothers, we had a Sedition Act of Draconian severity passed in a great hurry as if the country was in the throes of a revolution, and a number of political prosecutions instituted, and the Judges being also in a state of panic, several well-known and respected citizens were convicted of charges of which not one of their fellow-countrymen believed them to be guilty. One of these unfortunate victims, on presenting himself before the Calcutta Congress of 1901, received a splendid ovation which showed that in the opinion of his fellow-countrymen he was a persecuted martyr and not a culprit. Well, gentlemen, we had just begun to hope that the dark clouds of those days of panic had rolled by, when the Government of Lord Curzon has thrown another bombshell in our midst, by the proposed amendment of the Official Secrets Bill. One of these precious amendments proposes, contrary to every maxim of civilized jurisprudence, to throw the burden of proof upon the accused person, in other words the prosecution is relieved of the duty of giving evidence

in support of its charges so that the accused person must be convicted almost automatically if he cannot prove the negative proposition, *viz.*, that he is not guilty. Mr. Arundel, with the *naivete* so characteristic of Anglo-Indian officials, declares that under the old Act there were difficulties in the way of obtaining convictions. Mr. Arundel is a genius. He has been the first to discover the method of securing convictions automatically. After this it is hardly worth while to refer to other amendments such as that which seeks to gratify the *amour propre* of the executive officers by placing the petty secrets of their offices, such as the projected promotion by favour of a particular official over the heads of worthier men, on the same level with important military and naval secrets the divulgence of which may be fraught with great and perhaps fatal danger of the Empire. No wonder that this proposal of the Government has been too much even for its most steady supporters among the conservative Anglo-Indian press. I desire to express our special thanks to the Calcutta *Englishman*, which true to its British instincts, had made a vigorous protest against this Bill which it described as a deliberate attempt to Russianise public affairs. Gentlemen, we freely admit that military and naval secrets should be safeguarded against espionage, but apart from those matters, to me it is inexplicable why the Government of India, although it has always at its head a statesman brought up in the free and healthy atmosphere of England, should display such strong impatience of criticism and such a morbid antipathy against the liberty of the press. If they are confident in the justice of their proceedings, why should they not be able to say like *Maitre Labori* on a well-known occasion. *Nous voulons la lumiere, toute la lumiere ?* (we want light: we court all possible light). A just and honest administration has nothing to lose by courting publicity and criticism. A great historian and eminent statesman of the last century tells us that "the press may have absolute freedom without danger; truth alone is formidable; whatever is false is powerless; and the greater the exaggeration the weaker its effect. No Government has ever yet been overthrown by lies. A week's exaggeration and lies exhaust all the pens of pamphleteers and libellers: Governments have only to allow them to declaim. But a Government requires time and philosophy before

it is prepared to admit these truths." Well, gentlemen, when will our Government acquire philosophy enough to admit these truth? Viceroys and Governors of different schools succeed one another, but with a few bright exceptions, such as Lord Ripon, they all seem to accept the vicious tradition of repressive legislation as one of the unquestioned axioms of statecraft.

No Tory Education

Gentlemen—The subject of education is not second in importance to any other. Not long ago the whole country was convulsed over the Report of the Universities Commission which plainly showed a determination to deprive a large portion of our middle classes of the benefits of high education in this country and also to abolish the private educational institutions which had gradually grown up around our Universities. It was well-known that the majority of the Commission only echoed the ideas which the Viceroy had put forth in a speech of his. With his Lordship's Tory and aristocratic ideas, he wanted to make our educational institutions approach as nearly as possible the standard of Eton and Oxford. It was naturally difficult for him to understand why poor men (such as the majority of our middle classes happen to be) should be anxious to receive a sort of education which poor people's children in England do not aspire to receive. Fortunately, however, there was among the members of the Commission a distinguished Hindu gentleman, Mr. Justice Guru Das Banerji, who perceived the danger of the situation and wrote an elaborate and convincing dissentient minute. It is, however, a matter for congratulation that the Government has already made several concessions. We are glad to feel that our indigenous colleges are not to be destroyed by a stroke of the pen and that our meritorious students of limited means are not to be excluded from the benefits of higher education by the device of raising the fees and abolishing the private colleges. It may be all very fine for the scions of the English aristocracy, brought up in the lap of luxury, to imagine that it is only they and men like them who are fit to receive the advantages of Higher Education which they themselves have received in Eton or Rugby, in Oxford or Cambridge. For our part we cannot help remembering that some of our most distin-

guished men who were the first to be honoured by the Government itself with the highest offices ever yet attained by any native of India,—we cannot help remembering that these men would have never occupied the positions that they did if the difficulties now sought to be thrown in the path of poor students had existed at the time when they were students in our schools and colleges.

Gentlemen, I take it that there can be no more important national question than the question of education. Let us, therefore, lay down the principles by which that question should be governed. Subject to your approval, I desire to lay down the following principles: Firstly, the education of the people should be as much as possible in the hands of the people; secondly, the popular control over our educational institutions should not be lightly interfered with until it has been plainly shewn that popular control has been found altogether wanting. Now, our chief criticism and opposition to this Bill must be concentrated on that clause which does away with the present constitution of the Senate which is now independent of the Government because although the Fellows are almost all nominated by the Government yet by reason of the tenure of their office being for life they are practically independent. This Bill, however, strikes a blow at their independence because the vast majority of Fellows are to be nominated by the Government and only for five years. So that their renomination must to a large extent depend upon how far they may have succeeded in ingratiating themselves into the good graces of the Government.

Apres Moi Le Deluge

If members of the Covenanted Civil Service so high in standing and position as Mr. Smeaton and Sir H. Cotton could be deprived of their legitimate reward simply because they had the courage to declare their conscientious convictions how could the members of the Senate expect a better fate? It is true that the Bill proposes that a small number of Fellows should be elected by the graduates, but in our opinion they will be far too few to give the Senate a popular character. I think you will also agree with me that the qualification of the electors as proposed by the

Bill is extremely limited and that it ought to extend to all who are graduates. Mr. Raleigh has been good enough to assure us that at some future time the principle of election might be extended. That is exactly the sort of promise that Anglo-Indian officials are always fond of making. All concessions of a substantial nature they very complacently leave to their successors as if they unconsciously sympathized with the sentiment bluntly expressed by that typical despot, Louis XIV, when he said *Après moi le deluge*. So far back as the year 1860, Sir Bartle Frere, while leaving to District Magistrate a combination of judicial and executive functions, held out a hope that at no distant future this anomaly might be removed. More than 40 years have gone by and yet that hope has not been realized. Therefore, as regards Mr. Raleigh's statement, we would much rather have a better recognition of the elective principle at the present moment than a promise to be realized at some uncertain future period. Such, therefore, are our objections to this Bill. We want as little Government control as possible. We do not want difficulties to be put in the way of our poorer students. We are glad to find that the suggestions as to the raising of the fees has been abandoned; but if I may be permitted without derogating from the dignity of the occasion to use a homely saying I would remind you that "there are more ways of killing a cat than stuffing it with cream." We do not want our indigenous colleges to be harassed by undue interference. While we are prepared to welcome any reasonable and well-considered reforms as regards the health, morality and education of our students, we do not want the aristocratic standard of Eton and Oxford to be established in this poor country.

Compulsory Free Education

But, gentlemen, let us not confine our attention to High Education alone. We have a sacred duty towards the poorer classes of our people. Those of us who have received the benefits of High Education are bound to do, whatever may be in our power, to extend the blessings of education, so far as may be, to the masses of our people. Let us remember the simple but eloquent words of late Mr. John Bright that the nation in every country dwells in the cottage. Therefore, it is of the utmost

importance that we should have some system of primary vernacular instruction, like the Board Schools in England, whereby the dwellers in the cottage and the sons of toil may be brought more in touch with the more fortunate classes of their countrymen. Do not let us forget that wherever the masses of the people are steeped in ignorance there is always a double danger, firstly of their being entirely apathetic towards all questions affecting the welfare of the country and secondly of their being liable to be excited beyond reasonable bounds by unscrupulous or fanatical agitators. In all European countries, with perhaps the exception of Russia and Turkey, provision is made by the State for the free education of all its subjects. I was myself in England when the Board Schools were first introduced and I remember that even in that country the scheme was at first somewhat unpopular because it involved the compulsory attendance of children at school.

But that feeling soon wore away, the English people came to recognize the benefits of the institution and how there is hardly a single individual amongst the poorest classes who cannot read and write, and it is an ordinary spectacle to see even the cab drivers regularly buying a daily newspaper and reading it while waiting for a fare on the stand. It is this system of compulsory free education which has rendered it possible for representatives of the working classes to enter the British House of Commons and to hold their own against those who by birth were more fortunately situated. I have cited the case of England as I am more familiar with its politics, but the same thing may be said *mutatis mutandis* of most countries of Europe and the United States of America. Coming nearer home, we have seen what wonderful results have been achieved in Japan by the introduction of the same system of compulsory free education. If, therefore, all progressive nations have found it necessary to adopt this system to keep abreast of the times, is it too much to ask our people to take up this question in earnest? I am sure that no mature consideration all our thoughtful men will agree that this reform is very much to be desired and I am equally sure that if we approach the Government with any degree of unanimity and ask for some tentative measure in this direction,

the Government itself will be glad to respond to our wishes. I shall only add that the enlightened ruler of Baroda has already set an example in this direction which British India might well follow.

But, gentlemen, while it is the duty of a civilized and enlightened Government to give all reasonable facilities for both primary and higher education, let us not forget that we have corresponding duties of our own. Perhaps the rising generation will not consider it presumptuous on my part if I venture to remind them that, after all, the best of educational institutions and the most ideal of Universities can only furnish us with a pass key to the Temple of Knowledge. But whether that key is to grow rusty in our pockets, or whether we are to make use of it to open the portals of that sacred Fane, in order to hold communion with the immortal dead and to take possession of the priceless legacy left to us by the mighty men of old, depends entirely upon ourselves. Thank you, gentlemen, that our own classical poets, that Homer and Virgil, that Shakespeare and Milton, that Dante and Tasso, that Corneille and Racine who surpassing the wonders of the Arabian Nights have left to us works which, after the lapse of so many centuries, still stand out to the eyes of the initiated like pictures bright with "colours dipt in Heaven"—thank you that these men "who though dead, deathless all," lived and worked only for their own generation and for the circumscribed geographical limits of their own native land? No, gentlemen, they were cosmopolitan in the truest sense of the word. They lived and worked and died for the entire human race. The rich legacy they have left behind is a legacy for all nations and for all prosperity.

Thanking the Madras Government

Just before leaving Calcutta for Madras, I received a wire from the Dacca People's Association asking me to enlist on their behalf your sympathy to encourage them in their protest against the absorption of Dacca and Mymensingh by Assam. Hitherto Assam has been considered a most backward administration, but Dacca and Mymensingh form two of the most advanced districts in Bengal. You can, therefore, quite under-

stand that Dacca does not appreciate the tender solicitude of the Government when they are requested to give up their advantages to oblige Assam.

I understand, gentlemen, that you too have a grievance of such an important nature that it may fitly be called a national question involving as it does the principle of Self-Government. I refer to the retrograde and reactionary Madras Municipal Bill which is before your Legislative Council. Under ordinary circumstances, one would have thought that the Government of Madras would have benefited by the extraordinary financial disclosures in the Calcutta Municipal accounts, by no less an authority than the Government auditors whose impartiality is above suspicion. Such have been the results in Calcutta of the boasted reform introduced by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Gentlemen, the Madras Municipal Bill has taken the Calcutta Bill with all its deficiencies as its model and is trying to concentrate in a few the power which should really belong to the representatives of the Majority of the rate-payers. I am, therefore, not surprised that the proposal has evoked such strong opposition on your part.

Gentlemen, I shall touch on one subject more before I conclude, *viz.*, the industrial movement which is of such vital importance to our nation; and although I have left the subject to the last, it is by no means the least. Day before yesterday, one of our most advanced princes opened the Industrial Exhibition which is such an useful adjunct of the Congress and here on behalf of the people of India let me in the most cordial manner thank the Government of Lord Amthill for the substantial gift it has made to the Exhibition Fund. I have always been strong in my belief that our industries form the best of all political levers. Once we rear up large industries in India (you must distinguish it from exploitation by foreign capital) in which the interest not only of the capitalist but that of the wage earner and consumer is to be safeguarded, you may be sure that three-fourths of our battle of reform is won, for the power of the purse is by far the greatest of all powers.

Gentlemen, if I were to attempt to do full justice to all the

questions in which we are interested it would require a great deal more time than I should be justified in taking up. As it is I find that I have exceeded the length which I had prescribed for myself. The Congress has now been in existence for 19 years, during which we have had our days of sunshine as well as our days of storm. It has been said that the Congress represents after all a 'microscopic minority'. Although this statement was first made several years ago, it is still echoed from time to time by those who are determined to disparage that movement and hold it up to ridicule. Perhaps they will be surprised to learn that an illustrious writer whose works have already occupied a prominent position in the classical literature of modern Europe has said, speaking of a country in the van of European civilization, that "it is only the *elite* of a nation who are alive to the sentiments of glory and liberty, who appreciate noble and generous ideas and are ready to make sacrifice for them. The masses of the people desire quiet and repose, except when they are stirred up by deep and mighty passions. I may venture to follow up these pregnant words by adding that inasmuch as history teaches us that opinion always percolates from the higher to the lower strata of society, and what are the ideas of the educated minority today are bound to be shared by the masses tomorrow, it is the duty of all far-sighted statesmen to take time by the forelock and by the concession of well-considered reforms to ensure the contentment of the people and to enhance their loyalty and affection for the Government. At the same time we must not forget that a great deal depends on ourselves; for no nation has ever yet attained any position of importance by merely relying on the favours of the Government. There are many matters as to which, whether the Government is willing to help us or not, we ourselves can do a great deal, such for instance as the education of the masses of our people. Let us remember that if we are ever to acquire those rights and privileges which we all desire, the stimulus and the motive power must come from ourselves, and above all let us not forget that we can never hope to realize our aspirations unless the Congress, fully sensible of its duties towards the masses of our people, so shapes its policy as to bring them into line with us. If I might venture to address you in the eloquent language

which Virgil puts into the mouth of the Sibyll, I would say that:

“Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,
A voice of brass and admantine lungs”

I could even then hardly hope to make a sufficiently impassioned appeal to you as regards the vital importance of educating our masses. We cannot forget that unfortunately our Government by the introduction of a policy of promiscuous distribution of titles encourages sycophancy and subservience amongst some of our wealthy people. That is the very reason why one of our titled folks, forgetting their duty to their country, are ever ready to perform servile genuflexions before every official clothed in brief authority. We are, however, glad to find that several of the follower of our aristocracy have risen superior to selfish considerations, and with admirable patriotism have come forward to place themselves at the head of the people whose natural leaders their rank and position justly entitle them to be.

A Welcome Rapprochement

Gentlemen, in dealing with the economic question, I have shown that a good portion of the Home Charges is represented by the pension and other liberal allowances made to Anglo-Indian officials in England. Is there any reason why this injustice should be perpetuated? Have we not a right to say to our Government, that by the policy inaugurated by some of the best of your statesmen you have given us the benefits of a liberal education and stimulated our personal and national aspirations? Is it not, therefore, your duty to open up a career for those whose legitimate ambition you yourselves have roused? If you deliberately choose to close every avenue to our legitimate aspirations do you really think that you are strengthening the loyalty of the Indian people? Or does it not strike you if you have any of the sagacity and foresight of statesmen, that you are doing your best to sow discontent and disaffection amongst a people sincerely disposed to be loyal to British rule? Speaking at a dinner of the National Liberal Club of 20th February 1884, when the Rt. Hon'ble the Earl of Kimberley was the President, having to respond to the toast of Liberal administration in India

proposed by Mr. Walter Wren I said, "My Lord, in proportion as you pursue a policy of justice and provide a legitimate field for the gratification of our growing aspirations, you will place the loyalty of the Indian people on a firm and sure foundation," and, gentlemen, I had the satisfaction of finding that that sentiment met with the unanimous approval of the cultured audience that I was then addressing.

Looking around us, I miss many of those who were such familiar figures in the Congress, and to whom so much of the success of the movement is due, but whom in the inevitable course of nature the Grim Ferryman, who spares neither prince nor peasant, has wafted across those dark waters from which there is no return. But I am glad to find that the rising generation is so well represented on this occasion; for if Time is year by year depriving us of some of our most valued leaders, we have at least the consolation of knowing that our younger men are ready to take up with vigour the work commenced by the generation that is fast passing away. I remember to have read some years ago in Orme's *History of India*, that whatever we do, we do languidly. If there be any foundation for that opinion, the zeal and energy of our younger generation ought to go far towards wiping out that reproach, for even men like myself who can no longer lay any claim to youth, unconsciously feel ourselves almost rejuvenated when we come in contact with their exuberant enthusiasm. Young men of India, in you the hopes of our country are centred, and I cannot bring home to you the responsibilities which rest on you better than by repeating, with the alteration of two words only, the historical message sent from Ligny on the 16th June 1815—"Gentlemen, the fate of India rests in your hands."

It is another hopeful sign of the times that there is an increasing rapprochement between Hindus and Mohammedans, —a rapprochement happily emphasized this year by the fact that of all the men of light and leading of which Madras can boast, the Congress party have selected you, Sir, to be the Chairman of the Reception Committee of our great national organization. Our Mohammedan fellow-countrymen who may have at one time looked askance at the Congress, on account of

the misrepresentations of those who are interested in dividing us, are now daily becoming more and more convinced that their interests as well as ours can only be advanced if we heartily cooperate with each other. There may have been a time, Sir, when the East India Company found it necessary to adopt a policy which in a letter, addressed to your great ancestor, General Bonaparte well described as *diviser pour regner*. Happily we can now hope for better things for we are no longer ruled by an irresponsible, unscrupulous and avaricious body of traders whose only object was to mercilessly exploit the country and whose rapacity and inhuman methods roused the indignation and fired the eloquence of Burke and Sheridan. Our Government is now under the control of Parliament and we have the satisfaction of knowing that our destinies are linked with those of a nation that has ever been distinguished by its fervent love of liberty proved not merely by their own political institutions but displayed on various occasions with rare generosity on behalf of distant and oppressed peoples. Although a British Poet has sung:

Did peace descend, to triumph and to save,
When free-born Britons, cross'd the Indian wave ?
Ah, no !—to more than Rome's ambition true,
The nurse of Freedom gave it not to you ?
She the bold route of Europe's guilt began,
And, in the march of nations led the van.

Still, for our part, we prefer to cling to the belief that the English people are not barbarous conquerors, but that they are champions of liberty whose divine mission it is to rekindle the torch of genius in this ancient land of civilization and to raise us once more to a position in some degree worthy of the greatness of our past history.

INDICTMENT OF AN AUTOCRATIC AND BUREAUCRATIC RULE*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was well said by one of my predecessors in this Chair that the Presidency of the Indian National Congress was the greatest honour that could be conferred by the people of India on one of their own countrymen. I feel that the honour is even greater when it is bestowed on one who is not of your own race or country. I have good reason to be proud of the position in which you have placed me this afternoon. Although I must always be aware that one of your own body would more worthily and adequately discharge the functions of the office, and am conscious that it must be more appropriate for an Indian to preside at the Indian National Congress than an Englishman. I received your invitation to come here as the highest compliment you could pay me, and accepted it not only with a deep sense of responsibility, but also of gratitude and pride in this notable and public recognition of the humble services, I have been able to render to India.

Character of the Congress

This is the twentieth annual session of the Indian National Congress, an organization avowedly national in its name and scope. We meet for the furtherance and discussion of national interests. I see before me a vast number of delegates—the number is deliberately limited for convenience sake—representatives of every community, of every rank and profession, as well as religion,—met together as the political leaders of all parts of

* Presidential address delivered by Sir Henry Cotton at the Bombay Congress held on 26-28 December, 1904.

India. Here you are able to act in concert and to declare in no uncertain accents the common public opinion of the multitudes of whom you are the mouthpiece. You occupy a vantage ground of no mean eminence. Here are the voice and brain of the country. Here, before me, are gathered the representative citizens of a great nation. Yours is a position which no failure in your projects and no neglect of your advice can nullify. You are assembled together—highly trained Zoroastrians, wealthy and energetic natives of Cutch and Gujarat, citizens of this splendid city who mould its destinies alike in commerce and in intellectual pursuits; brilliant and patriotic Mahrattas exulting in the glory of your past and your ancestors, Brahmins from Madras, with your keen and subtle intelligence; Bubus from Bengal, strenuous and able, who rule and control public opinion from Peshawar to Chittagong; representatives from the Punjab and the United and Central Provinces; Hindus who are exercising an almost indescribable influence by virtue of the living Hinduism which lies at the heart of your national existence; and followers of Islam comparatively less in numbers, but animated by the zeal and vigour and austerity which have always characterized the religious history of your race.

We are met here in this great representative assembly to lay before the public and the Government a practical programme of policy which covers, I believe most of the important political and economic problems of the Indian Empire. We do not pretend to prepare any such policy within these walls. The work of educating public opinion is carried on throughout the year, and year by year, by means of the Press and the proceedings of local political bodies and associations. The work is fostered by the pronouncements and speeches of representative Indians who are afforded the opportunity, rare and seldom though it be, of uttering their country's voice in the Council Chambers of the State. In these ways public opinion is formed, a national policy is framed, and in due course it is crystallized into a definite shape. It is our function at the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress to give united and authoritative expression to views on which there is already a consensus of opinion in the country. We are met today for such a purpose, and for this duty

no organization is more qualified and none could better be fitted than our own.

Leaders and Followers

The Indian National Congress has thus its own functions, which I take it upon myself to say, as a watchful eye-witness from its birth, it has discharged with exemplary fidelity, judgement, and moderation. Yours is a distinguished past. If you have not in any considerable measure succeeded in moulding the policy of Government, you have exercised an immense influence in developing the history of your country and the character of your countrymen. You have become a power in the land, and your voice peals like a triumph-note from one end of India to the other. Your illustrious leaders have earned a niche in the Temple of Fame, and their memory will be cherished by a grateful posterity. Foremost among them I place the venerable figure of your grand Old ex-President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji who, now in the evening of his life, at the age of four score years, applies himself with unremitting energy and patriotism to your cause. Among those who are lost to us, pre-eminent is Mahadeo Govind Ranade, the wise in counsel, whose death we do not cease to mourn. Nor will I omit the name of the late Manmohun Ghose, who has set before us a conspicuous example of practical and reconstructive effort. We have still with us our distinguished Chairman of the Reception Committee, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, the first of our Presidents, Mr. Justice Badrudin Tyabji, Mr. Justice Sankaran Nair, Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, Babu Surendra Nath Bannerjea, and Messrs. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Why need I mention more names? They are all household words, not only in this Congress camp, but in all the places, in the palace and in the cottage. Their leadership in India is ably supplemented by the labours of the British Committee of the Congress in England, and it is impossible to speak in terms of too high praise of the self-sacrificing devotion of Mr. Hume, and of Sir William Wedderburn, whom it is a pleasure and honour to welcome today in our midst. The name of Mr. Hume will always be associated with the origin and growth, the mingled triumphs and defeats of the Indian

National Congress. Sir William Wedderburn's unrivalled familiarity with the details of Indian political work in the United Kingdom and his exceptional knowledge of the Bombay Presidency are of the utmost utility to us at the present time. The late Mr. William Digby was not a member of the British Committee but he was an Englishman devoted in an extraordinary degree to Indian interests; his whole life, indeed, was given up to the cause of India, and I desire from this place to commemorate his services and to acknowledge the profound loss India has sustained by his death.

Patience and perseverance, persistence in good repute and evil repute, earnestness and resolution, these are the attributes of the leaders of a national movement. I make bold to say that they are the qualities which your leaders possess. You may well be proud of them. But the victory cannot be won by leaders only. It is for their followers to give them their loyal and undivided support.

You cannot all be leaders. Captains and Generals are few in number; the plan of the campaign is designed by them, but success is assured by the obedience and discipline of the rank and file. I speak in no unfriendly spirit when I warn you of the risks you run by petty internal bickerings and dissension, by unworthy jealousies and ignoble depreciation of the life-long labours of the foremost men of your generation. It is here I lay my finger on the weakness of your organization. These signs of frailty are natural, inevitable in the nascent growth of your movement. But they are none the less corroding and dangerous symptoms, the existence of which is undoubted, and which it is, at all costs, the duty of all of you who have the glow of patriotism in your hearts firmly to suppress and eradicate.

England and India

It is true that the reforms we advocate depend for the most part on their adoption by public opinion in England. Recall the case of Ireland! Internal agitation in Ireland was the necessary stepping-stone of reform, but by itself it accomplished little; it was only when Irish agitation forced itself upon English Liberal statesmen and was supplemented by a powerful phalanx of

opinion in England, that any concessions were allowed to the sister island. And so it is in the case of India. The remedy for both countries is the same. The opportunity of a peaceful solution rests in both cases with the English people, who alone have it in their hands to effect a material modification in the attitude of Government through the pressure of public opinion from the Mother Country. In this lies the value of your British Committee in London. Perhaps you do not always recognize the services which have been rendered to your cause by the untiring exertions of the members of that Committee, who unceasingly place the Indian view of Indian affairs before the British public by means of Parliament, the Press, and the Platform. The work of this Committee deserves from you more generous support than it has received. It is from this point of view, also that lies the importance of increasing the representation in Parliament of those who are not only possessed of an adequate knowledge of Indian affairs, but are also imbued with a hearty sympathy for the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people. You owe a deep debt of gratitude to those honourable members who are always willing to press Indian questions upon the House, of whom I would especially mention Messrs. Schwann and Roberts. Mr. Caine, alas! is lost to us; but I need not tell you that the number of men in the present House of Commons who combine this knowledge and sympathy may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Remember that it is in the House of Commons that the great questions on which the fate of India depends must be ultimately decided.

Members of India

We want more Members for India. Yes, indeed! But remember also that the use of that phrase cannot but ring a delusive note. Do not deceive yourselves or expect too much. We want to hear more of India in the House of Commons. We want members of the House who will devote themselves to India as an integral and not the least important part of the British dominions, as a portion of the Empire which is not directly represented, and calls, therefore, for their special attention but we cannot expect from them that undivided devotion to Indian interests to which we are so accustomed in this country from our own

leaders. Sir Henry Fowler once declared that all the members of the House of Commons were members for India, but this is the very apotheosis of cant, and we have only to be present in the gallery of the House when Indian questions are under discussion to realize that no statement could be further from the truth. India returns no representatives to Parliament; and even the most friendly members for Parliamentary constituencies are not returned to represent India in the House, but their own constituents. They never can be members for India in the strict sense of the expression, for the first claim upon a member of the House of Commons is, and always must be, held upon him by his constituents.

The Functions of Parliament

Remember, also, what are the relations between the Imperial Parliament and the Indian Government. "It is not our business," said Mr. Gladstone on a memorable occasion, "to advise what machinery the Indian Government should use. It is our business to give to those representing Her Majesty's Government in India ample information as to what we believe to be sound principles of government. It is also the duty and the function of this House to comment upon any case in which we think the authorities in India have failed to give due effect to those principles, but in the discharge of their high administrative functions, or as to the choice of means, there is no doubt that that should be left in their hands." These words convey a wise warning that the duty of England towards India is to form convictions on the general policy which should guide the Government and to stimulate and strengthen and control the authorities in putting them into practice. They do not imply an abnegation of the responsibilities of Parliament for the good Government of India, and there is little echo in them of the pitiful appeal of the Indian bureaucracy to preserve India from Parliamentary interference. But they are a timely reminder to us that the function of Parliament is not to make any attempt to extend its direct rule to India, and that the details of administration must be left to the local authorities, upon whom must rest the personal responsibility of giving effect to the general principles which are laid down for their guidance.

The Opportuntties of a General Election

All these are qualifications which it is necessary for us to bear in mind, but the great enduring fact remains that the Parliament of Great Britain and the people of England are the final arbiters of India's destinies. It is not in India itself that the fate of India will ultimately be determined. Those are blind, and worse than blind, who ignore or depreciate the importance of the work that devolves on your English associates and on the delegates whom you may send from India to educate and build up the growth of English public opinion in regard to India. The present is one of those critical periods that recur every few years. No one can say precisely when a General Election will take place. But everyone knows that it cannot be much longer delayed, and in all human probability the interval between the twentieth and twenty-first Congress will witness that great upheaval to which we are looking forward in party politics at home, the expulsion of the present Government from office and the formation of another in its place, the appointment of a Liberal Secretary of State for India, and the beginning of a period during which it is reasonable to expect, not only the undoing of many of the mistakes committed during ten dark years of reaction, but also some definite advance in the work of reconstruction. We stand at the parting of the ways. We see before us a period of hope of which for so long we have been unable to catch a gleam. But in order that this period may be rendered fruitful much will need to be done, and assuredly one of the first and most important things is that the Indian National Congress should clearly and emphatically put forward its proposals, organize and inspire its forces, and make all necessary preparation for an epoch-making campaign.

The Growth of a National Spirit

What is the great political problem that lies before you? What is the real meaning of the movement which has brought you together today and animates your thoughts and action? It is the consciousness that your organization is a national one, and that you are working together in the formation of a national movement with common sentiments of interest and

patriotism. The different races, the numberless castes, classes, and creeds of India are welded together in your ranks. This is primarily the result of education, the inestimable boon which, in accordance with a noble and liberal policy, England has extended to India. It is education, and education on English methods and on the lines of Western civilization, that has served to unite the varying forces among the Indian populations. The English language is the channel through which you are now able to meet on a common platform, and to give expression to your common interests and aspirations. At the same time the railways, the steam-ships, the post office, and the telegraph have played their part in closing the gap that used to keep the different provinces of India as under. I rejoice to see that this great movement is fully recognized by your countrymen. It advances by leaps and bounds. The unmistakable yearning for nationality finds its utterance through a Newspaper Press which has now become a potent factor in your politics. I have watched the growth of this Press, rising, in little more than one generation, from stuggling, obscure, and fitful efforts, into an organ of great power, criticising the measures of Government with remarkable independence and vigour, and continually checking the abuses of executive authority. I am not blind to its imperfections, but it is impossible not to admire the ability and patriotism with which it is conducted. The unanimity of this Press is as marked as the increase of its influence. The whole of its influence is in the direction of nationalization. A single note is struck. In every large town in India newspapers are now published, identical in their spirit and in their common object, all aiming and converging at the formation of a single political ideal.

The growth of a national spirit is the touchstone of your organization. This assemblage of delegates to an Indian National Congress is the decisive evidence of a national movement. The growth of an Indian nation is the great political revolution that is working before our eyes. There is no doubt of its meaning, its character, or its destination. It involves the introduction of no anarchical element into India's future : there is no sign of any rupture with the past. We know, indeed,

that the present form of British administration cannot be permanent. The Hon'ble Mountstuart Elphinstone, whose memory is still revered in this Presidency, where he ruled as Governor for eight years, wrote as long ago as 1850: "I conceive that the administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors, in a state of isolation produced by a difference in religion, ideas, and manners which cuts them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things. I conceive, also, that the progress of education among the Natives renders such a scheme impracticable, even if it were otherwise free from objection."

Every thinking man must know that these words are true. But we know also that the connection between India and England will not be snapped. The English language, while it is the means of enabling you to attain unity, binds you also to Great Britain. The future of India is linked with that of England, and it is to England that India must always look for guidance, assistance, and protection in her need.

A Complex Problem

We have to deal with a problem of extraordinary difficulty and complexity. We are face to face with a great upheaval which has revolutionized all departments of thought, inspired the aspirations of diverse communities and infused the sense of nationality throughout a vast and surging empire. I have just quoted the words of a sagacious and eminent Anglo-Indian, uttered more than fifty years ago. I will supplement them by a quotation from one who is universally recognized as the greatest and most successful of Britain's pro-consuls. More than twenty years have now elapsed since Lord Cromer said :

"No one who watches the signs of the times in India with even moderate care can doubt that we have entered upon a period of change. The spread of education, the increasing influence of a free Press, the substitution of legal for discretionary administration, the progress of railways and telegraphs, the easier communication with Europe, and the more ready influx of European ideas are beginning to produce a marked effect

upon the people. New ideas are springing up. New aspirations are being called forth. The power of public opinion is growing daily. Such a condition of affairs is one in which the task of Government, and especially of a despotic Government, is beset with difficulties of no light kind. To move too fast is dangerous, but to lag behind is more dangerous still. The problem is now to deal with this new-born spirit of progress, raw and superficial as in many respects it is, so as to direct it into the right course, and to derive from it all the benefits which its development is capable of ultimately conferring upon the country, and at the same time to prevent it from becoming, through blind indifference or stupid repression, a source of serious political danger. It is only what ought to be expected by every thoughtful man, that, after fifty years of free Press and thirty years of expanding education, with European ideas flowing into the country on every side, and old indigenous customs, habits and prejudices breaking down, changes should be taking place in the thoughts, the desired, and the aims of the intelligent and educated men of the country which no wise and cautious Government can afford to disregard, and to which they must gradually adapt their system of administration if they do not wish to see it shattered by forces which they have themselves called into being but which they have failed to guide and control."

The Futility of Reaction

This quotation is a long one, but it is fraught with wisdom, and it is needless to say that, during the twenty years which have since elapsed the conditions mentioned by Lord Cromer have developed with increasing rapidity. It is not within the power of any man to obstruct the tide of progress, otherwise than for a time, by a policy of reaction. The period of Lord Ripon, and of his Finance Ministry who is now Lord Cromer, has been well described as the Golden Age of Indian Reformers, when the aspirations of the people were encouraged, education and local self-government were fostered, and the foundations of Indian nationality were firmly laid. The natural trend of official opinion has been to assert itself in a reactionary outburst against this development, disparaging the vantage ground

acquired in the past. We are told that the salvation of India is not to be sought on the field of politics at the present stage of her development, that there are many other fields of usefulness and power which lie around the citadel of politics, and that when these fields are occupied the entrance to real political life will be easy, natural, and safe. We read in the columns of the *Times* :

“We must wearily retrace our steps and devote our energies to educating the Indians in character and commonsense. Then, and not till then, can we put them out into the polytechnic of local self-government.”

We must wait, forsooth, for a working reality “until generations of really educated Indians have come and gone.” We are told that the weakness and limitations of the newly-educated classes are now more clearly perceived, and that the complexities of the problems of Oriental politics are more distinctly realized. These are the common places of reaction. They are the arguments of Mr. Noodle in his fatuous oration by Sydney Smith. But it is not by indulgence in such vague generalities that the current of advance can be stemmed.

Of what avail is it to disparage Burke and Macaulay, Bright, Ripon, Crommer and Elphinstone? You cannot withstand the flowing tide. Temporary spasms of reaction are inevitable. They pass away like footprints on the sand, and we need not trouble ourselves too much with vexatious aberrations from the path of progress. They will be quickly forgotten. I have seen signs among you of depression, and have noticed a tendency to submit with resignation to the policy of a regime which affords no encouragement to your aspirations. I am not surprised at these symptoms, but assuredly you have little cause for giving way to a sense of despondency. It is not reserved to any human agency to set back the dial of time. The result of reaction is always to galvanize into fresh life. Be vigilant, therefore, be hopeful; be of good cheer and of a gladsome countenance. Relax not your efforts, for the waves of progress are irresistibly dashing against the break water of prejudice, and even now the day is dawning which Macaulay declared would be the proudest day of

England's history.

The Ideal of India's Future

Let us accustom ourselves to the conception which the realization of a national spirit in India involves. The present form of British administration cannot survive the fulfilment of those national tendencies which the British Government itself has brought into existence. But India is bound to England as England is to India. England has incurred liabilities not lightly to be set aside, and she should no more break from her past than should India break from the traditions of her history. It was lately declared by a high authority that he could not conceive of a time as remotely possible in which it could be either practicable or desirable that Great Britain should take her hand from the Indian plough. But such is not my conception of India's future. An abrupt retreat would, indeed, be advocated by no one, and the process of reconstruction cannot be effected otherwise than by slow and gradual means. Many years must elapse before we can expect the consummation of a reconstructive policy. But it is a policy which we should always keep before our eyes. Indian patriots look back on their past with a just sense of pride, and they know that India will again take her own rank among the nations of the East. They are striving for the attainment of this ideal which, however it may be delayed or marred in execution, is sure in the event.

Autonomy is the keynote of England's true relations with her great Colonies. It is the keynote also of India's destiny. It is more than this: it is the destiny of the world. The tendency of Empire in the civilized world is in the direction of compact autonomous States which are federated together and attached by common motives and self-interest to a central power. You have already local legislatures, in which a certain measure of representation has been granted to the Indian people. A small concession has been made in this direction, but it is wholly inadequate to meet growing demands. In the cautious and gradual development of representation, in the increase of your power and influence in India itself, involving the ultimate extension of autonomy, we shall find the appropriate and natural prize and

legitimate goal for Indian aspirations. It was the dream of John Bright, and he indulged in no mere mystic prophecy when he foresaw that India would fulfil her ultimate destinies by a process of evolution, out of which she would emerge, not through force or violence as an independent State, or torn from the Mother Country, or abandoned to England's enemies but as a federated portion of the dominion of the Great British Empire. The ideal of an Indian patriot is the establishment of a federation of free and separate States, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing Colonies, each with its own local autonomy, cemented together under the aegis of Great Britain. That is a forecast of a future, dim and distant though it be, the gradual realization of which it is the privilege of Government to regulate, and the aim and hope and aspiration of the Indian people to attain.

This is our ideal of India's future. The process of reconstruction should be always before our eyes. Changes may, and should, be gradual, but they must come, and we should prepare ourselves for their realization. Statesmanship consists in foreseeing, and we are all of us the better for the exercise of forethought. Familiarize yourselves, therefore with a conception of India's future, which gathers as it grows, and insensibly attracts into the political evolution all other great problems of economic and social reformer which are awaiting solution.

The Economic Problem

What is your economic problem? It is the poverty of your people. No one who considers the economic condition of India can doubt that one of its greatest evils is to be found in the fact that the great mass of the people are dependent upon the cultivation of the soil. The establishment of large industries capitalized by Englishmen affords but a poor compensation for the variety of indigenous industries once spread through the country. An India supplying England with its raw products and dependent upon the West for all its more important manufactures, is not a condition of affairs which an Indian patriot can contemplate with equanimity. I may be allowed to appropriate the words which have been uttered by your distinguished

Viceroy in another connection:

“There is no spectacle which finds less favour in my eyes than that of a cluster of Europeans settling down upon a foreign country and sucking from it the moisture which ought to give sustenance to its own people.”

India is the field where British capital is invested, but all the interest that is reaped therefrom passes to the pocket of the investor, and he takes it to England. This is a part of the economic drain which has been sneered at as a “copy-book fallacy” and as “a foolish and dangerous illusion.” But how can it be denied that it would be vastly more beneficial to India if the wealth produced in the country were spent in the country? India is poor, and there are those who believe that in consequence of its political conditions it is becoming poorer; but the ambition of your people is to take their place among other nations in the future federation of the world. Your opposition to the exploitation of your country by foreigners is based upon a conviction that this exploitation is a real obstacle to your progress, and you do not need to be assured by me that the prosperity of your country depends on the diminution of its economic drain and on the conservation of its resources for ultimate development by indigenous agency. I am glad to recognize the growing tendency of Indians to help themselves. The death of Mr. Tata was an irreparable loss, but there are others, stimulated by his example, who will strive to take his place. The Industrial Exhibitions in connection with the annual meetings of our Congress are a satisfactory evidence of the tendency of which I speak. The difficulties are immense, for the essential difficulty always hinges on the disagreeable truth that there can be no revival of Indian industry without some displacement of British industry. But the first steps have been taken, and a start made by Indian capitalists. The beginnings are small, very small at present, but like the little cloud no bigger than man’s hand they may grow and swell with a full promise of abundance. It rests with you to see that the present impetus does not flag or dissipate itself in ideal words.

The Problem of Western Influences on the East

Look at Japan ! The force which had made Japan what she is, is an absorbing patriotism derived from, and dependent on, her national existence. It is based on collective action which independence alone can give. What an inspiration is afforded by the character of these Eastern islanders ! What an example have they not set to the East of the power of a patriotic spirit ! The conditions in India do not point to any early renaissance such as we have witnessed in Japan. But the changes that are taking place among you are as remarkable in their social, moral and religious relations as in their political and economic aspects, and your nascent nationalism is the magnet which holds together the solvent influences of Western civilization let loose on the simple society of the East. Under the immediate effect of these influences, your old organizations are crumbling up, and you have entered upon a long period of transition preparatory to the establishment of a new order. The result of English education has been to break the continuity of centuries, and the problem now is to bridge over the period of disorder with the least disturbance. Official interference was unavoidable in the first instance—in no other way could a beginning have been made but the educational movement in India now stands in need of no such stimulus. It is in matters of education more than any other that the people of the country have become ripe for self-government.

Systematic education is already in falling into the hands of private enterprise. The time has come for the Government of transfer its educational endowments to the custody of those who have been educated through them. The present system of University education should be reconstituted on a representative basis. A policy which progress to unit together still tighter the bonds of official control is absolutely retrograde. It has been condemned by every section of Indian opinion; and though it may temporarily prevail, it will be as evanescent as it is unsound. It is only through the educated members of your own community that it will be possible to guide your countrymen at large so as to ensure that the changes which are being wrought by contact with the West shall be effected without danger and

in a healthy manner. It is reserved for you to link the present with the past and to introduce modifications with regard to the antecedents which always must powerfully affect the environment in which you are placed. The problem of grafting Western ideas on to an Oriental stock is now ready for solution in the only way in which a successful solution is possible, by means of Orientals who, having been thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of Western civilization, have at the same time not lost sight of the traditions of their past.

The Key-Note of Administrative Reform

I will not dwell on the constitutional modifications, the administrative changes, which were foreshadowed by Lord Cromer twenty years ago. You will dilate on many of these in the discussion of the resolutions which it will be my duty to submit for the approval of this Congress. These resolutions will be transmitted by me for the consideration of the Government of India. We cannot tell that consideration they may there receive. A bureaucratic Government is not likely to under-estimate the value of any administrative reform which it puts forward of its own initiative or the urgency of the call for its introduction. But when the proposed reforms are pressed on them from outside and affect their own constitution, we need have no apprehension of undue haste or injudicious eagerness to accept them. Of this at least we are conscious, that our proposals are worthy of consideration, for they bear the hallmark of Indian public opinion and will be endorsed by the organs of your educated countrymen throughout the length and breadth of India. The Key note of administrative reform is the gradual substitution of Indian for European official agency. This is the one end towards which you are concentrating your efforts, and the concession of this demand is the only means of satisfying the most reasonable of your legitimate aspirations. Lord Ripon justly urged on behalf of his scheme of local self-government that it would be an instrument of political education. And it may be as truly said that if we desire to eventually establish an independent Government, we can only do so by training the people to a sense of self-help and self-reliance through familiarity with the details, as well as the principles of executive administration. We

pray that our rulers may be endowed with this desire. It is no unworthy aim that we hold out to them for fulfilment. It is a title to glory all their own that they found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of subjection, and have so ruled them as to make them desirous of all the privileges of citizenship. But however great may be their energy and activity in working through an official agency, it counts as dross if they lack the higher genius of educating the people by making them work for themselves, of evoking their powers by affording them opportunities for their exercise, and of raising them from a condition of mere passive subjection to a capacity for the discharge of higher responsibility. A nation is best administered which can manage its own concerns with the least aid from Government; and no system of administration can be progressive or beneficial which crushes out the self-reliance of the people and blights their legitimate aspirations to realize their destiny through their own exertions

*Reconstitution of the Civil Service and the Separation
of Executive and Judicial Functions*

To meet this end the complete reconstitution of the Indian Civil Service is necessary. It is surprising how little change there has been in the form of administration in India during the past century. The character of the Civil Service has been theoretically unchanged. It is a fine old service, of which I, of all men, have reason to speak with respect. It has enrolled within its ranks men, of whom the Mother Country may well be proud. It is, however, a form of administration both bureaucratic and autocratic, and an organization suited only to a government by foreigners. It has been perceptibly weakening from its inherent inapplicability to an environment where changes are becoming rapid. It must pass away, after a prolonged period of magnificent work, to be replaced by a more popular system which shall perpetuate its efficiency while avoiding its defects. The Government should now find expression in a form of administration more representative and less concentrated in individuals. The principles of administration for which we are indebted to Lord Ripon have paved the way for this reform, and centralization is already giving way to local self-government. In the natural

course of things administrative officers must be chosen more and more from the permanent residents of the locality. The injurious custom of constant transfers and changes will then cease. The interests of the efficiency and economy will alike be served by the appointment of Indians on the spot to perform functions for which we now import foreigners from Europe and Indians brought from every other part of the province than that in which they are employed.

In the judicial branch of the service reorganization is immediately required. The members of the Civil Service, when very young and every ignorant of the language, are vested with magisterial power beyond comparison greater than those possessed by corresponding functionaries under any civilized Government, and it would be strange indeed if they were not led into occasional errors and sometimes into abuse of power. It is the system that is to blame. There is no longer any reason why, over the greater part of India, important judicial functions should be discharged by persons of immature years, and it is a crying reform in regard to the administration of justice (in all but backward tracts where the patriarchal system must still prevail) that only those persons should be vested with judicial powers whose age, training, and experience afford a guarantee for the proper exercise of authority. Patience and discrimination, respect for the forms of law, rigid imperviousness to rumour and to outside report—these are some of the qualifications which are the essential attributes of the judicial office. There is no stage in the career of a civilian which affords him the opportunity for their acquisition. The whole training of an Indian civilian unfits him for judicial work. The remedy lies in the complete separation of the judicial from the executive service, and judicial appointments should be reserved, as they are in other countries, for members of the legal profession who are trained to undertake the duties attaching to them. In no other way would the separation be really complete, and by no other process of selection is it possible to secure the proper discharge of judicial functions.

Enlargement of the Legislative Council,

The greatest of the administrative reforms which have been

effected in India since Lord Ripon's time is the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on a partially representative basis. I congratulate the Indian National Congress on the no inconsiderable share of which it may boast in the accomplishment of this reform. The Indian Councils Act, which was passed in 1892, has operated to the general satisfaction of the public and to the advantage of Government. But it was not a perfect measure, and it labours under defects which no amount of tactfulness or happy give and take on the part of Provincial Governors or elected members can obviate. It is impossible to give adequate representation to a province containing many millions of inhabitants in a Council of only twenty members. It is necessary, therefore, to enlarge the Councils. It is expedient also to secure their stability and dignity by including in their constitution those noblemen whose position and status in the country entitle them to be recognized as legislators. We ought never to lose sight of the fact that India, in spite of all its changes, is, and always has been, an aristocratic and conservative country, and that any attempt to democratise Indian institutions is calculated to result in failure. The adoption of a scheme for enlarged Councils on a really representative basis would not only afford satisfaction to the educated classes of the community, but it would gratify and conciliate the nobility and ensure for them a share in the responsibilities of administration commensurate to their rank.

Financial Control: Tibet

It is necessary also to increase the power of these Councils, especially in regard to matters of finance. At present a budget is submitted to them for their information, and they are entitled to criticize it, but they have no power to control or vote against its provisions. Vast sums of money are annually spent on enterprises which exclusively affect your interests, but your representatives possess no check whatever over the outlay, and as there is none in Parliament, so it is the more necessary that it should be exercised in India itself. I will take a concrete case: the cost of Tibetan expedition. When Mr. Brodrick was lately challenged in the House of Commons on this question, he exclaimed that those should pay the piper who called the tune. Was there ever

a grosser travesty or more mischievous misuse of this familiar proverb? I think we know who called the tune. It was certainly not the people of India. Is there a single man in this vast representative assembly who would hold himself in the smallest degree responsible for undertaking or recommending that expedition? There is not one. (A Voice "No") The people of India are, and were, unanimously opposed to it. I speak for you all. There is not one of you who does not unreservedly condemn this act of wanton violence and aggression, and who does not deplore the ruthless slaughter of imperfectly armed monks and simple shepherds, "whose bones lie scattered on the mountains cold," and whose only offence consisted in their resisting invasion and disarmament in their own country. And yet, in spite of universal protest, the whole of this expedition, which was undertaken to increase Britain's trade and establish what is described as Imperial prestige in Central Asia, is imposed upon the overburdened and poverty-stricken people of India. I can recall many instances of financial injustice which have been perpetrated in the interests of England in her dealings with this country, but none more indefensible and impossible to justify in a properly constituted Council.

The Proposed Partition of Bengal

A word, too, I wish to say on a subject which is so justly agitating the minds of my old friends in Bengal; I allude to the proposed partition of that province. We shall recognize that this is a matter of more than local interest when we recall that the sinister aspect of the proposal is to shatter, if it be possible to do so, the unity and to undermine the feelings of solidarity which are so happily established among the members of a compact and national branch of the Empire. The idea of the severance of the oldest and the most populous and wealthy portion of the province, and the division of its people into two arbitrary sections has given a profound shock to the Bengali race. I do not think I ever remember popular sentiment to have been more deeply stirred than it has been by this scheme for the separation of one-half of Bengal from the capital of the province and its amalgamation with Assam. It has been suggested that there should be a new Lieutenant Governorship with all its expensive

paraphernalia of a large secretariat and separate departments; a scheme which is not without its attraction to the members of an autocratic bureaucracy who see before them the prospect of additional offices and emoluments. But it is repugnant to the last degree to the inhabitants of the country affected, who are aghast at the idea of their exclusion from a province to which they are attached by all historic material, social and sentimental associations. I admit that it is desirable to relieve the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from some of the responsibilities which rest upon his shoulders. But this end may easily be attained by other means; either by the appointment of an Executive Council, or preferably I think, by the separation of Behar, which is not peopled by Bengalis, and the constitution of that province, with a population of twenty millions in round numbers, as a separate administration with its own Chief Commissioner. It would be easy to devise a scheme which would not receive the unanimous disapproval of the affected population. To press on proposals such as those which have been put forward for the break up of Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the Bengali people can only be described as a most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship. I am convinced that a Liberal Secretary of State would never sanction such proposals, and I fervently trust that the Government of India, in the exercise of their own good sense and better feeling, will not shrink from abandoning a project so universally condemned.

Indians in the Transvaal

I will add another protest on the question of Indians in South Africa. We do not forget that Lord Lansdowne, a few weeks after the outbreak of the Boer War, in his dual capacity of Secretary of State for War and ex-Viceroy of India, assured a Sheffield audience that of all the misdeeds of the Boers none filled him so much anger as their treatment of British Indians; and that he went so far as to point a lurid picture of the political evils which might have been expected to follow in India itself if England had failed to put an end to such insolent injustice. It was on these grounds that the war was justified to the British public. In this way hope was afforded that at the

close of the war the anti-Indian policy of the Boers would be reversed. But has it been reversed? Far from it. Peace having been secured, the British rulers of the Transvaal have applied themselves with British vigour and precision to the task of enforcing Boer law. In dealing with Indian colonists their little finger has been thicker than Mr. Kruger's loins, and where he had chastised with whips, they have chastised with scorpions. Fortunately, your fellow-countrymen were not dismayed: they lost no opportunity of asserting their rights and their efforts have at last been rewarded by a decision of the Supreme Court which has vindicated their claim to trade in any part of the Transvaal. The response to this has been an official agitation to set aside this decision by legislation, and in a despatch to His Majesty's Government, Lord Milner actually writes:

"I think that to attempt to place coloured people on an equality with white in South Africa is wholly impracticable, and that, moreover, it is in principle wrong."

What a hopeless attitude is indicated in these words! Before the war Indians were free to enter the country without restriction or payment of registration fee, residence in any part of the Republic was permitted, and freedom to travel was allowed. Under British rule no immigration is permitted other than under severe restrictions and the payment of an annual registration fee of £3; all Indians, excepting those who pass an educational test in a language other than their own, are compelled to reside in locations, and a vexatious system of photographic passes has been established without warrant in law, inoperative Boer enactments have been brought into force and rendered more stringent by Ordinances or executive orders, and British Indians have been offensively classed in legislation with Hottentots. These are the grievances of which we complain, and I rejoice to think that a resolution protesting against them will be framed by this Congress, which I venture to hope, will strengthen the hands of the Government of India in withstanding the further perpetration of avoidable wrong.

Conclusion

I am now bringing my remarks to a conclusion. We have good grounds for hope. The foundations of the future have been laid, and a superstructure is arising upon them. Skill, care, and forethought are needed: enthusiasm tempered by the construction of the edifice, liberality and largeness of conception in the design. You are the nucleus of a movement the power of which grows every day, and already supplies the most potent impulse in inspiring, instructing, and controlling the varied forces upon which the future of India depends. It has been the labour of my life to endeavour to ameliorate the relations between rulers and the ruled, to soften asperities and to evoke confidence and respect through sympathy. My position among you today is an evidence, that I have not altogether failed. I have carried on the golden lamp to those who shall come after me. I have never despaired of the present or doubted of the success which is denied eventually to crown your efforts. But it is upon yourselves that you must rely for the initiation and development of schemes which depend, in their systematic application and fulfilment, upon the local source from which they emanate. You are not without the noblest stimulus to cooperate with heart and soul in the great work that lies before you. The memory of the dead is with us at this hour. May the memories of Ram Mohun Roy and Dayanand, the energizing labours of Kisto Das Pal, of Telang and Ranade whose names we have inscribed with reverential love on the roll of Indian patriots, infuse into your hearts the zeal and strength to devote your own lives to the service of your country. Strive to show yourselves constantly worthy of your causes. You have incurred grave responsibilities: do not shrink from the honest endeavour to discharge them worthily:

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths,
In feelings, not in figures on a dial;

We should count life by heart-throbs. He most lives,
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

Labour each in your own sphere, as you are bound to do, to hand on to your successors the large endowments you have re-

ceived, augmented and improved by your own exertions. Be tolerant towards all. And especially take to heart the need to brotherly feeling towards one another and of a spirit of veneration and gratitude to your leaders in this national movement. Remember that moral improvement is the only source of real unity, and as such of dignity as well as happiness.

A CHARTER OF INDIAN LIBERALISM*

Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great, the signal honour, which you have conferred upon me by electing me to preside over your deliberations this year. As has been said by more than one of my predecessors, the Presidentship of the Congress is the highest distinction, which it is in the power of our countrymen to bestow upon anyone, and proud indeed is that moment in an Indian's life, when he receives at your hands this most conspicuous mark of your confidence and your favour. As I, however, stand before you today, it is not so much the honour of the position, great as that is, as the responsibility, which it imposes upon me, that occupies my thoughts. When I was first invited nearly four months ago to accept this office, we were able to see on the horizon only the small cloud—no bigger than a man's hand. Since then the sky has been overcast and for sometime a storm has been raging; and it is with rocks ahead and angry waves beating around that I am called upon to take charge of the vessel of the Congress. Even the stoutest heart among us may well own to a feeling of anxiety in such a situation. Let us, however humbly trust that in this holy city of Benares, the Divine guidance, on which we may securely throw ourselves, will not fail us, and that the united wisdom and patriotism of the delegates assembled will enable the Congress to emerge from the present crisis with unimpaired and even enhanced prestige and usefulness.

* Presidential address delivered by Gopal Krishna Gokhale at the Kashi Congress held on 27-30 December, 1905.

The Prince and Princess of Wales

Gentlemen, our first duty today is to offer our most loyal and dutiful welcome to Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of this their first visit to India. The Throne in England is above all parties—beyond all controversies. It is the permanent seat of majesty, the honour and the beneficence of the British Empire. And in offering our homage to its illustrious occupants and their heirs and representatives, we not only perform a loyal duty, but also express the gratitude of our hearts for all that is noble and high-minded in England's connection with India. The late Queen-Empress, again, was known, within the limits of her constitutional position, to exercise during her reign her vast influence in favour of a policy of justice and sympathy towards the Indian people. We can never forget that the great Proclamation of 1858, on which we take our stand so largely in our constitutional struggle, was not only in spirit but also in substance her own declaration of the principles, on which India was to be governed. The present King-Emperor has announced his resolve to walk in the foot-steps of his mother, and we have no doubt that the Prince of Wales is animated by the same desire to see a policy of righteousness pursued towards India. We rejoice that His Royal Highness and his noble consort have come out amongst us to acquaint themselves personally with the ancient civilization of this country and its present condition. The Congress earnestly and respectfully wishes their Royal Highnesses a most successful tour through India, and it humbly trusts that the knowledge they will acquire and the recollections they will carry back with them will constitute a fresh bond of sympathy and attachment between the Royal Family in England, the Princess and People of this country.

The New Viceroy

The Congress also offers a most cordial and respectful welcome to Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Minto. The new Viceroy assumes the responsibilities of his office at a critical juncture. The temper of the people, so sorely tried during the last three years, calls for the exercise of wise and statesmanlike

conciliation on the part of those who are in authority, if further estrangement between the rulers and the ruled is to be prevented. I earnestly trust that such conciliation will be forthcoming. Meanwhile a special responsibility rests upon all to see to it that the immediate task that confronts His Excellency is not made more difficult than it already is. The difficulties of the situation are not of Lord Minto's creating, and has right to expect the cooperation of both the officials, and the public in his endeavours to terminate a state of tension, which has already produced deplorable results and which cannot be prolonged without serious detriment to the best interests of the country.

Lord Curzon's Administration

Gentlemen, how true it is that to everything there is an end ! Thus even the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon has come to a close ! For seven long years, all eyes had constantly to turn to one masterful figure in the land,—now in administration, now in astonishment, more often in anger and in pain, till at last it has become difficult to realize that a change has really come. For a parallel to such an administration, we must, I think, go back to the times of Aurangzeb in the history of our own country. There we find the same attempt at a rule excessively centralized and intensely personal, the same strenuous purpose, the same overpowering consciousness of duty, the same marvellous capacity for work, the same sense of loneliness, the same persistence in a policy of distrust and repression, resulting in bitter exasperation all round. I think even the most devoted admirer of Lord Curzon cannot claim that he has strengthened the foundations of British Rule in India. In some respects, his Lordship will always be recognized as one of the greatest Englishmen that ever came out to this country. His wonderful intellectual gifts, his brilliant powers of expression, his phenomenal energy, his boundless enthusiasm for work,—these will ever be a theme of just and unstinted praise. But the gods are jealous, and amidst such lavish endowments, they withheld from him a sympathetic imagination, without which no man can ever understand an alien people; and it is a sad truth that to the end of his administration Lord Curzon did not really understand the people of India. This was at the root of his

many inconsistencies and made him a perpetual puzzle to most men. And thus the man, who professed in all sincerity, before he assumed the reins of office, his great anxiety to show the utmost deference to the feelings and even the prejudices of those over whom he was set to rule, ended by denouncing in unmeasured terms not only the present generation of Indians but also their remote ancestors and even the ideals of their race, which they cherish above everything else; he, who in the early part of his administration, publicly warned the official classes that "official wisdom is not so transcendent as to be superior to the stimulus and guidance" of public opinion and who declared that in the present state of India "the opinion of the educated classes is one which it is not statesmanship to ignore or to depise," ended by trampling more systematically upon that opinion than any of his predecessors, and claiming for his own judgment and that of his official colleagues a virtual character of infallibility. The fact is that Lord Curzon came to India with certain fixed ideas. To him India was a country, where the Englishman was to monopolize for all time all power and talk all the while of duty. The Indians' only business was to be governed and it was a sacrilege on his part to have any other aspiration. In his scheme of things there was no room for the educated classes of the country; and having failed to amuse them for any length of time by an empty show of taking them into his confidence, he proceeded in the end to repress them. Even in his last farewell speech at the Byculla Club in Bombay, India exists only as a scene of his Englishmen's labours, with the toiling millions of the country—eighty percent of the population—in the background. The remaining twenty percent, for aught they are worth, might as well be gently swept into the sea! Had Lord Curzon been less self-centred, had he had more humility in his nature, he might perhaps have discovered his mistake before it was too late. This would probably have enabled him to avoid giving so much offence and causing so much pain as he unhappily did during the last two years, but I doubt if the main current of his administration would even then have flowed in another channel. Lord Curzon's highest ideal of statesmanship in efficiency of administration. He does not believe in what Mr. Gladstone

used to call the principle of liberty as a factor of human progress. He has no sympathy with popular aspirations, and when he finds them among a subject people, he thinks he is rendering their country a service by trying to put them down. Thus in his Byculla Club speech he actually stated that he had not offered political concessions to the people of India, because he "did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India itself to do so!" Taking Lord Curzon at his highest, we find him engaged in a herculean attempt to strengthen Englishman's monopoly of power in India and stem the tide of popular agitation and discontent rousing the members of bureaucracy to a sense of duty similar to his own and raising the standard of administrative efficiency all round. The attempt has failed, as it was bound to fail. Never was discontent in India more acute and widespread than when the late Viceroy laid down the reins of officer; and as regards the bureaucratic monopoly of power, I think we are sensibly nearer the time when it will be successfully assailed.

One claim Lord Curzon advanced in his farewell speech at Bombay, which it is necessary to examine a little. He told his hearers, as he had done once before—on the occasion of the last Budget—that even if he had incurred the hostility of educated Indians, the masses would be grateful to him for what he had done for them. This attempt to distinguish between the interests of the educated classes and those of the bulk of their country-men is a favourite device with those who seek to repress the legitimate aspirations of our people. It is significant that Lord Curzon had never resorted to it till he had finally broken with the educated classes. We know of course that the distinction is unreal and ridiculous and we know also that most of those who use it as a convenient means to disparage the educated classes cannot themselves really believe in it. Lord Curzon mentions the reduction of the salt-duty, the writing off of famine areas, the increased grants to primary education and to irrigation, the attempt at Police Reform as measures on which he bases his claim. The suggestion here is that he adopted these measures for the good of the masses in spite of the opposition—at any rate, the indifference—of the educated

classes when the plain fact is that it was the Congress that had been urging these measures year after year on the attention of Government and that it was only after years of persistent agitation that it was able to move the Government in the desired direction. Four years ago, when with a surplus of seven crores or nearly five millions sterling in hand, the Government of India did not remit any taxation, and I ventured to complain of this in Council and to urge an immediate reduction of the salt-duty, I well remember how Lord Curzon sneered at those who "talked glibly" of the burdens of the masses and of the necessity of lowering the salt-tax as a measure of relief. Lord Curzon was fortunate in coming to India when the currency legislation of Lord Lansdowne and Sir David Barbour had succeeded in artificially raising the rupee to its present level, thereby enabling the Government of India to save about four millions sterling a year on its Home remittances. This with the recovery of the opium revenue, placed huge surpluses at Lord Curzon's disposal throughout his administration, and he never knew a moment of that financial stress and anxiety, which his predecessors had to face for a series of years. Considering how large these surpluses have been, I do not think the relief given by Lord Curzon to the tax-payers of the country has by any means been liberal. He himself estimated last March the total amount of this relief at 7 millions sterling. He did not mention that during the same time he had taken from the tax payers 33 millions sterling over and above the requirements of the Government. Again how paltry is the relief given by the reduction of the salt-duty and the writing off of famine arrears, compared with the enormous injury done to the mass of our people by the artificial raising of the value of the rupee, which led to a heavy immediate depreciation of their small savings in silver and which makes a grievous addition to their permanent burdens by indirectly enhancing their assessments and increasing their debts to the money-lender, as prices adjust themselves to the new Rupee ! Much has been made of Lord Curzon's increased grants to primary education. Considering how little the State does in India for the education of the masses, it would have been astonishing, if with such surpluses Lord Curzon had not made addition to the educational expen-

diture of the country. But if he has given a quarter of million more to education, he has given five millions a year more to the Army; and with reckless profusion he has increased the salaries of European officials in my departments and has created several new posts for them. "A spirit of expenditure," to use an expression of Mr. Gladstone's, has been abroad in all directions during his time, and he has never practised the old-fashioned virtue of economy, with which the real interests of the people are bound up. Of course a ruler cannot labour as devotedly as Lord Curzon has done for seven years for increased efficiency without removing or mitigating important administrative evils; but that is quite different from a claim to champion the special interests of the masses as against their natural leaders and spokesmen, the educated classes of the community.

Partition of Bengal

Gentlemen, the question that is uppermost in the minds of us all at this moment is the Partition of Bengal. A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengali brethren and the whole country has been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any Government measure has encountered during the last half a century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule—its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of Service interests to those of the governed. Lord Curzon and his advisers—if he ever had any advisers—could never allege that they had no means of judging of the depth of public feeling in the matter. All that could possibly have been done by way of a respectful representation of the views of the people had been done. As soon as it was known that a partition of some sort was contemplated meeting after meeting of protest was held, till over five hundred public meetings in all parts of the Province and proclaimed in no uncertain voice that the attempt to dismember a compact and homogenous province, to which the people were passionately attached and of which they were justly proud, was deeply

resented and would be resisted to the uttermost. Memorials to the same effect poured in upon the Viceroy of India. The Secretary of State for India was implored to withhold his sanction to the proposed measure. The intervention of the House of Commons was sought first by a monster petition, signed by sixty-thousand people, and later by means of a debate on the subject raised in the House by our ever-watchful friend, Mr. Herbert Roberts. All proved unavailing.

The Viceroy had made up his mind. The officials under him had expressed approval. What business had the people to have an opinion of their own and to stand in the way? To add insult to injury, Lord Curzon described the opposition to his measure as "manufactured"—an opposition in which all classes of Indians, high and low, uneducated and educated, Hindus and Mohammedans had joined, an opposition than which nothing more intense, nothing more widespread, nothing more spontaneous had been seen in this country in the whole course of our political agitation? Let it be remembered that when the late Viceroy cast this stigma on those who were ranged against his proposal, not a single public pronouncement in favour of those proposals had been made by any section of the community; and that among foremost opponents of the measure were men like Sir Jolindra Mohan Tagore and Sir Gurudas Banerji, Raja Peary Mohan Mukerji and Dr. Rash Behary Ghose, the Maharajas of Mymensing and Kassimbazar, —men who keep themselves aloof from ordinary political agitation and never say a word calculated in anyway to embarrass the authorities, and who came forward to oppose publicly the Partition project only from an overpowering sense of the necessity of their doing what they could to avert a dreaded calamity. If the opinions of even such men, are to be brushed aside with contempt, if all Indians are to be treated as no better than dumb, driven cattle, if men, whom any other country would delight to honour, are to be thus made to realize the utter humiliation and helplessness of their position in their own, then all I can say is "Goodbye to all hope of cooperating in any way with the bureaucracy in the interests of the people;" I can conceive of no graver indictment of British rule

than that such a state of things should be possible after a hundred years of that rule.

Gentlemen, I have carefully gone through all the papers which have been published by the Government, on this subject of Partition. Three things have struck me forcibly—determination to dismember Bengal at all costs, an anxiety to promote the interests of Assam at the expense of Bengal, and a desire to suit everything to the interests and convenience of the Civil Service. It is not merely that a number of new prizes have been thrown into the lap of that service—one Lieutenant-Governorship two Memberships of the Board of Revenue, one Commissionership of a Division, several Secretaryships and Under-Secretaryships—but alternative schemes of readjustment have been rejected on the express ground that their adoption would be unpopular with members of the Service. Thus even if a reduction of the charge of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had really become inevitable—a contention, which the greatest living authority on the subject, Sir Henry Cotton, who was Secretary to the Bengal Government under seven Lieutenant-Governors, does not admit—one would have thought that the most natural course to take was to separate Behar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur from Bengal and form them into a separate Province. This would have made the Western Province one of 30 millions in place of the Eastern. But this, says the Government of India “would take from Bengal all its best districts and would make the Province universally popular.”

This was of course a fatal objection, for compared with the displeasure of the Civil Service, the trampling under foot of public opinion and the outraging of the deepest feelings of a whole people was a small matter! But one can see that administrative considerations were really only secondary in the determination of this question. The dismemberment of Bengal had become necessary, because in the view of the Government of India, “it cannot be for the lasting good of any country or any people that public opinion or what passes for it should be manufactured by a comparatively small number of people at a single centre and should be disseminated thence for

universal adoption, all other views, being discouraged or suppressed." "From every point of view," the Government further states "it appears to us desirable to encourage the growth centres of independent opinion, local aspirations, local ideals and to preserve the growing intelligence and enterprise of Bengal from being cramped and stunted by the process of forcing it prematurely into a mould of rigid and sterile uniformity." You will see that this is only a paraphrase, in Lord Curzon's most approved style of the complaint of the people of Bengal that their fair Province has been dismembered to destroy their growing solidarity, check their national aspirations and weaken their power of cooperating for national ends, lessen the influence of their educated classes with their countrymen, and reduce the political importance of Calcutta. After this let no apologist of the late Viceroy pretend that the object of the partition was administrative convenience and not political repression!

Gentlemen, it is difficult to speak in terms of due restraint of Lord Curzon's conduct throughout this affair. Having published his earlier and smaller scheme for public criticism, it was his clear duty to publish similarly the later and larger scheme, which he afterwards substituted for it. But in consequence of the opposition which the first scheme encountered, he abandoned the idea of taking the public any more into his confidence and proceeded to work in the matter in the dark. For more than a year nothing further was heard of his intentions, and while he was silently elaborating the details of his measure, he allowed the impression to prevail that the Government had abandoned the Partition project. And in the end, when he had succeeded in securing the Secretary of State's sanction to the scheme, it was from Simla, where he and his official colleagues were beyond the reach of public opinion that he sprang the final orders of Government upon an unprepared people. Then suddenly came his resignation. And the people permitted themselves for a while to hope that it would bring them at least a brief respite, especially as Mr. Brodrick had promised shortly before to present further papers on the subject to Parliament and that was understood to mean

that the scheme would not be brought into operation till Parliament reassembled at the beginning of next year. Of course, after Lord Curzon's resignation, the only proper, the only dignified course for him was to take no step, which it was difficult to revoke and the consequence of which would have to be faced, not by him, but by his successor; he owed it to Lord Minto to give him an opportunity to examine the question for himself, he owed it to the Royal visitors not to plunge the largest Province of India into violent agitation and grief on the eve of their visit to it. But Lord Curzon was determined to partition of Bengal before he left India and so he rushed the necessary legislation through the Legislative Council at Simla, which only the official members could attend, and enforced his orders on 16th October last—a day observed as one of universal mourning by all classes of people in Bengal. And now, while he himself has gone from India, what a sea of troubles he has bequeathed to his successor! Fortunately, there are grounds to believe that Lord Minto will deal with the situation with tact, firmness, and sympathy, and it seems he has already pulled up to some extent Lord Curzon's favourite Lieutenant, the first ruler of the new Eastern Province. Mr. Fuller has evidently cast to the winds all prudence, all restraint, all sense of responsibility. Even if a fraction of what the papers have been reporting be true, his extraordinary doings must receive the attention of the new Secretary of State for India and the House of Commons. There is no surer method of goading a docile people into a state of dangerous despair than the king of hectoring and repression he has been attempting.

But, gentlemen, as has been well said, even in things evil there is a soul of goodness, and the dark times, through which Bengal has passed and is passing, have not been without a message of bright hope for the future. The tremendous upheaval of popular feeling, which has taken place in Bengal in consequence of the partition, will constitute a landmark in the history of our national progress. For the first time since British rule began, all sections of the Indian Community, without distinction of caste or creed, have been moved by a

common impulse and without the stimulus of external pressure to act together in offering resistance to a common wrong. A wave of true national consciousness has swept over the Province, and at its touch old barriers have, for the time at any rate, been thrown down, personal jealousies have vanished, other controversies have been hushed! Bengal's heroic stand against the oppression of a harsh and uncontrolled bureaucracy has astonished and gratified all India, and her sufferings have not been endured in vain, when they have helped to draw closer all parts of the country in sympathy and in aspiration. A great rush and uprising of the waters, such as has been recently witnessed in Bengal, cannot take place without a little inundation over the banks here and there. These little excesses are inevitable, when large masses of men move spontaneously—especially when the movement is from darkness into light, from bondage towards freedom,—and they must not be allowed to disconcert us too much. The most outstanding fact of the situation is that the public life of this country has received an accession of strength of great importance, and for this all India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Bengal. Of course, the difficulties which confront the leaders of Bengal are enormous and perhaps they have only just begun. But I know there is no disposition to shrink from any responsibilities and I have no doubt that whatever sacrifices are necessary will be cheerfully made. All India is at their back and they will receive in their work that lies before them the cordial sympathy and assistance of the other Provinces. And discredit, that is allowed to fall on them, affects us all. They on their side must not forget that the honour of all India is at present in their keeping.

The Swadeshi Movement

Gentlemen, I will now say a few words on a movement, which has spread so rapidly and has been hailed with so much enthusiasm all over the country during the last few months—the *Swadeshi* movement. It is necessary at the outset to distinguish it from another movement, started in Bengal, which has really given it such immense impetus—the boycott of British goods. We all know that when our Bengali brethren found that nothing

would turn the late Viceroy from his purpose of partitioning Bengal, that all their protests in the Press and on the platform, all their memorials to him, to the Secretary of State and to Parliament were unavailing, that the Government exercised its despotic strength to trample on their most cherished feelings and injure their dearest interests and that no protection against this of any kind was forthcoming from any quarter, they, in their extremity, resolved to have recourse to this boycott movement. This they did with a two-fold object—first a demonstration of their deep resentment at the treatment they were receiving, and secondly to attract the attention of the people in England to their grievances, so that those who were in a position to call the Government of India to account might understand what was taking place in India. It was thus as a political weapon, used for a definite political purpose, that they had recourse to the boycott; and in the circumstances of their position they had every justification for the step they took. And I can tell you from personal experience that their action has proved immensely effective in drawing the attention of English people to the state of things in our country.

But a weapon like this must be reserved only for extreme occasions. There are obvious risks involved in its failure and it cannot be used with sufficient effectiveness, unless there is an extraordinary upheaval of popular feeling behind it. It is bound to rouse angry passions on the other side, and no true well-wisher of his country will be responsible for provoking such passions, except under an overpowering sense of necessity. On an extreme occasion, of course, a boycotting demonstration is perfectly legitimate, but that occasion must be one to drive all classes, as in Bengal, to act with one impulse, and make all leaders sink their personal differences in the presence of a common danger. It is well to remember that the term "boycott" owing to its origin, has got unsavoury associations, and it conveys to the mind before everything else a vindictive desire to injure another. Such a desire on our part, as a normal feature of our relations with England, is of course out of the question. Moreover, if the boycott is confined to British goods only, it leaves us free to purchase the goods of other foreign countries

and this does not help the *Swadeshi* movement in any way.

Gentlemen, the true *Swadeshi* movement is both a patriotic and an economic movement. The idea of *Swadeshi* or "one's own country" is one of the noblest conceptions that have ever stirred the heart of humanity. As the poet asks:

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land."

The devotion to motherland, which is enshrined in the highest *Swadeshi*, is an influence so profound and so passionate that its very thought thrills and its actual touch lifts one out of oneself. India needs today above everything else that the gospel of this devotion should be preached to high and low, to prince and to peasant, in town and in hamlet, till the service of motherland becomes with us as overmastering a passion as it is in Japan. The *Swadeshi* movement, as it is ordinarily understood, presents one part of this gospel to the mass of our people in a form, which brings it within their comprehension. It turns their thoughts to their country, accustoms them to the idea of voluntarily making some sacrifice for her sake, enables them to take an intelligent interest in her economic development and teaches them the important laws of cooperating with one another for a national end. All this is most valuable work, and those who undertake it are entitled to feel that they are engaged in a highly patriotic mission. But the movement on its material side is an economic one; and though self-denying ordinances, extensively, entered into, must serve a valuable economic purpose, namely to ensure a ready consumption of such articles as are produced in the country and to furnish a perpetual stimulus to production by keeping the demand for indigenous things largely in excess of the supply, the difficulties that surround the question economically are so great that they require the cooperation of every available agency to surmount them. The problem is indeed one of the first magnitude. Twelve years ago, the late Mr. Ranade remarked at an Industrial Conference held at Poona: "The political domination of one country by another attracts far more attention than the more formidable, though

unfit domination, which the capital, enterprise and skill of one country exercise over the trade and manufactures of another. This latter domination has an insidious influence, which paralyzes the springs of all the varied activities, which together make up the life of a nation." The question of production is a question of capital enterprise and skill, and in all these factors, our deficiency at present is very great. Whoever can help in any one of these fields is, therefore, a worker in the Swadeshi cause and should be welcomed as such. Not by methods of exclusion but by those of comprehension, not by insisting on every one working in the same part of the field but by leaving each one free to select his own corner, by attracting to the cause all who are likely to help us, are the difficulties of the problem likely to be overcome. Above all, let us see to it that there are no fresh divisions in the country in the name of Swadeshim. No greater perversion of its true spirit could be imagined than that.

Take the question of cotton piece-goods, of which we import at present over 22 millions sterling worth a year. This is by far the heaviest item among our imports and our present *Swadeshi* agitation is directed mainly towards producing as much of these goods in our own country as possible. I have consulted three of the best experts available in India on this subject, Mr. Bezanji of Nagpur, the right hand man of the late Mr. Tata in mill matters, Hon. Mr. Vithaldas Damodardas, who has kindly placed a copy of his article at my disposal, and our friend Mr. Wacha. They are all agreed about the requirements and the difficulties of the situation. So far as cotton fabrics are concerned, even strict Free Traders should have nothing to say against the encouragement, which the *Swadeshi* movement seeks to give to their manufacture in India. In the first place, many of the usual objections that may be urged against a system of State protection do not apply to helpful voluntary action on the part of consumers, such as the Swadeshi movement endeavours to promote. Moreover, the essence of Free Trade is that a commodity should be produced where the comparative cost of its production is the least and that it should be consumed where its relative value is the highest; and if accidental circumstances have

thwarted such an adjustment in a given case, any agency which seeks to overcome the impediments, works in the end in the interest of true Free Trade. Now everyone will admit that with cheap labour and cotton at her own door, India enjoys exceptional advantages for the manufacture of cotton goods; and if the Swadeshi movement helps her to regain her natural position in this respect—a position which she once occupied but out of which she has been driven by an extraordinary combination of circumstances—the movement works not against but in furtherance of true Free Trade. Even at present the Cotton Industry in India is an important one. It is the largest industry after agriculture in the country; it is also the only one agriculture excepted—in which the Indians themselves have a substantial share. It is represented by a paid-up capital of about 17 crores of rupees or a little over 11 millions sterling, the number of mills being about 200, with five millions spindles and fifty thousand powerlooms. In addition to this, there are, according to the Census of 1901, about a quarter of a million persons engaged in handloom weaving in the country. Our mills consume nearly 60 per cent of the cotton produce of India and produce 58 crores lbs of yarn. Of this quantity, Mr. Vithaldas tells us, about 23.5 crore lbs is exported to China and other foreign countries, about 13.5 crore lbs is used in our weaving mills, and about 19 crores is woven by hand loom weavers, the remaining 2 crores going to the manufacture of rope and twine. In addition to this, 3 crore lbs of yarn is imported from the United Kingdom, and is consumed by handlooms. The handloom industry of the country thus absorbs, in spite of its hard struggles, about 22 crore lbs of yarn, or nearly double the quantity woven by powerlooms, and this is a most interesting and significant fact. The yarn used by the weaving mills produces about 55 crores of yards of cloth of which about 14 crore yards is exported to foreign countries and about 41 crores is left for consumption in the country. If we put down the production of the handlooms at about 90 crore yards, we have about 130 crore yards as the quantity of Swadeshi cloth consumed at present in India.

The quantity of piece-goods imported from the United Kingdom and retained for use in the country is about 205 crore yards

a year. Of a total cloth consumed, therefore, over one-third is at present Swadeshi. This is an encouraging feature of the situation. But the imported cloth is almost all superior in quantity. "While our mills," Mr. Vithaldas says, "produce the coarser cloth, say from yarn up to 30s count and in a few cases up to 40s, the bulk of the imported cloth is of the finer quality, using yarn over 30s count. The Indian weaving mills are obliged to restrict themselves for the most part to weaving coarser-cloth owing to the inferior quality of cotton now grown in the country." It may be noted that even from existing cotton, hand-loom can, owing to their greater delicacy of handling the yarn, produce finer cloth than the power-loom. Fortunately owing to the exertions of the Agricultural Department of Bombay Government—exertions for which it is entitled to the best thanks of the whole country—Egyptian cotton has just been successfully introduced into Sind, and this year a thousand bales of a quality equal to very good Egyptian have been produced. A much heavier crop is expected next year and there is no doubt that its cultivation will rapidly extend. The main difficulty in the way of our manufacturing the quality of cloth that is at present imported is one of capital. Mr. Wacha estimates that if the whole quantity of 205 crore yards is to be produced by mills, the Industry requires an additional capital of about 30 crores of rupees. Even if we propose to spread this over ten years, we should require an addition of 3 crores of rupees every year. Now if we turn to the Statistical Abstract of British India, we shall find that the total increase in the capital invested in cotton mills during the last ten years has been only about 3 crores—an amount that Mr. Wacha wants every year for ten years. The normal development of the mill industry is thus plainly unequal to the requirements of the situation. Moreover, it is well to remember what Mr. Bazanji says—that the present mill-owners must not be expected to be very keen about the production of finer cloth, because its manufacture is much less paying than that of the coarser cloth. This is due to various causes, the principal one among them being that English capital, similarly invested, is satisfied with a smaller range of profits. Capital from other quarters must, therefore, be induced to come forward and undertake this business. If we again turn to the

Statistical Abstract, we shall find that our people hold about 50 crores of rupees in Government Securities and about 11 crores in Postal Savings Banks, the private deposits stand at about 33 crores of rupees, but there are no means of ascertaining how much of the amount is held by Indians. Considering the extent of the country and the numbers of the population, these resources are, of course, extremely meagre. Still they might furnish some part of the capital needed. In this connection may I say that a special responsibility now rests in the matter on the Aristocracy of Benga!! And this not merely because the Swadeshi movement is being so vigorously advocated in their Province, but also because owing to the Permanent Settlement of Bengal they are enabled to enjoy resources, which in other parts of India, are swept into the coffers of the State.

If sufficient amount of capital is forthcoming Mr. Bazanji's patriotism may, I am sure, be relied on to secure for the undertaking whatever assistance his great capacity and unrivalled knowledge can give. It must, however, be admitted that capital will come forward only cautiously for this branch of the business. But the handlooms are likely to prove of greater immediate service. Mr. Vithaldas looks forward to a great revival of the handloom industry in the country, and I cannot do better than quote what he says on this point in his paper. "This village industry," he says, "gives means of livelihood not only to an immense number of the weaver class but afford means of supplementing their income to agriculturists—the backbone of India—who usually employ themselves on handlooms, when field-work is unnecessary and also when, owing to famine, drought or excessive rains, agricultural operations are not possible. Now the apparatus with which the work is nearly two centuries behind the times. Mr. Havell, Principal of Calcutta School of Art, Mr. Chatterton of the Madras School of Art, and Mr. Churchill of Bangalore, along with many others, are doing yeoman's service by taking keen interest in the question of supplying economical and improved apparatus to the handloom weavers, Mr. Havell has pointed out that in preparing the work our handloom weavers are incapable of winding more than two threads at a time, though the simplest mechanical device would

enable them to treat 50 or 100 threads simultaneously. The latest European handloom, which successively competes with the powerloom in Cairo and in many places in Europe, can turn out a maximum of 48 yards of common cloth in a day. Mr. Havell is satisfied that the greater portion of the imported cotton cloth can be made in the Indian hand-loom with great profits to the whole community. The question of the immediate revival of the handloom weaving industry on a commercial basis demands the most earnest attention of every well-wisher of India and evidence gives promise of a successful issue to efforts put forward in this direction. "The outlook here is thus hopeful and cheering; only we must not fail to realize that the cooperation of all who can help—including the Government—is needed to overcome the difficulties that lie in the path.

Our Aims and Aspirations

Gentlemen, this the twenty-first session of the Indian National Congress. Last year, since 1885, we have been assembling in these gatherings to give voice to our aspirations and to formulate our wants. When the movement was first inaugurated, we were under the influence of that remarkable outburst of enthusiasm for British Rule, which had been evoked in the country by the great Viceroyalty of the Marquis of Ripon. The best beloved of India's Viceroy was not content to offer mere lipomage to the principle that righteousness alone exalted a nation. He had dared to act on it in practice and he had braved persecution at the hands of his own countrymen for its sake. Lord Ripon's noblest service to this country was that he greatly quickened the processes by which the consciousness of a national purpose comes to establish itself in the minds of a people. The Congress movement was the direct and immediate outcome of this realization. It was started to focus and organize the patriotic forces that were working independently of one another in different parts of the country so as to invest their work with a national character and to increase their general effectiveness. Hope at that time was warm and faith shone bright largely as a result of Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty, and those who started the Congress believed that by offering their criticism and urging their demands

from a national platform, where they could speak in the name of all India, they would be able to secure a continuous improvement of the administration and a steady advance in the direction of the political emancipation of the people.

Twenty long years have since elapsed and during the time much has happened to chill that hope and dim that faith, but there can be no doubt that work of great value in our national life has already been accomplished. The minds of the people have been familiarized with the idea of a united India working for her salvation; a national public opinion has been created; close bonds of sympathy now knit together the different Provinces; caste and creed separations hamper less and less the pursuit of common aim; the dignity of a consciousness of national existence has spread over the whole land. Our record of political concessions won is, no doubt, very meagre, but those that have been secured are of considerable value; some retrogression has been prevented; and if latterly we have been unable to stem the tide of reaction, the resistance we have offered though it has failed of its avowed purpose, has substantially strengthened our public life. Our deliberations have extended over a very wide range of problems; public opinion in the country is, in consequence, better informed and the Press is steadily growing in authority and usefulness. Above all, there is a general perception now of the goal towards which we have to strive and a wide recognition of the arduous character of the struggle and the immense sacrifices it requires.

The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that in course of time a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing Colonies of the British Empire. For better, or worse, our destinies are now linked with those of England and the Congress recognizes that whatever advance we seek must be within the Empire itself. That advance, moreover, can only be gradual, as at each stage of the progress it may be necessary for us to pass through a brief course of apprenticeship before we are enabled to go to the next one; for it is a reasonable proposition that the sense of responsibility, required for the proper exercise of the

political institutions of the West, can be acquired, by an Eastern people through practical training and experiment only. To admit this is not to express any agreement with those who usually oppose all attempts at reform on the plea that the people are not ready for it. "It is liberty alone," says Mr. Gladstone in words of profound wisdom, "which fits men for liberty." This proposition, like every other in politics, has its bounds; but it is far safer than the counter doctrine, "wait till they are fit." While, therefore, we are prepared to allow that an advance towards our goal may be only by reasonably cautious steps, what we emphatically insist on is that the resources of the country should be primarily devoted to the work of qualifying the people by means of education and in other ways, for such advance. Even the most bigoted champion of the existing system of administration will not pretend that this is in any degree the case at present. Our net revenue is about 44 millions sterling. Of this very nearly one-half is now eaten up by the Army. The Home Charges, exclusive of their military portion absorb nearly one-third. These two, between them, account for about 34 millions out of 44. Then over three millions are paid to European officials in civil employ. These leave only about 7 millions at the disposal of the Government to be applied to other purposes. Can any one, who realizes what this means, wonder that the Government spends only a miserable three-quarters of a million out of State funds on the education of the people—primary, secondary and higher, all put together! Japan came under the influence of Western ideas only forty years ago, and yet already she is in a line with the most advanced nations of the West in matters of mass education, the State finding funds for the education of every child of school-going age. We have now been a hundred years under England's rule, and yet today four villages out of every five are without a school house and seven children out of eight are allowed to grow up in ignorance and in darkness! Militarism, Service interests and the interest of the English capitalists—all take precedence today of the true interest of the Indian people in the administration of the country. Things cannot be otherwise for it is the Government of the people of one country by the people

of another, and this, as Mill points out, is bound to produce great evils. Now the Congress wants that all this should change and that India should be governed, first and foremost, in the interests of the Indians themselves. This result will be achieved only in proportion as we obtain more and more voice in the government of our country. We are prepared to bear—and bear cheerfully—our fair share of the burdens of the Empire, of which we are not a part, but we want to participate in the privileges also, and we object most strongly to being sacrificed, as at present, in order that others may prosper. Then the Congress asks for a redemption of those promises for the equal treatment of Indians and Englishmen in the Government of this country, which have been solemnly given us by the Sovereigns and the Parliament of England. It is now three-quarters of a century since the Parliament passed an Act, which, the Court of Directors pointed out, meant that there was to be no governing caste in India. The governing caste, however, is still as vigorous, as exclusive as ever. Twenty-five years later, the late Queen-Empress addressed a most memorable Proclamation to the Princess and people of India. The circumstances, connected with the issue of that Proclamation, and its noble contents will always bear witness to the true greatness of that great sovereign and will never cease to shed lustre on the English name. The Proclamation repeats the pledges contained in the Charter Act of 1833, and though an astounding attempt was made less than two years ago by the late Viceroy to explain away its solemn import, the plain meaning of the royal message cannot be altered without attributing what is nothing less than an unworthy subterfuge to a Sovereign, the deep reverence for whose memory is an asset of the Empire. That the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 have created in the eyes of reactionary rulers a most inconvenient situation is clear from a blunt declaration, which another Viceroy of India, the late Lord Lytton, made in a confidential document, which has since seen the light of day. Speaking of our claims and expectations based on the pledges of the Sovereign and the Parliament of England, he wrote; "We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We have

had to choose between prohibiting them (the Natives of India) and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straightforward course.....Since I am writing confidentially, I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and of India, appear to me upto the present moment, unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear." We accept Lord Lytton as an unimpeachable authority on the conduct of the Government in evading the fulfilment of the pledges. We deny his claim to lay down that our "claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled."

Our whole future, it is needless to say, is bound up with this question of the relative position of the two races in this country. The domination of one race over another—specially when there is no great disparity between their intellectual endowments or their general civilization—inflicts great injury on the subject race in a thousand insidious ways. On the moral side, the present situation is steadily destroying our capacity for initiative and dwarfing us as men of action. On the material side, it has resulted in a fearful impoverishment of the people. For a hundred years and more now India has been for members of the dominant race, a country where fortunes were to be made to be taken out and spent elsewhere. As in Ireland, the evil of absentee landlordism, has in the past aggravated the racial domination of the English over the Irish, so in India what may be called absentee capitalism has been added to the racial ascendancy of Englishmen. A great and ruinous drain of wealth from the country has gone on for many years, the not excess of exports over imports (including treasure) during the last forty years amounting to no less than a thousand millions sterling. The steady rise in the death-rate of the country—from 24 per thousand, the average for 1882-84, to 30 per thousand, the average for 1892-94, and 34 per thousand, the present average,—is a terrible and conclusive proof of continuous impoverishment of the mass of our people. India's vast interests—material and moral—no less than the honour of England, demand that the policy of equality for the

two races promised by the Sovereign and by Parliament should be faithfully and courageously carried out.

The Bureaucracy

Gentlemen, as I have already observed, the manner in which the Partition, of Bengal has been carried out furnishes striking illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule. Happily these features are not always so conspicuously in evidence. No one also denies that a large proportion of the members of the bureaucracy bring to their work a high level of ability, a keen sense of duty and a conscientious desire, within the limits of the restricted opportunities permitted by the predominance of other interests, to do what good they can to the people. It is the system that is really at fault—a system which relegates the interests of the people to a very sub-ordinate place and which, by putting too much power into the hands of these men, impairs their sense of responsibility and develops in them a spirit of intolerance of criticism. I know many of these men are on their side constantly smarting under a sense of unfair condemnation by our countrymen. They fail to realize that if the criticism that is passed on their actions is sometimes ill-informed and even unjust this is largely due to the veil of secrecy which carefully hides official proceedings from the view of the people in India.

Moreover theirs are at present all the privileges of position and they must bear without impatience or bitterness its few disadvantages. I have already said that our advance towards our goal can only be gradual. Meanwhile, there is a great deal of work to be done for the country in which officials and non-officials could join hands. A considerable part of the way we could both go together, but it can be only on terms consistent with the self-respect of either side. In old times, British rule was new and its higher standards and its more vigorous purposes excited general admiration, the Englishmen's claim to a privileged position, even outside the sphere of official duties, we allowed to pass unchallenged. That is now no longer possible and those officials, who expect the Indians to approach them with bated breath and whispering humbleness—

and the type is not confined to the new Eastern Province, do more harm to their own class than they imagine. In one respect the gulf between the official and educated classes of the country is bound to widen more and more every day. The latter now clearly see that the bureaucracy is growing frankly selfish and openly hostile to their national aspirations. It was not so in the past. In a most remarkable letter which I had the honour to receive, while in England, two months ago, from Mr. Hodgson Pratt—a great and venerated name among all lovers of peace,—he tells us with what object Western education was introduced into this country. “Fifty years ago,” writes Mr. Pratt, who in those days was a member of the Bengal Civil Service, “while India was still under the government of the East India Company, it was considered both just and wise to introduce measures for national education on a liberal scale, with adequate provision of schools, colleges, and universities. This event was hailed with lively satisfaction by the native population as heralding a new era of social progress, and as satisfying the active intelligence of the Hindus. Now it must be observed that the character of the teaching thus inaugurated by Englishmen would necessarily reflect the ideals which have for centuries prevailed among them. In other words, Indian youths would be brought up to admire our doctrines of political liberty, popular rights, and national independence; nor it could ever have been supposed that these lessons would fall upon deaf ears and cold hearts. On the contrary, the inevitable result of such teaching was clearly perceived by the Government of those days, and was regarded in a generous spirit. In support of this assertion I may mention that at the time of the inauguration of these measures I accompanied the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (Sir Frederick Halliday) on one of his winter tours through the province. Naturally, he called the attention of those who attended the public meetings held by him to the new education policy, and he always took occasion to declare that the schools would promote one of the leading purposes of British rule, which was to prepare the people for self-government. It certainly was not supposed that at any subsequent time a policy would be adopted which would disappoint the legitimate

hopes thus created.” Now, however, that the time has come for the bureaucracy to part with some of its power in favour of the educated classes, all kinds of excuses are brought forward to postpone what is no doubt regarded as yet only a very small fraction of the community. The hollowness of this plea was well exposed by the late Mr. George Yule in his address as President of our National Congress in 1888. Quoting Prof. Tharold Rogers, he pointed out that a hundred years ago, not one man in ten or one woman in twenty knew how to read and write in England. Going another century or two back, he added, the people of England, man and boy, high and low, with the exception of a mere handful, were steeped in the grossest ignorance and yet there was a House of Commons. We have now in this country about 15 million people who can read and write, and about a million of these have come under the influence of some kind of English education. Moreover, what we ask for at present is a voice in the Government of the country, not for the whole population, but for such portion of it as has been qualified by education to discharge properly the responsibilities of such association.

Another argument brought forward in favour of maintaining the present bureaucratic monopoly of power is that though the educated classes make a grievance of it, the mass of the people are quite indifferent in the matter. Now in the first place, this is not true. However, it may suit the interests of the officials to deny the fact, the educated classes are in the present circumstances of India the natural leaders of the people. There is the Vernacular Press, the contents of which do not fail to reach the mass of our population; in a hundred ways they have access to the minds of the latter; and what the educated Indian thinks today, the rest of India thinks tomorrow. Moreover do the officials realize how their contention condemns their rule out of their own mouth? For it means that only as long as the people of India are kept in ignorance and their faculties are forced to lie dormant that they do not raise any objection to the present system of administration. The moment education quickens those faculties and clears their vision, they range themselves against a continuance of the system!

Our Immediate Demands

Gentlemen, a number of important questions will come up before you for discussion during the next two days, and following the practice of previous Congressmen, you will no doubt record after due deliberation, your views on them in the form of resolutions. This is of course necessary; but may I suggest that for purposes of effective agitation in the immediate future, we should now concentrate our main energies on certain selected portions of our programme? Speaking broadly most of the reforms that we have been advocating may be grouped under four heads: (1) those which aim at securing for our people a larger and larger share in the administration and control of our affairs; these include a reform of our Legislative Councils, the appointment of Indians to the Secretary of State's Council and the Executive Councils, in India, and a steady substitution of the Indian for the European agency in the public service of the country; (2) those which seek to improve the methods of administration, such as the separation of Judicial from Executive functions, Police Reform, and so forth; (3) those which propose a readjustment of financial arrangements with the object of securing a reduction of the burdens of the tax-payers and a more efficient application of our resources; under this head come a reduction of military charges, the moderating of land assessments and so forth; and (4) those which urge the adoption of vigorous extension of primary education, facilities for industrial and technical instruction, grants for improved sanitation, and a real attempt to deal with the alarming indebtedness of the peasantry.

Now what I would most earnestly and respectfully suggest is that we would select from each group such reforms as may be immediately urged with the greatest effect and press them forward in this country and in England with all the energy we can command. In my humble opinion our immediate demands should be; (I) A reform of our Legislative Councils, raising the proportion of elected members to one-half, requiring the budgets to be formally passed by the Councils and empowering the members to bring forward amendments, with safeguards for

bringing the debates to a close in a reasonable time. The Presidents of the Councils should have the power of veto. The Viceroy's Legislative Council consists at present 25 members of whom only 5 are elected, one by the Chamber of Commerce of Calcutta—a body of Europeans—and the other four by four provinces. We must ask for the proportion of elected members to be raised to 12. Of this number, two seats may be given one to commerce and one to certain industries and the remaining ten should be assigned to different provinces, two to each of the three older provinces, and one each to the remaining. And, to begin with the right of members to move amendments may be confined to one amendment each.

The two members for Commerce and Industries will generally be Europeans and they will ordinarily vote with Government. Thus even if all the ten provincial members voted together they will be only 10 out of 25. Ordinarily, they will not be able to carry a motion against the Government, but on exceptional occasions they may obtain the support of two or three men from the other side and then the moral effect of the situation will be considerable. In the Provincial Legislative Councils, we must have an increase in the members, each district of a province being empowered, to send a member. The objection that these bodies will in that case be somewhat unwieldy is not entitled to much weight.

(2) The appointment of at least three Indians to the Secretary of State's Council to be returned one each by the three older provinces.

(3) The creation of Advisory Boards in all Districts throughout India, whom the heads of districts should be bound to consult in important matters of administration concerning the public before taking action. For the present their function should be only advisory, the Collectors or District Magistrates being at liberty to set aside their advice at their discretion. Half the members of a Board should be elected representatives of the different Talukas or sub-divisions of the district and the other half should consist of the principal District Officers and such non-official gentlemen as the head of the district may appoint.

These Boards must not be confounded with what are known as District Local Boards. There is at present too much of what may be called Secretariat, with an excessive multiplication of central departments. District administration must be largely free from this and responsible opportunities afforded to the people concerned to influence its course before final decisions are arrived at. If such Boards are created we may in course of time expect them to be entrusted with some real measure of control over the district administration. The late Mr. Ranade used to urge the importance of such Boards very strongly. If ever we are to have real local government in matters of general administration the creation of these Boards will pave the way for it. One great evil of the present system of administration is its secrecy. This will be materially reduced, so far as district administration is concerned, by the step proposed.

(4) The recruitment of the Judicial Branch of the India Civil Service from the legal profession in India.

(5) The separation of Judicial and Executive Functions.

(6) A reduction of military expenditure.

(7) A large extension of primary education.

(8) Facilities for industrial and technical education.

(9) An experimental measure to deal with the indebtedness of the peasantry over a selected area.

I think, Gentlemen, if we now concentrate all our energies on some such programme we may, within a reasonable time, see results which will not be altogether disappointing. One thing is clear. The present is a specially favourable juncture for such an effort. In our own country, there is sure to be a great rebound of public opinion after the repression to which it has been subjected during the last three years. And in England for the first time since the Congress movement began, the Liberal and radical party will come into real power. My recent visit to England, during which I enjoyed somewhat exceptional opportunities to judge the situation, has satisfied me that a strong current has already set in there against that narrow and aggressive imperialism which only the other day seemed to be carrying everything before it. The new Prime Minister is a tried and trusted friend

of freedom. And as regards the new Secretary of State for India, what shall I say? Large number of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a master and the heart hopes and yet trembles as it had never hoped or trembled before. He is the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone; will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country, or will he, too, succumb to the influence of the India Office around him and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster? We shall see; but in any case his appointment as Secretary of State for India indicates how strongly favourable to our cause the attitude of the new Ministry is. Mr. Ellis, the new Under-Secretary of State for India, is openly known to be a friend of our aspirations. A more gratifying combination of circumstances could not be conceived, and it now rests with us to turn it to the best advantage we can for our Motherland.

Conclusion

Gentlemen, one word more and I have done. I have no wish to underrate the difficulties that lie in our path, but I am convinced more than ever that they are not insuperable. Moreover, the real moral interest of a struggle such as we are engaged in lies not so much in the particular—re-adjustments of present institutions which we may succeed in securing, as in the strength that the conflict brings us to be a permanent part of ourselves. The whole life of a people, which is broader and deeper than what is touched by purely political institutions, is enriched even by failures, provided the effort has been all what it should be. For such enrichment the present struggle is invaluable. The true end of our work," said Mr. Ranade nine years ago, "is to renovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty, and developing to the full all his powers. Till so renovated, purified and perfected, we can never hope to be what our ancestors once were—a chosen people, to whom great tasks were allotted and by whom great deeds were performed. Where this feeling animates the worker, it is a matter of comparative indifference in what parti-

cular direction it asserts itself and in what particular method it proceeds to work. With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice and a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation, and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression and sorrow, will then be myths of the past, and the goods will then again descend to the earth and associate with men as they did in times which we now call mythical.” Gentlemen, I can add nothing that may be worthy of being placed by the side of these beautiful words. I will only call to your minds the words of another great teacher of humanity, who asks us to keep our faith in spite of trying circumstances, and warns us against the presumption of despairing because we do not see the whole future clearly before our eyes:

“Our times are in His hand,
Who saith “A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half, trust God; see all, nor be afraid”

6

UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you most sincerely for honouring me for the third time with the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. I hope I shall have your cordial help and support

I may here express my deep sorrow at the loss India has suffered in the deaths of Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, Justice Badruddin Tyabji, Mr. Anand Mohan Bose and Mr. Veeraraghava Chariar.

I offer my sincere thanks to the "Parliament Branch of the United Irish League," the Breakfast Meeting, the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club and the National Democratic League for their enthusiastic and cordial godspeed to me.

This is the first Congress after its having come of age. It is time that we should carefully consider what the position of the Indians is at present and what their future should be.

In considering this important matter I do not intend to repeat my lamentations over the past. I want only to look to the future.

The work of the Congress consists of two parts :

First and most important is the question of the policy and principles of the system of Government under which India ought to be governed in the future.

* Presidential address delivered by Dadabhai Naoroji at the Calcutta Congress held on 26-29 December, 1906.

Second is to watch the operation of the administration as it now exists, to propose from time to time any reforms and changes that may be deemed necessary to be made in the various departments, till the present system of government is radically altered and based upon right principles and policy in the accomplishment of the first part mentioned above.

I desire to devote my address mainly to the first part of the work of the Congress, viz., the policy and principles which ought to govern India in future.

What position do the Indians hold in the British Empire? Are they British citizens or not is my first question? I say we are British citizens and are entitled to and claim all British citizen's rights.

I shall first lay before you my reasons for claiming that we are British citizens.

Reason I. The Birthright

The acknowledgement of this birthright was declared on the very first occasion when England obtained the very first territorial and sovereign possession in India. The British statesmen of the day at once acted upon the fundamental basis of the British Constitution and character that anyone who came howsoever and wheresoever, under the British flag was a free citizen as "if born and living in England."

The fundamental basis in the words of the present Prime Minister is: "Freedom is the very breath of our life ... We stand for liberty, our policy is the policy of freedom." In the words of Mr. Morley: "Yes, gentlemen, the sacred word "free" which represents as Englishmen have always thought until today, the noblest aspiration that can animate the breast of man." This birthright to the "free" or to have freedom is our right from the very beginning of our connection with England we came under the British flag.

When Bombay was acquired as the very first territorial

possession; the government of the day in the very first grant of territorial rights to the East India Company declared thus :

(Extract from the "Grant to the First East India Company of the Island of Bombay, dated 27th March, 1669.)

"And it is declared that all persons being His Majesty's subjects inhabiting within the said Island and their children and their posterity born within the limits thereof shall be deemed free denizens and natural subjects as if living and born in England."

And further all the terms of the first grant are extended in it to all future British territorial acquisitions. Thus is the claim of Indians to be "free" and to all the rights of British natural subjects as "if living and born in England" are distinctly acknowledged and declared from the very first political connection with England.

Having given the declaration made some two and a half centuries back in the 17th century that the moment we Indians came under the British flag we were "free" citizens, I next give you what two of the prominent statesmen of this, the 20th century have said. When the Boers were defeated and subjugated, and came under the British flag, the present Prime Minister said (14th June 1901) :

"These people with whom we are dealing are not only going to be our fellow citizens, they are our fellow citizens already."

Sir William Harcourt at the same time said : "This is the way in which you propose to deal with your fellow citizens."

Thus the moment a people came under the British flag they are "free" and British "fellow-citizens." We Indians have been free British citizens as our birthright, as "if born and living in England" from the first moment we came under the British flag.

The Boer war cost British more than two hundred millions

and 20,000 dead, and 20,000 wounded. India, on the other hand, has enriched Britain instead of costing anything—and the blood that was shed was largely Indian blood—and yet this is a strange contrast. The Boers have already obtained self-government in a few years after conquest, while India has not yet received self-government though it is more than 200 years from the commencement of the political connection.

All honour and glory to the British instincts and principles and to the British statesmen of the 17th century. The Liberals of the present day and the Liberal Government have every right to be proud of those “old principles”, and now that a happy and blessed revival of those sacred old principles has taken place, the present government ought fairly to be expected to act upon those old principles, and to acknowledge and give effect to the birthright of Indians as “if living and born in England.” England is bound to do this. Our British rights are beyond all question. Every British Indian subject has franchise in England as a matter of course, and even to become a Member of Parliament. Nobody in England dreams of objecting to it. Once in my case, from party motives, an objection was suggested to entering my name on the register as an elector, and the revising barrister at once brushed aside the objection for, that as an Indian, I was a British citizen.

Reason II : Pledged Rights

The grant to the first East India Company cited in Reason I is both a declaration of the rights of Indians as British citizens as well as a pledge of those rights by that declaration.

Queen Victoria, in her letter to Lord Derby asking him to write the Proclamation himself, said :

“And point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown and prosperity flowing in the train of civilization.”

Thereupon the Proclamation then declared and pledged unreservedly and most solemnly calling God to witness and bless :

“We hold ourselves bound to the Natives of our Indian Territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to our other subjects, and these obligations by the blessing of Almighty God we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.”

Can there be a more sacred and solemn pledge before God, and Man ?

On the occasion of the Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India, she sent a telegram to Lord Lytton which he read in the open Durbar consisting of both Princes and People. In this telegram the Queen Empress said :

“That from the highest to the humblest all may feel that under our rule, the great principles of liberty, equity and justice are secured to them, and that to promote their happiness, to add to their prosperity and advance their welfare are ever present aims and objects of our Empire.”

And it is clear that this object of promoting our happiness etc., etc., can only be attained by our enjoyment of the principles of liberty, equity and justice, i.e. we must have the British liberty of governing ourselves.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of 1887, the Queen Empress again pledged and emphasised the pledges of the Proclamation thus :

“Allusion is made to Proclamation issued on the occasion of my assumption of the direct government of India as the Charter of the liberties of the Princes and people of India. It has always been and will be continued to be my earnest desire that the principles of that Proclamation should be unswervingly maintained.”

We are now asking nothing more or less than the liberties of our Charter,—our rights of British Citizenship.

The present King-Emperor has pledged :

“I shall endeavour to follow the great example of the first

Queen-Empress to work for the general well-being of my Indian subjects of all ranks.”

Again the King-Emperor in his speech on 19th February 1906, and :

“It is my earnest hope that in these Colonies as elsewhere *throughout my dominions* (the Italics are mine) the grant of free institutions will be followed by an increasing prosperity and loyalty to the Empire”.

And the Prime Minister clinches the whole that “good government could never be a substitute for government by the people themselves.”

How much less is then an economically evil government and constitutionally an unconstitutional despotic government, a substitute for self-government, and how much absolutely necessary it is to produce “increasing prosperity and loyalty to the Empire,” by “the grant of free insitutions.”

With the solemn pledges I have mentioned above, we have every right to claim an honourable fulfilment of all our British pledged rights. And so we claim all British rights as our birth-right and as our solemnly pledged rights. Britain’s duty, humanity, honour, instincts and traditions for freedom, solemn pledges, conscience, righteousness, and civilization demand the satisfaction to us of our British rights.

Reason III : Reparation

All our sufferings and evils of the past centuries demand before God and Man a reparation, which we may fairly expect from the present revival of the old noble British instincts of liberty and self-government. I do not enter into our past sufferings as I have already said at the outset.

Reason IV : Conscience

The British people would not allow themselves to be subjected for a single day to such an unnatural system of govern-

ment as the one which has been imposed upon India for nearly a century and a half. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman has made a happy quotation from Mr. Bright : "I remember John Bright quoting in the House of Commons on the occasion two lines of a poet with reference to political matters :

"There is on Earth a yet diviner thing,
Veiled though it be, than Parliament of King".

Then Sir Henry asks : "What is that diviner thing ? It is the human conscience inspiring human opinion and human sympathy." I ask them to extend that human conscience. "The diviner thing," to India in the words of Mr. Morley :

"It will be a bad day indeed if we have one conscience for the Mother Country and another conscience for all that vast territory over which your eye does not extend."

And now the next question is—What are the British rights which we have a right to "claim ?"

This is not the occasion to enter into any details or argument. I keep to broad lines.

(1) Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments and details is in the hands of the people themselves of that country, so should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments and details should be in the hands of the people themselves of India.

This is not only a matter of right and matter of the aspirations of the educated—important enough as these matters are—but it is far more an absolute necessity as the only remedy for the great inevitable economic evil which Sir John Shore pointed out a hundred and twenty years ago, and which is the fundamental cause of the present drain and poverty. The remedy is absolutely necessary for the material, intellectual, political, social, industrial and every possible progress and welfare of the people of India.

(2) As in the United Kingdom and the Colonies all taxa-

tion and legislation and the power of spending the taxes are in the hands of the representatives of the people of those countries, so should also be the rights of the people of India.

(3) All financial relations between England and India must be just and on a footing of equality i e., whatever money India may find towards expenditure in any department—Civil or Military or Naval—to the extent of that share should Indians share in all the benefits of that expenditure in salaries, pensions, emoluments, materials, etc., as a partner in the Empire, as she is always declared to be. We do not ask favours. We want only justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word—“Self-government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.

Mr. Morley says very truly and emphatically (Banquet, King’s Hall, Holborn, 4th June 1901) :

“But this I do say that political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope.”

So, for India also, there can be no national greatness, strength and hope except by the right political principles of self-government.

Now the next important question is, whether it is practicable to grant these rights of self-government at once or when and in what way? Nobody would, I think, say that the whole present machinery can be suddenly broken up at once and the rights which I have defined of self-government can be at once introduced.

Right No. 1 : Employment in the Public Services

The right of placing all administration in every department in the hands of the people of India, has the time arrived to do anything loyally, faithfully and systematically as a beginning at once, so that it may automatically develop into the full realisation of the right of self-government?

I say,—yes. Not only has the time fully arrived, but had arrived long past, to make this beginning. The statesmen of nearly three-quarters of a century ago not only considered the point of making a beginning, not merely made a pious declaration, but they actually passed an Act of Parliament for the purpose. Had that Act been honourably and faithfully fulfilled by the Government from that time to this, both England and India would have been in the position, not of bewailing the present poverty, wretchedness and dissatisfaction of the Indian people, but of rejoicing in the prosperity of India and of still greater prosperity of England herself.

In the thirties of the last century, England achieved the highest glory of civilization by its emancipations of the body and soul of man—by abolishing slavery and by freedom of conscience to enjoy all the rights of British citizenship. During these glorious days of English history, the statesmen of the time did not forget their duty to the people of India. They specially and openly considered the question of self-government of India, not only in connection with Britain, but even with the result of entire independence from Britain. When the Act of 1833 was passed Macaulay made that memorable speech about the duty of Britain towards India of which Britain shall for ever be proud. I cannot quote that whole speech here. Every word of it is worth study and consideration from the statesmen of the day. I shall give only a few extracts. He first said : “I must say that, to the last day of my life, I shall be proud of having been one of those who assisted in the framing of the Bill which contains that Clause”....“It would be on the most selfish view of the case far better for us that the people of India were well-governed and independent of us than ill-governed and subject to us.”.... “We shall never consent to administer the pousa (a prepartion of opium) to a whole community—to stupify and paralyse a great people, whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control.” “We are free, we are civilized, to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilization.”... “I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us and it

is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour.”...“To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would, indeed, be a title to glory all our own.”

Such was the glorious spirit in, and auspices under, which was enacted in Macaulay’s words “that wise, that benevolent, that noble clause.”

“That no native of the said territory, nor any natural born subjects of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company.”

I would not repeat here what I have often stated about this clause. Sufficient to say that simultaneous examinations in India have been declared authoritatively as the only honourable fulfilment of the clause.

Here is, then, the beginning that can be made at once not as a new thing but as one fully considered and settled by Act of Parliament 73 years ago. The power is ready in the hands of the Secretary of State for India to be put into execution at once without the necessity of any reference to Parliament or any authority.

And, in connection with this step, I would earnestly urge upon the Secretary of State to retrace the pernicious step which has lately been taken in India of abolishing competition for the services to which admission is made directly in India. In England competition is the basis of all first admissions in all the services and the same must be the basis in India as the fairest and most in accordance with justice.

This beginning will be the key, the most effective remedy for the chief economic and basic evil of the present system.

Mr. Morley has truly said : “But if you meddle wrongly with economic things, gentlemen, be very sure you are then

going to the very life, to the heart, to the core of your national existence.”

And so the economic muddle of the existing policy is going to the life, to the heart, to the core of our national existence. A three-fold wrong is inflicted upon us, i.e., of depriving us of wealth, work and wisdom, of every thing, in short, worth living for. And this beginning will begin to strike at the root of the muddle. The reform of the alternation of the services from European to Indian is the key-note of the whole.

On the score of efficiency also foreign service can never be efficient or sufficient. Sir William Hunter has said : “If we are to govern the Indian people efficiently and cheaply we must govern by means of themselves.” The Duke of Devonshire, as Indian Secretary, has said (23rd August 1883) : “There can in my opinion be very little doubt that India is insufficiently governed.” In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise.

After the simultaneous examinations are carried on for some years, it will be time to transfer the examinations altogether to India to complete the accomplishment of the rights (No. 1) of self-government without any disturbance in the smooth working of the administration.

Co-ordinately with this important beginning for Right (No. 1) it is urgent to expedite this object that education must be most vigorously disseminated among the people—free and compulsory primary education, and free higher education of every kind. The Indian people will hail with the greatest satisfaction any amount of expenditure for the purpose of education. It was free education that I had at the expense of the people that made me and others of my fellow-students and subsequent fellow-workers to give their best to the service of the people for the promotion of their welfare.

Education on the one hand, and actual training in administration on the other hand, will bring the accomplishment of self-government far more speedily than many imagine.

Heavy expenditure should be no excuse. In fact if financial justice, to which I shall refer hereafter, is done in the relations between England and India, there will be ample provision—even from the poor revenues of India—and with every addition of Indians in place of Europeans, the resources of India for all necessary purposes will go on increasing.

Right No. 2 : Representation

In England itself Parliamentary Government existed for some hundreds of years before even the rich and middle classes and the mass of the people had any voice or vote in it.

Macaulay pointed out in 1831 that the people living in the magnificent palaces surrounding Regent's Park and in other such places were unrepresented. It is only so late as 1832 that the middle classes obtained their vote, and it is only so late as 1885 that most of the mass of the people obtained their franchise. Women have no vote. Adult franchise is yet in struggle.

It is no use telling us, therefore, that a good beginning cannot be made now in India for what Mr. Gladstone called "living representation." The only thing needed is the willingness of the Government. The statesmen at the helm of the present government are quite competent and able to make a good beginning—such a systematic beginning as that it may naturally in no long time develop itself into full legislatures of self-government like those of the self-governing colonies. I need not go into any details here of the scope and possibilities of representation. The educated and thinking classes in India who have attended English schools and colleges are not the only people to be reckoned with. There is a large body who now are informed of the events of the world and of all British institutions by the vernacular press and literature in their own language.

The peasants of Russia are fit for and obtained the Duma from the greatest autocrat in the world, and the leading statesman, the Prime Minister of the free British Empire, proclaimed

to the world "the Duma is dead, long live the Duma!" Surely the fellow-citizens of that statesman and the free citizens of that Empire by birthright and pledged rights are far more entitled to self government, a constitutional representative system, than the peasants of Russia. I do not despair. It is futile to tell me that we must wait till all the people are ready. The British people did not so wait for their Parliament. We are not allowed to be fit for 150 years. We can never be fit till we actually undertake the work and the responsibility. While China in the East and Persia in the West of Asia are awakening and Japan has already awakened and Russia is struggling for emancipation—and all of them despotisms—can the free citizens of the British Indian Empire continue to remain subject to despotism—the people who were among the first civilizers of the world? Modern world owes no little gratitude to these early civilizers of the human race. Are the descendants of the earliest civilizers to remain, in the present times of spreading emancipation, under the barbarous system of despotism, unworthy of British instincts, principles and civilization?

Right No. 3 : Just Financial Relations

The right requires no delay or training. If the British Government wills to do what is just and right, this justice towards self-government can be done at once.

First of all take the European Army expenditure. The Government of India in its despatch of 25th March 1890 says : "Millions of money have been spent on increasing the Army in India, on armaments, and on fortifications to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent the invasions of the warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but, to maintain the supremacy of British Power in the East."

Again the Government of India says :

"It would be much nearer the truth to affirm that the Imperial Government keeps in India and quarters upon the re-

venues of that country as large a portion of its army as it thinks can possibly be required to maintain its dominion there, that it habitually treats that portion of its army as a reserve force available for imperial purposes; that it has uniformly detached European regiments from the garrison of India to take part in imperial wars whenever it has been found necessary or convenient to do so; and more than that it has drawn not less freely upon the native army of India towards the maintenance of which it contributes nothing to aid it in contests outside of India with which the Indian Government has had little or no concern."

Such is the testimony of the Government of India that the European Army is for Imperial purposes.

Now I give the view taken in the India Office itself.

Sir James Peile was a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and represented the Indian Secretary on the Royal Commission (Welby's) on Indian expenditure. Sir James Peile, in a motion, after pointing out that the military policy which regulated Indian Military expenditure was not exclusively India, urged that :

"It is worthy of consideration how far it is equitable to charge on a dependency the whole military cost of that policy, when that dependency happens to be the only part of the Empire which has a land frontier adjacent to the territory of a great European power."

Here then these extracts of the Government of India and the India Office show that the European Army expenditure is entirely for British imperial purposes, and yet with flagrant injustice the burden is thrown by the Treasury upon the helpless Indian people.

In the same way all the Government expenditure in England which entirely goes to the benefit of the people in England, and which is for British purposes, is imposed on the Indian people while the Colonies do not pay any portion for

similar expenditure in England. This expenditure should in common justice not be imposed on India. It is unjust. Here then, if we are relieved of burdens which ought not in common justice to be imposed upon us, our revenues, poor as they are at present, will supply ample means for education and many other reforms and improvements which are needed by us. This question is simply a matter of financial justice. I have put it on a clear just principle and on that principle India can be quite ready to find the money and its own men for all her own needs—military, naval, civil or any other. For imperial expenditure we must have our share in the services in proportion to our contribution.

These just financial relations can be established at once. They require no delay or preparation. It only needs the determination and will of the British Government to do justice. Lastly as to self-government. If the British people and statesmen make up their mind to do their duty towards the Indian people they have every ability and statesmanship to devise means to accord self-government within no distant time. If there is the will and the conscience there is the way.

Now I come to the most crucial question—particularly crucial to myself personally.

I have been for some time past repeatedly asked whether I really have, after more than half a century of my own personal experience, such confidence in the honour and good faith of British statesmen and government as to expect that our just claim to self-government as British citizens will be willingly and gracefully accorded to us with every honest effort in their power, leaving alone and forgetting the past.

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall give you a full and free answer.

In 1853 when I made my first little speech at the inauguration of the Bombay Association, in perfect innocence of heart influenced by my English education into great admiration for

the character, instincts and struggles for liberty of the British people, I expressed my faith and confidence in the British Rulers in a short speech from which I give a short extract :

“When we see that our Government is often ready to assist us in everything calculated to benefit us, we had better than merely complain and grumble, point out in a becoming manner what our real wants are.” And I also said :

“If an association like this be always in readiness to ascertain by strict enquiries the probable good or bad effects of any proposed measure and, whenever necessary, to memorialise Government on behalf of the people with respect to them, our kind Government will not refuse to listen to such memorials.” Such was my faith. It was this faith of the educated of the time that made Sir Bartle Frere make the remark which Mr. Fawcett quoted, *viz.*, that he had been much struck with the fact that the ablest exponents of English policy and our best coadjutors in adapting that policy to the wants of the various nations occupying Indian soil were to be found among the Natives who had received a high-class English education. And now, owing to the non-fulfilment of solemn pledges, what a change has taken place in the mind of the educated !

Since my early efforts, I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel.

My disappointments have not been of the ordinary kind but far worse and keener. Ordinarily a person fights—and if he fails he is disappointed. But I fought and won on several occasions, but the executive did not let us have the fruit of those victories—disappointments quite enough, as I have said, to break one’s heart. For instance, the “statutory” Civil Service, Simultaneous Examinations, Lord Lawrence Scholarships Royal Commission, etc., I am thankful that the repayment from the treasury of some unjust charges has been carried out, though the Indian Secretary’s salary is not yet transferred to the Treasury as it was hoped.

But I have not despaired. Not only that I have not despaired, but at this moment, you may think it strange, I stand before you with hopefulness. I have not despaired for one reason—and I am hopeful for another reason.

I have not despaired under the influence of the good English word which has been the rule of my life. That word is "Persevere." In any movement, great or small, you must persevere to the end. You cannot stop at any stage, disappointments notwithstanding, or you lose all you have gained and find it far more difficult afterwards even to begin again. As we proceed we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage, but persevere we must to the end. If our cause is good and just, as it is, we are sure to triumph in the end. So I have not despaired.

Now the reason of my hopefulness which I feel at this moment after all my disappointments. And this also under the influence of one word "Revival"—the present "revival" of the true old spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions in the hearts of the leading statesmen of the day. I shall now place before you the declarations of some of the leading statesmen of the day and then you will judge that my faith and hope are well-founded, whether they will be justified or not by future events.

Here, I give a few of those declaration—but I give an Appendix A of some of these declarations out of many.

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman

"We believe in self-government. We treat it not as an odious necessity, not as a foolish theory to which unfortunately the British Empire is committed. We treat it as a blessing and a healing, a sobering and a strengthening influence." (Bradford, 15.5.1901)

"I remain as firm a believer as ever I was, in the virtue of self-government." (Ayr, 29-10-1902)

“But here is another—Self-Government and popular control—and we believe in that principle.”

Mr. John Morley

“Yes, gentlemen, the sacred word ‘free’ which represented, as Englishmen have always thought until today, the noblest aspirations that can animate the breast of man.” (Palmerston Club, 9-6-1900)

“In his view the root of good government was not to be found in bureaucracy or pedantocracy. They must seek to rouse up the free and spontaneous elements lying deep in the hearts and minds of the people of the country.” (Arbroath, 23-10-1903)

The study of the present revival of the spirit, instincts and traditions of Liberty and Liberalism among the Liberal statesmen of the day has produced in my heart full expectation that the end of the evil system, and the dawn of a Righteous and Liberal policy of freedom and self government, are at hand for India. I trust that I am justified in my expectations and hopefulness.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have all the powerful moral forces of justice, righteousness and honour of Britain, but our Birthright and pledged rights and the absolute necessity and humanity of ending quickly all the sufferings of the masses of the people, from poverty, famine, plagues, destitution and degradation etc. On our sides if we use those moral forces, which are very effective on a people like the British people, we must, we are bound to win. What is wanted for us is to learn the lesson from Englishmen themselves—to agitate most largely and most perseveringly, by petitions, demonstrations and meetings, all quite peacefully but enthusiastically conducted. Let us not throw away our rights and moral forces which are so overwhelming on our side. I shall say something again on this subject.

With such very hopeful and promising views and declara-

tions some of the leaders of the present Government, we have also coming to our side more and more Parliament, press and platform. We have some 200 members in the Indian Parliamentary Committee. The Labour Members, the Irish Nationalist Members, and the Radicals are sympathetic with us. We have several Liberal papers such as "The Daily News," "The Tribune," "The Daily Chronicle," "Justice," "Investors' Review," "Reynolds," "New Age," and several others taking a juster view of India's rights and needs. We must make "India" a powerful organ. We have all sections of the Labour and Democratic Party, the British Nationalist Party, the Radicals and Liberals generally taking larger interest in Indian matters. The large section of the British people to whom conscience and righteousness are above every possible worldly thing, are also awakening to a sense of their duty to the vast population of India in their dire distress and poverty, with all its dreadful consequences. When I was in Parliament and the only Indian, I had the support of the Irish, Radical and Labour Members. I never felt helpless and alone, and I succeeded in several of my efforts. We must have many Indian Members in Parliament till we get self-government. Under such favourable circumstances let us not fail to make the most of our opportunity for our political emancipation. Let us, it is true, at the same time do, what is in our power, to advance our Social and Industrial progress. But for our political emancipation, it will be a great folly and misfortune for us to miss this good fortune when it has at last come to us, though I fully admit we had enough of disappointments to make us lose heart and confidence.

I base my hope upon the "revival" of the old British love of liberty and self-government, of honour for pledges, of our rights of fellow British citizenship. Within the short life, that may yet be vouchsafed to me, I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable and conscientious adoption of the policy for self-government for India—and a beginning made at once towards that end.

I have now expressed to you my hopes and reasons for

such hopes for ourselves. But as the Moral Law, the greatest force of the universe, has it,—in our good will be England's own greatest good. Bright has wisely said : "The good of England must come through the channels of the good of India. . . . In order that England may become rich, India itself must become rich." Mr. Morley has rightly said : "No gentlemen, every single right thing that is done by the Legislature, however moderate be its area, every single right thing is sure to lead to the doing of a great number of unforeseen right things." (Dundee, 9-12-1889). If India is allowed to be prosperous by self-government, as the Colonies have become prosperous by self-government, what a vista of a glory and benefits open up for the citizens of the British Empire, and for mankind, as an example, and proof of the supremacy of the moral law and true civilization!

While we put the duty of leading us on to self-government in the heads of the present British statesmen, we have also the duty upon ourselves to do all we can to support those statesmen by, on the one hand, preparing our Indian people for the right understanding, exercise and enjoyment of self-government and on the other hand, of convincing the British people that we justly claim and must have all British Rights. I put before the Congress my suggestions for their consideration. To put the matter in right form, we should send our "Petition of Rights" to His Majesty the King-Emperor, to the House of Commons and to the House of Lords. By the British Bill of Rights of 1689—by the 5th Clause—"the subjects have the right to present petitions to the Sovereign."

The next thing I suggest for your considerations, is that the well-to do Indians should raise a large fund of patriotism. With this fund we should organise a body of able men and good speakers, to go to all the nooks and corners of India and inform the people in their own languages of our British rights and how to exercise and enjoy them. Also to send to England another body of able speakers, and to provide means to go throughout the country and by large meetings to convince the British people that we justly claim and must have all British

rights of self-government. By doing that I am sure that the British conscience will triumph and the British people will support the present statesmen, in their work of giving India responsible self-government in the shortest possible period. We must have a great agitation in England, as well as here. The struggle against the Corn Laws cost, I think, two millions, and there was a great agitation. Let us learn to help ourselves in the same way.

I have said at the beginning that the duties of this Congress are two-fold. And of the two, the claim to a change of present policy leading of self-government is the chief and most important work.

The second part of the work is the vigilant watch over the inevitable and unnecessary defects of the present machinery of the Administration as it exists and as long as it exists. And as the fundamental principles of the present Administration are unsound there are inherent evils, and others are naturally ever arising from them. These the Congress has to watch and adopt means to remedy them, as far as possible, till self-government is attained, though it is only when self-government is attained that India will be free from its present evils and consequent sufferings. This part of the work the Congress has been doing very largely during all the past twenty-one years and the Subjects-committee will place before you various resolutions necessary for the improvement of the existing administration, as far as such unnatural and uneconomic administration can be improved. I would not have troubled you more but that I should like to say a few words upon some topics connected with the second part of the work of the Congress—Bengal Partition and *Swadeshi* movement.

In the Bengal Partition, the Bengalees have a just and great grievance. It is a bad blunder for England. I do not despair but that this blunder; I hope, may yet be rectified. This subject is being so well thrashed out by the Bengalees themselves that I need not say anything more about it. But in connection with it we hear a great deal about agitators and

agitation. Agitation is the life and soul of the whole political, social and industrial history of England. It is by agitation the English have accomplished their most glorious achievements, their prosperity, their liberties and, in short, their first place among the nations of the world.

The whole life of England, every day, is all agitation. You do not open your paper in the morning but read from beginning to end it is all agitation—Congresses and Conferences—Meetings and Resolutions—without end, for a thousand and one movements local and national. From the Prime Minister to the humblest politician, his occupation is agitation for everything he wants to accomplish. The whole Parliament, Press and Platform is simply all agitation. Agitation is the civilized, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force when possible. The subject is very tempting. But I shall not say more than that the Indian journalists are mere Matriculators while the Anglo-Indian journalists are Masters of Arts in the University of British Agitators. The former are only the pupils of the latter, and the Anglo-Indian journalists ought to feel proud that their pupils are doing credit to them. Perhaps a few words from an English statesman will be more sedative and satisfactory.

Macaulay has said in one of his speeches :

“I hold that we have owed to agitation a long series of beneficent reforms which could have been effected in no other way . . . the truth is that agitation is inseparable from popular government. . . . Would the slave-trade ever have been abolished without agitation? Would slavery ever have been abolished without agitation?”

For every movement in England—hundreds, local and national—the chief weapons are agitation by meetings, demonstrations and petitions to Parliament. These petitions are not any begging for any favours any more than that the conventional “Your obedient servant” in letters makes a man an obedient servant. It is the conventional way of approaching higher authorities. The petitions are claims for rights or for

justice or for reforms,—to influence and put pressure on Parliament by showing how the public regard any particular matter. The fact that we have more or less failed hitherto, is not because we have petitioned too much but that we have petitioned too little. One of the factors that carries weight in Parliament is the evidence that the people interested in any question are really in earnest. Only the other day Mr. Asquith urged as one of his reasons against women's franchise, that he did not see sufficient evidence to show that the majority of the women themselves were earnest to acquire the franchise. We have not petitioned or agitated enough at all in our demands. In every important matter we must petition Parliament with hundreds and thousands of petitions—with hundreds of thousands of signatures from all parts of India. Taking one present instance in England, the Church party has held till the beginning of October last 1,400 meetings known, and many more unknown, against the Education Bill and petitioned with three-quarters of a million signatures and many demonstrations. Since then they have been possibly more and more active. Agitate, agitate over the whole length and breadth of India in every nook and corner—peacefully of course—if we really mean to get justice from John Bull. Satisfy him that we are in earnest. The Bengalees, I am glad, have learnt the lesson and have led the march. All India must learn the lesson—of sacrifice of money and of earnest personal work.

Agitate; agitate means inform. Inform, inform the Indian people what their rights are and why and how they should obtain them, and inform the British people of the rights of the Indian people and why they should grant them. If we do not speak they say we are satisfied. If we speak, we become agitators! The Indian people are properly asked to act constitutionally while the government remains unconstitutional and despotic.

Next about the "settled fact." Every Bill defeated in Parliament is a "settled fact." Is it not? And the next year it makes its appearance again. The Education Act of 1902 was a settled fact. An Act of Parliament, was it not? And

now within a short time what a turmoil is it in? And what an agitations and excitement has been going on about it and is still in prospect! It may lead to a clash between the two Houses of Parliament. There is nothing as an eternal "settled fact." Times change, circumstances are misunderstood or changed, better light and understanding or new forces come into play, and what is settled today may become obsolete tomorrow.

The organizations which I suggest, and which I may call a band of political missionaries in all the Provinces, will serve many purposes at once—to inform the people of their rights as British citizens, to prepare them to claim those rights by petitions and when the rights are obtained, as sooner or later they must be obtained, to exercise and enjoy them.

"Swadeshi" is not a thing of today. It has existed in Bombay as far as I know for many years past. I am a free-trader, I am a member, and in the Executive Committee of the Cobden Club for 20 years, and yet I say that *Swadeshi* is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle. As long as the economic condition remains unnatural and impoverishing by the necessity of supplying every year some Rs. 20,00,00,000 for the salary, pensions, &c., of the children of a foreign country at the expense and impoverishment of the children of India, to talk of applying economic laws to the condition of India is adding insult to injury. I have said so much about this over and over again that I would not say more about it here—I refer to my book. I ask any Englishman whether Englishmen would submit to this unnatural economic muddle of India for a single day in England, leave alone 150 years? No, never. No, ladies and gentlemen, England will never submit to it. It is, what I have already quoted in Mr. Morley's words, it is "the meddling wrongly with economic thing that is going to the very life, to the very heart, to the very core of our national existence".

Among the duties which I have said are incumbent upon the Indians, there is one, which, though I mention last, is not

the least. I mean a thorough political union among the Indian people of all creeds and classes. I make an appeal to all—call it mendicant if you like—I am not ashamed of being a mendicant in any good cause and under necessity for any good cause. I appeal to the Indian people for this, because it is in their own hands only just as I appeal to the British people for things that are entirely in their hands. In this appeal for a thorough union for political purposes among all the people I make a particular one to my friends, the Mohammedans. They are a manly people. They have been rulers both in and out of India. They are rulers this day both in and out of India. They have the highest Indian Prince rulling over the largest Native State, viz., H.H. the Nizam. Among other Mohammedan Princes they have Junagad, Radhanpur, Bhopal and others.

Notwithstanding their backward education, they have the pride of having had in all India the first Indian Barrister in Mr. Budruddin Tyabji and first Solicitor in Mr. Kamrudin Tyabji, two Mohammedan brothers. What a large share of Bombay commerce is in the hands of Mohammedans is well-known. Their chief purpose and effort at present must be to spread education among themselves. In this matter among their best friends have been Sir Syed Ahmed and Justice Tyabji in doing their utmost to promote education among them. Once they bring themselves in education in a line with the Hindus, they have nothing to fear. They have in them the capacity, energy and intellect, to hold their own and to get their due share in all the walks of life—of which the State Services are but a small part. State services are not everything.

Whatever voice I can have I wish Government would give every possible help to promote education among the Mohammedans. Once self-government is attained then will there be prosperity enough for all, but not till then. The thorough union, therefore, of all the people for their emancipation is an absolute necessity.

All the people in their political position are in one boat. They must sink or swim together. Without this union all

efforts will be vain. There is the common saying—but also the best commonsense—“United we stand—divided we fall.”

There is one other circumstance, I may mention here. If I am right, I am under the impression that the bulk of the Bengalee Mohammedans were Hindus by race and blood only a few generations ago. They have the tie of blood and kinship. Even now a great mass of the Bengalee Mohammedans are not to be easily distinguished from their Hindu brothers. In many places they join together in their social joys and sorrows. They cannot divest themselves from the natural affinity of common blood. On the Bombay side, the Hindus and Mohammedans of Gujarat all speak the same language, Gujarati, and are of the same stock, and all the Hindus and Mohammedans of Maharastic Annan—all speak the same language, Marathi, and are of the same stock—and so I think it is all over India, excepting in North India where there are the descendants of the original Mohammedans invaders, but they are now also the people of India.

Sir Syed Ahmed was a nationalist to the backbone. I will mention an incident that happened to myself with him. On his first visit to England, we happened to meet together in the house of Sir C. Wingfield. He and his friends were waiting and I was shown into the same room. One of his friends recognising me and introduced me to him. As soon as he heard my name he at once held me in strong embrace and expressed himself very much pleased. In various ways, I knew that his heart was in the welfare of all India as one nation. He was a large and liberal-minded patriot. When I read his life some time ago I was inspired with respect and admiration for him. As I cannot find my copy of his life I take the opportunity of repeating some of his utterances which Sir Henry Cotton has given in *India* of 12th October last .

“Mohammedans and Hindus were,” he said, “the two eyes of India.” “Injure the one and you injure the other.” We should try to becc me one in heart and soul and act in unison; if united, we can support each other, if not, the effect of one

against the other will tend to the destruction and downfall of both.”

He appreciated when he found worth and freely expressed it. He said : “I assure you that the Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can truly say that they are really the head and crown of all the communities of Hindustan. In the word “nation” I include both Hindus and Moham-medans, because that is the only meaning which I can attach to it.”

Such was the wise and patriotic counsel of that great man and our Mohammedan friends will, I hope, take it to heart. I repeat once more that our emancipation depends upon the thorough union of all the people of Indian without any obstruction.

I have often read about the question of a constitution for the Congress. I think the gentlemen who raise this question would be the proper persons to prepare one like a Bill in the House of Common in all its details. The Congress then can consider it and deal with it as the majority may decide.

Let every one of us do the best he can, do all in harmony for the common object of self-government.

Lastly, the question of social reforms and industrial progress—each of them needs its own earnest body of workers. Each requires for it separate devoted attention. All the three great purposes—Political, Social and Industrial—must be set working side by side. The progress in each will have its influence on the others. But, as Mr. Morley truly and with deep insight says : “Political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope,” and his other important utterance which I repeat with this one sums up the whole position of the Indian problem. He says : “The meddling wrongly with economic things, that is going to the very life, to the very heat, to the very core of our national existence.”

This meddling wrongly with economic things is the whole evil from which India suffers—and the only remedy for it is—“Political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope.” And these political principles are summed up in self-government. Self-government is the only and chief remedy. In self-government lies our hope, strength and greatness.

I recommend to your serious notice the treatment of British Indians in South Africa.

I give a small Appendix B of some facts and figures which I need not read now.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have finished my task. I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen, I say : be united, persevere, and achieve self-government so that the millions now perishing poverty, famine and plague, and the score of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilized nations of the world.

BE BOLD, BOLDER, NOT TOO BOLD*

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—My first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me in asking me to take the chair. Believe me, I am more than grateful for the distinction you have conferred on me, unsought and unsolicited—a proud distinction, the proudest in your power to confer, but a distinction which carries with it a very heavy responsibility. For the position which I am occupying so unworthily is full of anxiety and was never more so than at the present juncture when heavy clouds have floated into the political sky; and in standing before you today I feel as if I was summoned to drive the chariot of the Sun; and if I am spared the fate of Phaeton, I shall owe my good fortune only to your forbearance and indulgent kindness on which I am confident I can safely rely. I can rely, too, with confidence on your willing co-operation; for are we not all animated by one common purpose and do we not know that co-operation is the very life of concerted action which can never thrive in an atmosphere of continuous strife and difference ?

Every one must admit that we are passing through a sad and evenful period—a period of stress and storm—and if ever there was a time when we ought to close up our ranks and present a firm, serried and united front, that time is this; for the situation is of more than ordinary gravity. It is full of difficulty and full of peril, and unless we are imbued with a strong sense of discipline and of responsibility, the vessel of the Congress may be steered direct upon the rocks. It would be idle to deny, and I

* Presidential address delivered by Rash Behary Ghose at the Surat Congress held on 26-27 December, 1907. The business could not be finished as the session came to an abrupt end due to disturbance.

do not deny, that domestic dissensions have raised angry storms which are now sweeping across some parts of the country; but there is no real occasion for pessimism, or despair, though the incidents which recently occurred at Nagpur might well fill some minds with misgivings. There is, however, every reason to think that these disturbances were mainly the work of some misguided young man who had been carried off their feet by the wild talk of irresponsible persons. Of one thing, however, I am certain; those who have compelled us to change our place of meeting have no right to be proud of their achievement.

And here, on behalf of the assembled delegates, I must gratefully acknowledge the readiness and alacrity with which the people of Surat invited us to hold our sittings in their historic city. In offering their hospitality to the Congress they have only acted in accordance with their traditional generosity; for they are citizens of no mean city. Surat, as history tells us, was the queen of Western India, a busy and famous mart before the like-village of Llyndyn was staked out and long, long before Venice rose from the sea. But, perhaps, her greatest distinction, it is certainly her best title to our gratitude, is that Surat was the first resting place on Indian soil—where dissent was never suppressed by the sword, the gibbet or the stake—of the Parsi pilgrim fathers who cheerfully left home and kindred for the sake of conscience and whose descendants have inherited the virtues with the blood of their ancestors and repaid their debt a thousandfold to India; for I make bold to say that there is no community whose love for the country is greater than that to which so many of our leaders belong, and which has given to us our “Grand Old Man”.

I am glad to see in this assembly almost all our prominent leaders—men whose names are as household words and who have already taken an abiding place in the minds of the people. But I miss some well-known faces. Kali Churn Banerjee is no longer amongst us. A pious Christian, an accomplished scholar, an eloquent speaker and an ardent patriot, he was an ideal leader, respected by every community in the country. A most strenuous and earnest worker, his whole heart was in the Congress and his love for it was strong even in death. For who does

not remember how he left a sick bed to attend our last meeting in Calcutta? Who does not remember how, though overcome by the heat and warned by the doctors, he refused to leave the assembly till he fell into a swoon and had to be carried out of the Pandal? He died only a few days afterwards and when we think of the lonely Scotch cemetery in Koraya, where his remains were laid, we cannot help feeling how much learning, how much modest and unassuming simplicity, how much piety, how much winsome tenderness and how much patriotism lie buried in the grave of Kali Churn Banerjee. That hand which everybody was glad to touch is vanished. The voice which everybody was glad to hear is still. But if to live in the hearts and memories of those whom we leave behind is not to die, Kali Churn is not dead but is still alive. True he no longer lives in his own person but he lives in us and will live on in those who succeed us, enjoying an immortality which is not given to all the sons of men. Pandit Biswambharnath, too, of Allahabad has been gathered to his fathers and we shall miss his mellow patriarchal wisdom in our councils. But though his work on earth has been done, in that high sense of duty which alone could have nerved him when, as President of the Reception Committee in 1892, he welcomed the delegates to Allahabad, though only three weeks before a paralytic seizure had brought him to the verge of the grave, he has left an example which will continue to inspire generations of his countrymen. The Pandit was in many ways a most remarkable man, and it will be long before there arises among us another jurist, scholar and patriot who can make us forget the loss of Biswambharnath.

Gentlemen,—the year that is now fast drawing to a close has seen the country convulsed to its depths and has truly been a dramatic year. The first act opened with the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and of Ajit Singh. This was followed by the Ordinance against public meetings, the Rawalpindi trial, and the Press prosecutions in the Punjab and in Bengal, and the curtain dropped on what, it is to be hoped, was the last scene in the Council chamber at Simla, when the Public Meetings Act was passed.

It has been said in defence of the resurrection of regulation III of 1818, that it is a standing law. It is not a standing law but a standing negation of all law; not a standing law but a standing menace to our liberty, a standing reproach in our Statute Book. A prosecution, we have been gravely told, attracts public attention and a trial for sedition is, therefore, not always deplorable. This is the good old rule, the simple plan, which used to be followed in an ancient Scotch border town which also possessed a standing law, though even in Jedburgh the formality of a trial was not wholly dispensed with, only it took place after the execution. It may be a mere weakness in a lawyer; but I confess I cannot congratulate the Indian Government on their use of a weapon which is as obsolete in civilized jurisprudence as the rack or the screw. Their action is deporting a man for reasons which they dared not disclose was "illegal", "unconstitutional", "tyrannical", "arbitrary", "impudently absurd" and "preposterous". None of these epithets are mine. They have all been taken by me from Hansard and were used by a staunch Liberal on a memorable occasion. And was not Mr. Morley's answer in the House of Commons the most outrageous and indefensible answer ever given since Simon de Montfort invented Parliament? But it seems that what is true under one degree of longitude is not true under another. What is true in Cape Town is not true in the Punjab.

Who but must laugh, if such a man there be,
Who would not weep if Morlieus were he?

And who was the first victim selected for the exercise of this arbitrary power? An earnest, religious and social reformer a man whose character was above all reproach, a man who lived not for himself but for others—the idol of the Punjab. Such a man is suddenly discovered by the secret police to be a revolutionary and political enthusiast animated by an insane hatred of the British Government and secretly plotting its forcible subversion. If Lala Lajpat Rai had been put on his trial he could have triumphantly vindicated his innocence and shown that even strong Lieutenant-Governors are not infallible. He could have triumphantly shown that the garbled extracts in

the *Wafadar* gave a most untruthful version of his aims and methods had been strictly constitutional and that he had always set his face against agitation which tended to sedition or disorder. But this privilege, which may be claimed by the meanest criminal, was denied to one of our foremost men; and if Lala Lajpat Rai is now regarded as a martyr by his countrymen generally, it is the Government and the Government alone that have elevated him to that position and placed that priceless crown of thorns upon his head. If the Fort of Mandalay is now regarded as a holy place, as I know it is by some of my countrymen, it is the Government and the Government alone that have invested it with that holiness.

In Etawah, too, similar tragedy would have taken place had it not been averted by the good sense of Sir John Hewett who was able to see through the disgraceful conspiracy which had been so cunningly planned. But the spectre of an impending mutiny had obscured the vision of the Punjab officials and they saw in a mob riot a deep-laid scheme for the overthrow of the British role.

The result was the Rawalpindi prosecution which has thrown a lurid light on the methods of sedition hunters. Men occupying the highest position in society and looked up to as their leaders by the people in the Punjab were placed in the dock as felons who had by their seditious speeches incited violent riots. For six long months these men were detained in prison, as bail was refused on the ground that they could not, with safety to the State, be allowed to be at large. But what was the end of this prosecution? A complete vindication of their innocence and a most scathing exposure of the case for the Crown. The Judgement of the Special Magistrate shows that panic had magnified into rebellion a perfectly lawful agitation against very substantial grievances. The evidence on which the six lawyers had been kept in prison for months was "suspicious if not fabricated" and there was not the shadow of a shade of evidence to establish any sort of complicity on their part with any conspiracy against the British Crown.

And this leads me to remark that the situation in the Punjab

was succinctly summed up by Lala Lajpat Rai in a letter which was written by him only a few hours before his arrest. The discontent he said was due to several causes which he set forth in chronological order.

(a) 'The letters and articles that appeared in the *Civil and Military Gazette* some time in July and August last year under the heading "Signs of the Times".'

(b) The prosecution of the *Punjabee* coupled with the refusal of the Government to take similar action against the *Civil and Military Gazette*.

(c) The Colonisation Bill.

(d) The Land Alienation Act Amendment Bill.

(e) The increase of the Canal rates on the Bari-Doab Canal.

(f) The abnormal increase of Land Revenue in the Rawalpindi District.

(g) The appalling mortality from plague which had made the people sullen and labour scarce, and raised the wages abnormally.

This diagnosis was perfectly correct, for as soon as the most pressing grievances were removed, the Punjab became quiet. Though the bureaucracy will probably persuade themselves that this happy result was entirely due to the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and of Ajit Singh, and that another mutiny has been averted solely by their foresight and timely precautions.

The Press prosecutions, too, which were entered upon so lightly by the Government did not show much wisdom. In some instances the Crown failed to secure a conviction and a defeat in such cases must always cover the Government with humiliation. Then, again, the prosecutions in Calcutta showed unmistakably the new spirit with which the people are prepared to face all attempts at coercion. In many of these cases the defendants refused to plead and cheerfully went to prison and they must be blind indeed who cannot see in it a new consciousness of nationality which at the present day inspires Young India and has penetrated even the seclusion of the

Zenana. When the Editor of the *Yugantar* was sent to jail, there was a crowded meeting of Indian ladies in Calcutta, not to condole but to present a congratulatory address to his mother, and what did the old lady say in her reply? "Bupin's useful career has just begun", she said, "with his recent incarceration and his example will do more good than his mere presence as a humble worker in the midst of his countrymen". Again, at the Barisal Conference, which was forcibly dispersed, some ladies flung away their ornaments on witnessing the humiliation of their husbands and sons and took a vow to forego all luxuries till the men had learnt to assert their lawful rights. Not satisfied with these prosecutions the Government undertook a crusade against mere schoolboys and our young barbarians were either publicly flogged or condemned to hard labour. Is it a matter for wonder that all this should have called for the most intense indignation throughout the country? The official may not believe it but we can assure him the Indian has eyes and hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections and passions.

It is a matter for wonder that the political movement should have waxed stronger and stronger, driving even many moderate men into active sympathy with those whom they had previously regarded as impracticable visionaries.

And this brings me to the unrest in Bengal, the partition of which has not only strained the loyalty of many people but has led to tragic results which ought to have been foreseen by the author of that measure. One of its objects was to strengthen the Mohammedan influence in East Bengal. That influence has been strengthened; but its strength has been manifested in a peculiar way. I do not wish to dwell on the Mohammedan riots and the atrocities which occurred in English Bengal but this I am bound to say, that the local officials were lacking in that firmness and impartiality which are the best title of England to our allegiance. I wish to speak with moderation, but what are we to think when a Sessions Judge divides witnesses into two classes, Hindus and Mohammedans, and prefers the evidence of Mohammedans to Hindus, because they are Mohammedans. This avowed bias has naturally

alienated Hindus who are burning with resentment.

Every one familiar with the recent history of Macedonia—and our officials are certainly familiar with it—knows that it is very difficult for a country to obtain autonomy when it is torn by religious and racial hatreds. To divide and rule, however, is a maxim which must be hateful to every Englishman and we should be sorry to charge any English official with such tactics. But the fact remains that, for the first time in Bengal, racial and religious hatreds have been surging in the new Province among communities who formerly lived on the most friendly terms. Lord Curzon, I find, protests against the notion that he meant to play off the Mohammedans against the Hindus, and we are bound to accept his Lordship's denial; but there is a well-known maxim in law that every man must be presumed to foresee the consequences of his own acts; though in the case of his Lordship, with his well-known foibles, we are not driven to rely upon this old legal saw.

The officials still fondly believe or pretend to believe that the Mohammedans were goaded to madness by the boycott movement of the Hindus; and that this was the real cause of the general lawlessness of the lower classes among the Mohammedans which burst into flame in East Bengal only a few months ago. It is, however, singular that this lawlessness did not reveal itself when the movement was at its height. Again, if the official view is correct, we have remarkable instance of the innate perversity of the Oriental mind; for the boycott benefited the Mohammedans and not the Hindus, by reviving the weaving industry on which they had lived for generations. It is, however, unnecessary to discuss this question at length, because it has now been placed beyond all controversy by the solemn judgements pronounced not by Hindu but by English and Muslim Magistrates.

At Jamalpur, where the disturbances began in the Mymensingh District, the first information lodged at the Police Station contained no reference whatever to boycott or picketing. Mr. Beatson Bell, the trying Magistrate at Dewanganj, observed that boycott was not the cause of the disturbances. Another

Special Magistrate at Dewangunj, himself a Mohammedan gentleman of culture, remarked: "There was not the least provocation for rioting; the common object of the rioters was evidently to molest the Hindus". In another case the same Magistrate observed: "The evidence accused on the side of the prosecution shows that, on the date of the riot, the accused has read over a notice to a crowd of Musalmans and had told them that the Government and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca had passed order to the effect that nobody would be punished for plundering and oppressing the Hindus. So, after the Kali's image was broken by the Muslims, the shops of the Hindu traders were also plundered". Again, Mr. Barnville, the Sub-Divisional Officer of Jamalpur, in his Report on the Melandahat riot said: "Some Musalmans proclaimed by beat of drum that the Government had permitted them to loot the Hindus". And in the Hargilchar abduction case the same Magistrate remarked that the outrages were due to the announcement that the Government had permitted the Mohammedans to marry Hindu widows in *nikka* form.

The true explanation of the savage outbreak is to be found in the "red pamphlet" which was circulated so widely among the Mohammedans in East Bengal, and in which there is not a word about boycott or Hindu volunteers. "Ye Musalmans", said the red pamphlet, "arise, awake, do not read in same schools with Hindus. Do not buy anything from a Hindu shop. Do not touch any article manufactured by Hindu hands. Do not give any employment to a Hindu. Do not accept any degrading office under a Hindu. You are ignorant, but if you acquire knowledge you can at once send all Hindus to *Jehannum* (hell). You form the majority of the population of this Province. Among the cultivators also you form the majority. It is agriculture that is the source of wealth. The Hindu has no wealth of his own and has made himself rich only by despoiling you of your wealth. If you become sufficiently enlightened then the Hindus will starve and soon become Mohammedans". The man who preached this Jihad was only bound down to keep the peace for one year! You are probably surprised at such leniency. We in Bengal were

not, or were only surprised to hear that the man had been bound down at all!

At the present moment there is undoubtedly a lull in East Bengal; but who knows that the Province may not be swept again by another violent storm of wild frenzy and brute ferocity? For the devil of religious jealousy and hatred may be easily evoked; it cannot be as easily dismissed.

The partition of Bengal is at the root of all these disorders and the discontent created by it has spread to other parts of the country. The result is a general unrest, and, in the opinion of the Government, the situation is becoming serious. But is not the solution of the problem within easy reach? You cannot govern India without the sympathy and confidence of the people. That sympathy and that confidence have been imperilled by Lord Curzon's autocratic measure and the only way to win back our sympathy and confidence is its reversal and not the Seditious Meetings Act which was passed on the 1st November last. Of that Act I find it difficult to speak with patience. But, as my honourable friend Mr. Gokhale said in the Council Chamber, even more dangerous than the Act itself is the policy that lies behind it—a policy which is unwise in the highest degree and which is bound to fail in India as it has failed everywhere else. It will burn into the minds of the people harsh memories which even time may be powerless to efface, and will, there is every reason to fear, enhance the very evil which it is intended to control.

We hope, however, that this new weapon with which the Executive have been armed will be very sparingly used. For the Prime Minister said only a few days ago that he was in favour of the free toleration of all agitation that is not directly and openly subversive of order. And I have no doubt that these principles of toleration will be loyally carried out by the Indian Government, when they recover from the panic which has seized them. All agitation is not subversive of order. Every agitator is not a rebel though he is labelled as such by a section of the Anglo-Indian Press. A speech may be objectionable in expression and temper, but it ought not to be repressed merely

because it might indirectly be subversive of order.

By a strange irony of fate, it was left to a sympathetic Viceroy and a Liberal Secretary of State to adopt a policy of repression which Lord Curzon never ceases to remind us he had no occasion to call in aid. But the responsibility for this new policy primarily rests upon His Lordship, not upon Mr. Morley or Lord Minto who did not come into a "heaven of peace". Heavy storms had broken out before the retirement of Lord Curzon, who left undone everything which he ought to have done and did everything which he ought to have done. People for the first time began to distrust the good faith of their rulers, for His Lordship made no secret of his conviction that England's true mission was to govern India but not through the people or with their assistance. The commercial exploitation of the country and its administration by Englishmen were his ideal of imperialism. Indians were to be excluded from all offices of trust and responsibility and were to be denied even all opportunities of qualifying themselves for such offices, which were to be reserved exclusively for the ruling race. And in every department of the public service a large number of highly paid offices were created by him to be filled by his own countrymen.

We have, gentlemen, a long and heavy indictment to bring against Lord Curzon. We charge him with having arrested the progress of education. We charge him with having set back the dial of local self-government. We charge him with having deliberately sacrificed the interests of the Indian people in order to conciliate English exploiters and administrators. And, lastly, we charge him with having set Bengal in a blaze. It is Lord Curzon and Lord Curzon alone who is responsible for the rise of the new party, for he drove the people to despair and to madness. It is true Lord Curzon has retired, and yet the new party is growing in numbers. But we maintain that Lord Curzon is responsible for this growth, and if it is also growing in bitterness, Lord Curzon and Lord Curzon alone is responsible for it. Mr. Morley speaks of his duty to arrest the hand which would set the prairie on fire. Why did he not then, though in opposition, seek to arrest Lord Curzon's hand? He could not have rendered a greater service both to England and to India, for no

Englishman has done more to undermine our loyalty than the Viceroy who sought to humiliate not only His Majesty's Indian subjects but also the great ruling chiefs. It is quite possible we have failed to appreciate His Lordship's good intentions, but the herald who recalled only the other day the virtues of Lord Clive may console himself with the reflection that justice may yet be done to him in the avenging pages of history—in the Greek Kalends.

If the Punjab is quiet, it is only because the grievances of the people have been redressed. If Bengal is still in a disturbed condition, it is only because the partition of Bengal is a festering sore which will not be healed. Let the Bengali-speaking people be placed under a Governor with an Executive Council, and you will see the winter of our discontent made glorious summer. Force is no remedy, and the best security for the peace of the country is the conviction that all real grievances will be redressed, not deportations or coercion Acts; and I have no hesitation in saying that timely concessions alone can arrest the progress of the discontent which, though at present is a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, may in time overshadow the whole land.

And this reminds me that Mr. Morley made a fatal mistake, fatal to his reputation as a Liberal and a statesman, when he refused to undo the partition of Bengal and sought shelter behind a settled fact. If he had only shown more courage Bengal would not have been convulsed and there would have been no excuse for the reactionary policy which has done so much to tarnish his fair fame as a Liberal statesman. And yet though unwilling to disturb the partition of Bengal, in his first Budget speech Mr. Morley spoke sympathetically of the new spirit which is abroad in India. The Indian system of government could not, he admitted, move in the old narrow groove but called for improvement. Speaking of the Indian Congress, he said that there was no reason to be frightened at its demands, as it did not insist on any violent or startling new departures. Dissatisfaction with the administration, said the great disciple of Mill, is not disaffection. It is true he did not think that India should have universal suffrage or be placed on the same

footing as the self-governing colonies, but he insisted upon the spirit, the temper, the principles and the maxims of English institutions being applied to the Government of India. Mr. Morley also said that a definite and deliberate move ought to be made with a view of giving competent and able Indians the same access to the higher posts in the administration that are given to their British fellow-subjects, and pointed out that the Proclamation of Queen Victoria should be construed in a liberal and generous sense and not refined away with the ingenuity of a quibbling attorney's clerk. "We should be untrue", said the friend and biographer of Gladstone, "to all the traditions of this Parliament and to those who, from time to time and from generation to generation, have been the leaders of the Liberal Party, if we were to show ourselves afraid of facing and recognising the new spirit with candour and consideration." We know how these professions have ended in deportations, ordinances, public prosecutions, punitive police, military constabulary and the Public Meetings Act.

On the last Budget debate this great Liberal Minister boldly said that he had no apology whatever to offer for the deportations in the Punjab and he recommended a policy of firmness which in India means repression. Now we are quite willing to believe in Mr. Morley's kindness, sympathy and love of justice, though it may cost us a painful mental effort, but when he says his anchor still holds, we are bound to remind him that his vessel has veered round with the tide. He will not probably admit that he has changed his ground, but he has certainly changed his front. It is not, however, at all difficult to account for this sad change in Mr. Morley's attitude. He has been evidently misled by his responsible advisers whose knowledge of the condition of the country is deprived from secret police reports, and who told him of widespread sedition and the imminence not of a mere mutiny but of a revolt against the English rule with all its attendant horrors,—a rising of the women and children against the men. A large section of the English Press also sought to create enmity between the two races by stirring the memory of the dark days of the Indian Mutiny, stained with so many crimes and so much carnage; and the *London Times*,

true to its traditions, recounted the old story with embellishments in order to embitter our rulers against us. What wonder, then, if that apostle of freedom, to whom reasons of State are only the tyrant's plea, has been compelled to yield to the pressure put upon him by responsible advisers and by the Press. I will not say, with the Tory Press in England, that Mr. Morley has been translated, but we are painfully reminded of Ariel in the hateful bondage of Sycorax. The truth is politics, even in our day, is like pitch. You cannot touch it without being defiled, and the Secretary of State might have profited by the warning of Comte that a philosopher who holds up from his closet lofty ideals of conduct should not take an active part in the practical administration of a country like India where a liberal statesman must frequently stoop to arts which may be reconciled to the official conscience but not to the conscience of the plain man.

Mr. Morley, I repeat, has fallen under the spell of the bureaucracy. We are quite willing to believe he means well. Indeed, the India Office, like the floor of the House of Commons, is paved with good intentions. But under the present system of administration it is impossible for any single man to do real service to us. The Secretary of State has to take his facts from the Indian officials, and the only public opinion of which he knows anything is not the public opinion in India, but the public opinion in England, nourished upon the lies told by unscrupulous correspondents which are faithfully reproduced in the English Press.

The growth of a new party in India has also served as a very useful excuse for delaying all reforms. I am, however, bound to say that this party is not, at the present moment, at all dangerous. Every sensible man disapproves of its methods; if the Government can only rally the Moderates to their side by gradually preparing the country to take its position as a self-governing State or a federation of States united together under the supreme authority of England, they will extinguish the new party completely, and the ominous shadow which has projected itself over the future fortunes of the country will disappear. The bureaucracy, however, is unable to distinguish, or refuses to distinguish, between those who earnestly seek for reform and

the irresponsible agitators who would have nothing to do with the Government. They are all tarred with the same brush. Those who demand a larger share in the administration of their country, as essential to the welfare and the stability of the British Government, are confounded with the pestilent demagogue who would drive the hated foreigner into the sea. Those who counsel their countrymen to have patience, confident that their rulers would in time give them all they can reasonably want, if they confine their agitation to constitutional methods, are confounded with those who assert that nothing good can come out of England, and that passive resistance, if persisted, it would compel the English to retire from the country. But is it not a serious blunder, which in politics we all know is worse than a crime, to denounce the whole of the educated classes as disloyal? Such denunciations have some times a fatal tendency to realise themselves.

Mr. Morley recently spoke of the "enemies of England," but who are these enemies? Not certainly the educated classes who represent the better mind of India. The real enemies of England are those Englishmen who lose no opportunity of showing their hatred and contempt for the people of this country. Flushed with the insolence of a ruling caste they treat them as an inferior race with whom friendly or sympathetic relations are impossible.

The danger of such an attitude was clearly discerned by Lord Salisbury, who, when he was Secretary of State for India, addressed this memorable warning to the Cooper's Hill College students more than thirty years ago:

"No system of government", he said, "can be permanently safe where there is a feeling of inferiority or of mortification affecting the relations between the governing and the governed. There is nothing I would more earnestly wish to impress upon all who leave this country for the purpose of governing India than that, if they choose to be so, they are the only enemies England has to fear. They are the persons who can, if they will, deal a blow of the deadliest character at the future rule of England". Since this warning was given, the relations between

the two classes have grown worse and have given rise to racial hatred which is sure to cause serious trouble; for, as Mr. Morley said only the other day, bad and overbearing manners in India are a political crime.

The real enemies of England are those who talk of the lofty duty of England towards India but believe or pretend to believe, that this can only be discharged by a foreign bureaucracy and that, in the interest of the people themselves, they ought not to have any real share in the administration of the country. For, as Mr. Morley, the most tender, lofty, cheerful and delicately sober of all moralists, says, "the usual excuse of those who do evil to other people is that their object is to do them good."

The real enemies of England are those who try to stir up racial hatred in the Press by the most unblushing lies whenever reform is in the air. I am afraid to trust myself to speak of the conduct of these men who are standing menace to British rule, and will only say that we deeply regret that at this critical period the Government of India should have selected a correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, to supply them with Indian news at an extravagant salary. Who does not know the achievements of that paper in all parts of the world,—in Africa, in China, and in India? Who does not remember the story of the "coronation" of Babu Surendranath Bannerji, of the reign of terror established in Bengal by the "National Volunteers", the "Barisal Scare", the incipient mutiny and last, though not least, the treasonable incitements of Mr. Keir Hardie? This is certainly not the way to restore the confidence of the people who are overcome by a sense of utter helplessness and despair.

Mr. Morley said in his last speech that he could not discover what we want our rulers to which they are not slowly and gradually taking steps to accomplish, and seems to think that we were crying for the moon. But the National Congress does not surely cry for the moon when it asks for the reduction of the military expenditure. The National Congress does not surely cry for the moon when it protests against degrading Colonial Ordinances and demands for the Indian the ordinary rights of

British citizenship in the Colonies. The National Congress does not surely cry for the moon when it seeks the separation of Judicial from Executive functions or protests against the partition of Bengal. The National Congress does not surely cry for the moon when it insists upon the extension of primary education or the limitation of the revenue on lands which belong to the State. The National Congress does not surely cry for the moon when it insists upon a truly effective representation of the people in the Legislative Councils of the Viceroy and of the Governors of the Madras and of Bombay.

We do not demand the immediate recall of Lord Kitchener or the disbandment of the Indian Army. We do not demand universal suffrage. And yet these were some of the red herrings Mr. Morley dragged across the path of English Public opinion in his Abroath speech. What we do demand is that our rulers should introduce reforms as steps towards giving us that self-government which is now the aspiration of a people educated for three generations in the political ideas of the West. Mr. Morely admits that the English are here not for their own interest but the interest of the millions committed to their charge. Now, through this assertion has an unctious theological flavour about it, and must be taken with a few grains of Kurcutch salt, I take it no Englishman will deny that the supremacy of the English is not to last for ever and that their real object is to teach India to rule herself.

I am confident that every true Englishman who has an in-born sense of freedom and justice has faith in self-government. And I can affirm with equal confidence that, however beneficent a foreign rule may be, no people in whom all manhood has not been killed out will ever willingly submit for ever to the yoke though it may be wreathed with flowers. This is a natural sentiment which must commend itself to every true-hearted Englishman. The "brightest jewel in the British Crown" must not be regarded merely as a market for British goods or a field for the safe investment of British capital or as an opening a dignified career to "our boys". Now, can any one honestly say that England has done all that she might have done towards accomplishing her mission? What, I ask our rulers, have you

done during the one-and-half centuries of your stewardship? Given increased material prosperity? Granted; though the people with oriental perversity still continue to die of famine. 'Give us high education? Granted; though here again in ways peculiar to the East where the law of cause and effect does not hold good that education has, according to you, led not to contentment but to disaffection. But if that education, as we assert, has with all its faults given you public servants as able and as loyal as their English brethren, has not the time come to give the educated classes a larger share in the administration of the country? We look at the achievements of Japan in less than fifty years. We look at Persia, we look at China, and our minds are filled with despair. We cannot any longer be fed with worn out platitudes; and when Mr. Morley deals in them he forgets that we too may claim to have kindled our modest rushlights at Burke and Mill's benignant lamps. We too know the painful journey that lies before us before we can be welded into the political unity of a nation. Long, long is the way, rugged is the ground and the weary steps must be trodden with bleeding feet, with bleeding knees and with bleeding hearts. But do not, we pray you, stand with a drawn sword to impede our journey.

I repeat that we are not crying for the moon. I repeat that all we ask is that our country should take her rightful place among the nations under the aegis of England. We want in reality and not in mere name to be the sons of the Empire. Our ambition is to draw closer to England and to be absorbed in that Greater Britain in which we have now no place. The ideal after which we are striving is autonomy within the Empire, and not absolute independence. Let England help us in attaining our object and her name will continue to shine with undimmed glory, even when the New Zealander sits on the ruined arches of Westminster Bridge.

A new spirit is abroad in India which calls for an improvement in the Indian system of Government which has now become an anachronism. Men nurtured on Western ideals and literature must be animated by the new aspirations which must be satisfied. The time that Macaulay foresaw—the most glorious day for England—has now arrived. With the growth of new

ideas and new aspirations the Indians insist upon a greater share in the administration of their own affairs. This demand is resisted by an autocratic bureaucracy who are jealous of the slightest encroachment on the privileges of their order. It is admitted on all hands that the people of this country are most docile and law-abiding and yet portions of the country are in a state of ferment. This is due not only to the resistance to the demand of the people for a large share in the management of their own affairs, but also to the reactionary policy persistently followed in recent years by the Government, and their contempt for public opinion and the legitimate aspirations of the people. Political life is stirring in India which must be faced in a considerate spirit, but there has been, as yet, no serious attempt to do so by the Government. The result is general discontent. The bureaucrats are certainly wise in their generation. They defer all reforms till the discontent gathers in volume and leads to seditious movements, when they readily seize on them as a pretext for repression and for indefinitely postponing any experiment in self-government. The Spanish matador, as we all know, maddens the bull with his muleta and then plunges his sword into its neck.

The supreme necessity of the hour is sympathy. We wish to see less and less of the strong hand, and more and more of the strong nerve, the strong head and the kind heart. As the Prime Minister recently said, the Indian Administration should be brought into closer contact with the Indian people, and that it is only by an honest, courageous and persistent attempt to do so that England would discharge her momentous trust,—the most momentous trust that was ever committed to a great State. And there never was a time when sympathy was more needed; for India is truly a country of many sorrows and is stricken sorely by plague and famine.

And this brings me to the reforms which Mr. Morley shadowed forth towards the end of his speech on the last Indian Budget debate. These were, in addition to a Royal Commission to enquire into the evils of over-centralisation, (first) the institution of an Advisory Council of Notables, (second) the enlargement of the Legislative Councils, (third) the fuller discussion of

the Budget in the Viceroy's Council, and, (fourth) the nomination of one or two Indians to the Secretary of State's Council in London.

It would be premature to express any opinion on the work of the Decentralisation Commission. We have, however, every reason to think that it will strengthen the elective element on Municipal and Local Boards and that the representatives of the people will be associated with the district officer in the work of local administration. I know that most people distrust Commissions, though Lord Curzon was free from any such weakness. But we trust that the Decentralisation Commission will prove an exception to the general rule and lead to great improvements in the administration, as the terms of reference are wide enough to include proposals for advancing the cause of local self-government by strengthening and developing Municipal and Local Boards and by decentralising District Administration. The distribution of power between the Supreme and Provincial Governments is a matter of secondary importance to us. But to what extent our control of local affairs in Municipalities and District and Local Boards is real—also to what extent the administration of a district by the Collector and District Magistrate is influenced directly and indirectly by the opinion of the people of the district—these are matters of supreme importance. Though we may not be yet in a position to make a correct forecast of the result of the labours of the Commission, our best men must direct their energies towards making these labours fruitful, and this can only be effected by our coming forward in sufficient numbers to give evidence before it. Of course, only such persons should come forward for the purpose as have a fair grasp of these questions and some personal acquaintance with either local self-government or district administration. The present disposition which, I fear is general all over the country to leave the Commission alone is most unfortunate and will only do us harm. We should insist that the composition of Municipal and District and Local Boards should now be entirely or almost entirely elective. We should also insist that the resources at their disposal should be larger than at present. And we should lastly insist that the control of Government over local

bodies should be similar to that of the Local Government Board in England, and, as there, it should be exercised only in the interests of efficiency and purity of administration, and that, subject to this control, local bodies should be free to manage local affairs and spend local resources as they deem best. Then, and then only, would they feel a real sense of responsibility in the matter of local self-government which can never be developed under the present system of constant and harassing interference on the part of officials. As regards district administration, everybody will admit that the Collector and District Magistrate should be emancipated from the present excessive Secretariat control, and, in place of it, every head of a district should have associated with him a Board composed of elected and nominated members, which may at first be entirely or almost entirely advisory, but which, in course of time, should be entrusted with definite and gradually expanding powers of control. All important administrative matters concerning a district, except such as may have to be treated as strictly confidential, should be laid before this Board for advice, which the Collector and District Magistrate should not be at liberty to set aside except for reasons to be recorded in writing. If the experiment succeeds, as it is bound to do, the Board should be empowered to exercise substantial control over most matters of district administration like the administration of excise and forest rules, famine and plague administration.

The first three reforms adumbrated by Mr. Morley are now embodied in what is known as the Simla scheme, and I propose to deal with these reforms very briefly. The idea of a Council of Notables is not quite new. A similar measure was tried by Lord Lytton in 1877, but, as Mr. Morley admits, it was a complete failure; and I fear that unless the scheme is considerably modified, the proposed reform will share the same fate. For the Council is sure to be a reactionary body,—an Indian House of Lords, with this difference, that the English House of Lords contains many able and accomplished men who have been trained in politics from their earliest youth and who are in a large measure in touch with the general trend of public opinion. I do not, however, deny that the proposed Council, if it is pro-

perly constituted and its functions enlarged, may be a useful institution. But the present scheme is open to a variety of objections. In the first place, though Ruling Princes may well be invited to a Council which has to deal with matters touching the welfare of their States or their relations to the paramount power. British subjects alone should be eligible as members of a Council which will have to deal exclusively with questions relating to administration in British India on which ruling chiefs are not likely to be able to give much useful advice.

The proposed Council is also open to objection on the ground that the Councillors are not to be consulted collectively but only individually. Then again, it is absolutely necessary, in order to create confidence and to secure in some measure popular representation, that a certain proportion of the members should be elected by the different Provinces. The Council should also meet at stated times, and whenever any proposed measure is not accepted by a majority of the members it should be dropped, or, at any rate, postponed, for further consideration. You cannot invite opinions only to flout them.

The proposed reform of the Viceroy's Legislative Council is also open to very serious objections, if indeed it is not a step backwards. It has been almost universally condemned, as the proposal to allow the local Councils to return only seven out of fifty-four Members would seriously reduce the influence of the educated community who, notwithstanding the sneers at intellectuals, lawyers, and schoolmasters, are the real leaders of public opinion. Distrust, we all know, breeds distrust, and the Government ought not to be surprised if my countrymen regard their proposals with the same suspicion with which the Trojans regarded the friendly gifts of the Greeks.

The functions of the Council should also be enlarged and the debate on the Budget ought to be made a reality instead of a mere academic exercise. This can only be done by allowing the members to divide on any question on which there may be a difference of opinion on any head in the Budget. The Council should also be given an opportunity of discussing, under proper safeguards, questions relating to administration

on which there is a strong public feeling.

The Provincial Councils should also be expanded on the same lines and every district should be allowed to return a member. And the Advisory Boards for assisting local Governors in carrying on the administration should be constituted on the model of the Council of Notables. All important matters connected with local administration should be referred to these Boards for opinion before any action is taken. This is the only way to bring the administration into touch with the people.

I would ask you to consider the reform scheme carefully, for I am sure the Government will give due weight to any recommendations which may be made by you. It has been put forward before the public for criticism and it is our duty to suggest such additions and alterations as would, in our opinion, improve the scheme. It would certainly not be wise to reject the proposals simply because they do not go far enough in a petulant spirit. On the other hand, the government have no right to be surprised if, in their present mood, my countrymen refuse to be consoled by these rather doubtful concessions for the deportation of British subjects without a trial or the partition of Bengal.

It remains only to add with regard to the fourth proposal of Mr. Morley that it has already been carried out. It is no doubt a great step forward but its usefulness will entirely depend on the careful selection of the members. But the selections which have been made, have not commanded general approval.

Such approval can only be secured by giving the people a voice in the selection. We must, therefore, ask that whenever an Indian has to be appointed all elected members of the several Legislative Councils should be invited to submit three names to the Secretary of State, who should then select one out of the three.

I will now pass on to the present position of the National Congress. Gentlemen, it has been said that there is a hopeless division in our ranks and that we have now come to the parting of ways. It has been said that we are divided into two

parties,—those who place their faith in constitutional methods and those who have lost all faith in them—and that it is impossible for the two parties any longer to act together. Now in a vast organisation like the Indian Congress, which embraces every section of the community, differences of opinion must be inevitable though they cannot be allowed to reach a point which would paralyse our action. Quarrels when they stop short of this only prove not the weakness but the strength of our combination. They show the vigour of life and not the languor or decay. One thing, however, we must not forget. We must not forget that the National Congress is definitely committed only to constitutional methods of agitation to which it is fast moored, and if the new party does not approve of such methods and cannot work harmoniously with the old, everybody must admit it has no place within the pale of the Congress. Session, therefore, is the only course open to it. But I most fervently hope and trust that nothing of the kind will happen, for are we not all soldiers fighting in the same cause and under the same flag marching together to the golden trumpet note sounded by Dadabhai Naoroji last year for the great battle of *Swaraj*? Are we not all inspired with the same ideas, the same thoughts, the same desires and the same aspirations?

The Congress exists to draw us together and not to divide us. It stands pledged as ever to the larger employment of the people of this country in the public services so as to gradually dispense with the present expensive administration. It stands pledged as ever to our larger representation in the Legislative Councils. It stands pledged as ever to the reduction of the enormous military expenditure and to a more equal division of the burden between England and India. It stands pledged as ever to the limitation of the land revenue. It stands pledged as ever to the separation of executive and judicial functions. It stands pledged as ever to the *Swadeshi* movement. It stands pledged as ever to the resolution that the boycott movement in Bengal inaugurated by way of protest against the partition of the Province is a legitimate movement. It stands pledged as ever to the reunion of the people of Bengal under

one administration. And, lastly, it stands pledged as ever to win gradually for the country by all constitutional means that autonomy which England has so wisely granted to her Colonics.

We all recognise the supreme need of unity and of patriotic sacrifice. We are all agreed that nations are made by themselves. We are all agreed on the necessity of education on national lines and the general elevation of the masses so essential to the attainment of a higher political life. We are all agreed on the necessity of industrial development. For even deeper than political reform, before mere forms of Government, lies the great question of the industrial regeneration of the country. Let us stand by the Swadeshi movement which is founded not on hatred but on love—love of our own country, not hatred of the foreigner. Our creed is short and consists in the development of India for ourselves; but *Swadeshi* within the limits of the law. It is a patriotic sentiment which involves no disloyalty. We are determined not to use foreign goods so far as practicable, and no amount of repression will deter us from carrying out our resolution. We cannot protect our industries by tariff legislation, but we can show our love for the country by our sympathy for the masses who are now steeped in unspeakable poverty. The Anglo-Indian community, however, have taken fright at this movement and the Government too have been infected by it. They draw a sharp distinction between Swadeshi and boycott but unless boycott is accompanied by violence is there any real difference between the two?

I confess I see no reason why we should not still be able to work in harmony. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and we must be on our guard against the deadly peril of disunion. The race may not always be to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but depend upon it, without patient discipline and self-control, without courage and determination, without a sense of loyalty, of order and of duty, our enterprise is bound to fall. The citadel of bureaucracy is much stronger than the walls of Jericho. Brother-Delegates, the night is dark and tempestuous. Let us hold together and wait in patience for the

dawn, not resting till the bright morning comes, fearless in our faith and strong in our hopes. But this I am painfully compelled to say, that unless wiser counsels prevail, there is bound to be a cleavage when we must part company and the Congress left free to follow the path of constitutional agitation marked out by its founders,—the only path which promises a successful issue.

The new party seems to have persuaded itself that it is hopeless to expect any concessions from our rulers and that political agitation on the lines of the National Congress are a delusion and a snare. The true bureaucrat, it says does not appreciate moderation and always treats the constitutional reformer with secret contempt. Like the Sin Fein party in Ireland, it has lost all faith in constitutional movements but it must be said to its credit that it has also no faith in physical force; nor does it advise the people not to pay taxes with the object of embarrassing the Government. I am of course speaking of the leaders. All its hopes are centred in passive resistance of a most comprehensive kind, derived, I presume, from the modern history of Hungary, the pacific boycott of all things English. If I understand its programme aright, we must refuse to serve Government in any capacity either as paid servants or as members of Legislative Councils, Local Boards or Municipalities. British Courts of Justice too should be placed under a ban and courts of arbitration substituted for them—a proposal, by the way, which shows that the agitation is not the work of hungry lawyers. All schools and colleges maintained by the Government should also be boycotted. In a word, we must get rid of our habit of leaning on the Government and create in its place a habit of thinking and acting as if the Government were not. All this, however, is to be effected not by physical force but by social pressure; for there has as yet arisen no party to counsel violence or any other breach of the law.

Now it seems to me, to put it mildly, that this is a counsel of despair which may appeal to “the impatient idealist”, but which is foredoomed to failure. I speak not in anger but in sorrow, for it is quite possible to sympathise with this new

phase of patriotism, this yearning for an unattainable ideal. But we must look facts in the face. We must recognise them loyally, and if it is true that no man is ever good for much who has not in his youth been carried off his feet by fiery enthusiasm, it is equally true it needs the bit and the bridle. For enthusiasm, unless controlled by sound judgment, frequently ends in ghastly tragedies.

You all know the story of the city with the three gates with their inscriptions; the first said, "Be bold", the second "Be bold and ever more be bold", while the third and last inscription which the horseman read was "Be not too bold." You forget that rashness is not courage. You forget that hasty maxims drawn from the history of other nations and other times are extremely dangerous, as the conditions are never the same, and action which produces a certain result in one country at one time may lead to a directly opposite result in another country and at another time. You forget that there is no doctrine so universal and comprehensive that you are bound to act upon it at all hazards. You forget, it may be a cynical remark, but it is perfectly true, that though a martyr may be worshipped for his sufferings and his sacrifices, he is not always counted among the wisest of men and his example is more frequently admired than followed. I need not go far afield to seek for illustrations. You pride yourselves [on the idea that you alone have the courage of your convictions and that the Moderate party are disloyal to their country and would betray her with a kiss. But you forget that there is a faith, and, perhaps, as has been rightly said, a deeper faith which knows how to stand still and wait patiently till the fruit is ripe and may be gathered without violence. Your aims may be generous but do not drag the country into perils which you do not foresee but which are sure to follow on your methods. The millennium surely will not arrive when all Government colleges and schools are closed, when all Municipal and District Boards are abolished and elected members refuse to sit in the Legislative Councils of the Empire. Petulance is not manliness. It is easy to revile authority in season and out of season, but not so easy to build up a nation. Of one thing I am sure. One thing I know.

Mere rant, however full of fire, will not help us. What we want is action, leadership and discipline. What we want is earnest work in co-operation with the Government, if possible, but in any case in conformity with moral and constitutional methods. Temporary failures must not discourage us. Hopes deferred must not sicken us. We must pursue our course with that courage which inspires the soldier in a forlorn hope with heart for any fate, conscious of our integrity and conscious of the nobleness of our cause.

I implore you not to persevere in your present course. Do not be beguiled by mere phantoms. You cannot put an end to British rule by boycotting the administration. Your only chance under the present circumstances of gaining your object lies in cooperation with the Government in every measure which is likely to hasten our political emancipation for so long as we do not show ourselves worthy of it, rely upon it England will maintain her rule, and if you really want self-government, you must show that you are fit for such responsibility. Then and then only will the English retire from India, their task completely accomplished, and their duty done.

But suppose your movement is successful and the English retire from the country, leaving the people to stew in their own juice. Imagine the chaos and disorder into which the whole country would be immediately plunged. I really cannot—I hope to be forgiven for this remark—take the members of the new party seriously; I believe they are at present only in a sulky mood, because constitutional and peaceful methods have failed. They say that the National Congress has been for years only ploughing the sands of the sea-shore, that all prospects of reasonable concession are more and more receding into the distance and that we are deluding ourselves and our countrymen in persevering in our mendicant policy. Arguments, they say, are of no avail nor supplications however humble. They are always met by insult and by contempt. Now I venture to think that this mood betrays an impatience which the history of every reform shows to be in the highest degree unreasonable—a sullen and angry mood which may readily slide into a temper which would be a menace to law and order and would

furnish our enemies with the plea that public tranquillity can only be secured by repression. You may deny it, but I fear you are in danger of slowly but surely drifting into treason.

Do not, I beseech you, play the game of our enemies but be staunch to the Congress as ever and abide by the principles, and follow the chart laid down by its founders. Do you believe that we do not feel as strongly as you do the unjust disabilities under which we labour? Do you believe that we do not feel as strongly as you do our exclusion from our legitimate share in the administration of the country? Do you believe that we do not feel as strongly as you do the annual drain which is impoverishing the country? Do you believe that we do not feel as strongly as you do the burden of the military expenditure which arrests all progress and but for which the country would have been covered with a network of schools, with free primary education within the reach of the masses? Do you believe that we are not as determined as you are to work out our political emancipation.

But I ask you seriously if it would not be madness to give up constitutional agitation either here or in England, especially in England, where public opinion, not of the classes but of the great democracy, is now the dominating factor in politics. I do not invite you to supplicate with bated breath and whispering humbleness, but to demand of a nation, jealous of its honour, a fulfilment of the pledges which have been repeatedly given to us. What lies in our way is the utter ignorance of the English people about us. They have been led to believe that the administration of India is perfect; but if they were made acquainted with the real condition of the country, at the present day, they would gladly support such reforms as we demand; though we must be prepared for the opposition of those classes whose vested interests might be imperilled by any reform. We must, therefore, try to educate English public opinion. And that public opinion, when well informed and not warped by lies, is sure to be essentially just. It is only by enlisting such opinion on our side that we can hope to achieve our objects. We must, therefore, endeavour to place our views before the people of England by every means in our power, by

active agitation on the platform and in the Press. Remember that we have very powerful enemies, who try their best to mislead the nation, and we can only hope to meet them by creating a powerful body of opinion, in our favour, among the people who have been so recently emancipated and whose sympathy must always be with those who are only claiming the ordinary rights of British citizenship. This is now the task of the British Committee in London, whose services, however, have not received that recognition or support, which is undoubtedly due to them. Our friends in England have been unremitting in their exertions and if we have escaped more rigorous repressive measures, we owe it to them and to them alone. They have not only laboured to promote our welfare but have spent their own money for us, and I am not using the language of exaggeration when I say that they have poured out money like water in our cause.

I do not deny that we must rely on our own right hand to build up our national strength: but the only power that can control the bureaucracy now is to be found in England. Depend upon it, political agitation in England is not a mere waste of energy and of money. It is sure to improve the system of administration and to galvanize it into new life. Measures like free primary education, for instance, will appeal readily to the sympathies of the English people and will be forced on the bureaucracy, who, if left to themselves, would put it off indefinitely; for they have studied one art in perfection, the art of writing minutes and of not doing anything. Then, again, the exposure of official wrong-doing is sure to have a sobering effect on the bureaucracy. Agitation, therefore, in England must be carried on actively and persistently, not apathetically or intermittently, and I would specially recommend this question to the attention of the Congress. But we must work with courage and determination, without expecting immediate results and confidently leave the issue to time. Above all, we must try to win back the confidence of the English nation which has been forfeited by the wild utterances of some irresponsible agitators and the lies and calumnies industriously spread by those who hate the people and would keep them in a state of perpetual

tutelage. It is these men who led Mr. Morley and the Indian Government to believe that there was real danger of a conflagration, which, we know, never existed. It is these men who have deterred a Liberal Government from making any substantial concessions. It is these men who have induced the English people to distrust not only our loyalty but also our competency to manage our own affairs.

I repeat that though our progress may be slow, we must not lose heart; no, not, even if the dial is set back; for such things are inevitable in the course of human affairs. But depend upon it, unless history is a record of lies, Englishmen love freedom as their most cherished possession; but do not forget that the freedom they love is freedom broadening slowly from precedent to precedent. I repeat that our object can only be achieved by constitutional agitation and not by leaving Government severely alone. Visions may be sublime but they are not real; and a universal boycott, which would make administration impossible, seems to be the figment of a disordered imagination. Privileges have to be manfully fought for and it would be puerile to turn away from the struggle, simply because our first attempts are not crowned by tangible immediate results. For my part, I have never despaired, and I refuse to despair.

A JUST CAUSE CAN NEVER FAIL*

Brother-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fears which for months haunted the minds some of us have proved groundless. The genial predictions of our enemies so confidently made have also been falsified. For the Indian National Congress is not dead nor has Surat been its grave. It has been more than once doomed to death but, rely upon it, it bears a charmed life and is fated not to die. It is true a few men have left us, but the Congress is as vigorous as ever. We have now closed up our ranks and though some of us clung convulsively to the hope that those who have now deliberately committed political suicide would still continue to fight the good fight and keep the faith they soon found out their mistake. There can be no reconciliation with the irreconcilable.

The first ominous sign of a moment which has since unmasked itself showed itself in the Benares Congress in December 1905, after the reactionary policy of Lord Curzon had culminated in the partition of Bengal. It was at Benaras that the boycott of English goods which had been started in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of the province was declared to be legitimate, not however without some opposition from those who thought that such a step might ultimately end in hostility to the Government. The new movement started in 1905 reached its second stage in Calcutta where there was a stormy session, and an open rupture was averted only by the tact and authority of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. By that time the new party, who made no secret of their contempt for the moderates, had sketched out a comprehensive policy of passive resistance

* Presidential address delivered by Rash Behary Ghose at the Madras Congress held on 28-30 December, 1908.

modelled on the Irish Sin Fein. They insisted on a boycott not only of English goods but of the English Government itself, though their policy was veiled under the name of self-help and self-reliance. The relations between the two parties thus became strained almost to the breaking point in 1906, and the struggle had reached a still more menacing stage before we met at Surat last year, when the session had to be suspended amid tumultuous and unedifying scenes. And why?—simply because the Congress refused to be dragged from its old moorings by the new currents which had been set in motion. Our National Congress has, I need hardly remind you, from the very beginning strictly adhered to constitutional methods of agitation and has never encouraged disloyalty of any sort of kind. It is true like all other institutions, it has passed through the inevitable process of evolution; but it has passed never faltered in its loyal devotion to the Empire. And at Surat it remained firm to its creed and refused to purchase unity at the price of principle and of loyalty.

Now, I will not wander into the boundless realm of the might have been but will only say this: Those who have gone out of us, were never of us, for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us. Our paths now lie wide apart, and a yawning gulf separates us. It is, however permissible to us to hope that these wayward wanderers, if I may say so without offence, will come back to us and be ours again joining hands and hearts with us and fighting under the old banner—that banner to which we have always been true,—and by which we have again solemnly pledged ourselves to stand, never again to part. But we will not, we cannot, we dare not extend the hand of fellowship to them so long as they persist in their present insensate policy.

Brother delegates, we have been charged with having imposed a new constitution without a mandate from the Congress, but I can hardly believe that our accusers are serious. In the first place there is no question whatever of compulsion or of a brand new constitution. The constitution is not brand new and nobody is compelled to accept it. In the second place, is it not

the idlest pedantry to say that the convention which we were driven to summon at Surat when the regular machinery broke down—a convention at which over eight hundred delegates were present,—had no authority at all to act in the unforeseen emergency which had arisen? If we were always obliged to move only in the beaten path, we could not, in a time of crisis, move at all. “In a wilderness,” said Maynard on a historical occasion, “a man should take the track which will carry him home and should not stand crying.” Where is the King’s highway? I walk nowhere but on the ‘King’s highway.’ There are also other precedents familiar to every student of history. But what is the use of speaking of precedents or of history or of the counsels of common sense, to those who for their own purposes, are determined to belittle the Indian National Congress?

Brother delegates, I must confess it was not without considerable misgiving that I accepted the invitation of the Reception Committee to preside at the present session as I was then inclined in common with most of my countrymen to take a very gloomy view of our position and prospects. For if the situation last year was full of grave anxiety, the year which is just closing was marked by still more sinister omens. I am not, I trust, a pessimist; but a succession of repressive laws and deportations under a lawless Law will sap even the most robust optimism. In the course of the last few days, however, the condition of things has entirely changed, and the clouds which darkened the political sky and which we watched so long with fear and trembling are now dissolving in rain. The words of the poet have come true :

“The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

They are now breaking in blessings over your heads, slaking the parched and thirsty earth. The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. English statesmanship which, as Lord Morley justly boasted, has never yet failed in any part of the world, has risen to its fullest height

at this critical time, and has seized the golden moment, for it knows the season when to take occasion by the hand, not to suppress but to guide the new spirit which England has created in India. To have dropped the policy of conciliation at the present moment would have been a sign not of strength but of weakness. In justice alone lies the strength of rulers—justice which owes no account to the little prudences of the hour. And English statesmanship has dared to be just because England has a national conscience. It has dared to be just because it knows no fear. It has dared to be just because it has no real faith in the cult of cateen ballads,—the tinsel imperialism, which tells us that the white man was created only to bear the burden of the brown.

The reforms which have now been announced were foreshadowed in the King Emperor's message which came to cheer us in our hour of deepest gloom and dejection, and of shame. It was truly a message of peace and goodwill, full of the most kindly, most sympathetic, most friendly feelings towards his Indian subjects breathing the same noble sentiments which inspired the Proclamation of Queen Victoria. It has been said that the manifesto is spiritless and rather superfluous. It was not, I make bold to assert, spiritless, nor superfluous. It was not, spiritless, because it solemnly reaffirmed the great charter of 1858. It was not superfluous because it distinctly announced a policy of progressive development in the direction of self-government.

The language of the Queen's Proclamation, the keynote of which was the equality of races, was perhaps equally plain on one point. But can any one truthfully assert that it received a generous interpretation in practice? Did not a brilliant Viceroy attempt to explain it way in a famous speech and deliberately lay down the policy of excluding Indians from the higher branches of the service? The National Congress protested against the policy, but Lord Curzon would not pay the slightest attention to our protest. He would not be Lord Curzon if he did. We have a right to bring against Lord Curzon the same charges that Shylock brings against Antonio 'He hath scorned our nation'—a nation justly proud of their literature, justly proud of their philosophy and justly proud of their ancient civilisation.

We are now on the threshold of a new era. An important chapter has been opened in the history of the relations between Great Britain and India—a chapter of constitutional reform which promises to unite the two countries together in closer bounds than ever. A fair share in the government of our own country has now been given to us. The problem of reconciling order with progress, efficient administration with the satisfaction of aspirations encouraged by our ruler themselves, which timid people thought was insoluble has at last been solved. The people of India will now be associated with the Government in the daily and hourly administration of their affairs. A great step forward has thus been taken in the grant of representative government for which the Congress had been crying for years.

One of the leading features of the proposed reforms which are all based upon a progressive policy, is the extension of local self-government, perhaps the most potent instrument of political education. This is not entirely a new departure, but the policy with which the honoured name of Lord Ripon will always be associated, never had a fair trial. A single-minded English nobleman of the best type, Lord Ripon believed that righteousness exalteth a nation. He believed that a nation like an individual, has a conscience, and that England's duty to India would be discharged only by making the people gradually fit for self-government. The development of local self-government was, therefore, one of the objects nearest to his heart. But who does not know the fate of the measures introduced by him? Who does not remember the angry controversy which surged round Lord Ripon's administration? Who does not remember the threats of a white mutiny? Who does not remember the open insults to the Queen's representative? It was not the Ilbert bill which convulsed the Anglo-Indian world but Lord Ripon's attempt to give the local representative councils some actual share in the government of their district. And it was certainly not his Lordship's fault if the reforms proposed by him proved an illusion, a mere Barmecide feast.

But we are no longer going to be fed on illusions. Henceforth we shall have an effective voice in directing the policy of the Government in the administration of this country. Hence-

forth we shall be able to initiate discussion on all questions of public importance, and to pass resolutions which, though they may not be binding upon the Government, are sure to receive attention. Indian members will also be admitted to the Executive Councils. The debate on the Budget again will be a real debate and not a mere academic discussion, while the right of interpellation will be considerably widened. Henceforth, the executive will not be able to control all provincial legislation. In a word, we shall now have something like a constitutional government in the place of an autocratic and irresponsible administration. Lord Morley has also promised, not obscurely, that the Bombay and Madras system will be introduced into the larger sister provinces. And if the principle of dispensing with an official majority has not been for the present extended to the Imperial Council, we have no doubt its application will not long be withheld if the result of the experiment in the Provincial Councils proves satisfactory.

The reform scheme has no doubt been very carefully thought-out, but it is impossible to say that it is not susceptible of improvement. And it is quite open to you to suggest such alterations as would facilitate its practical working, and I am sure any reasonable representations made by you will receive every attention from the authorities. I would, therefore, invite your attention to the best method of securing the proper representation of the people in the Legislative Council, and in this connection, I would ask you to consider the question of the constitution of the electoral colleges. It would also be for you to consider whether the appointment of an Indian member to the Executive Councils should not be guaranteed by Statute, instead of being left to the pleasure of the Secretary of State for India for the time being. We cannot always have a Morley at the helm in England, nor a Minto at the head of the administration in India.

We do not know that the future destiny of India may be. We can see only as through a glass darkly. But of this I am assured, that on our genuine co-operation with the British Government depend our future progress and the development of a fuller social and political life. Of this also I am assured that

the future of the country is now in a large measure in our own hands. And we owe it to ourselves, we owe it to the Government which has generously recognised the justice of many of our claims, to show that we are deserving the confidence of our rulers. And, above all, we owe it to our countrymen to give that generous support to the Government which can alone promote their happiness and lead to further reforms. If we are apathetic or do not wisely exercise the privileges now given to us, we shall show to the world that we are unfit for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. The fault will be ours, the humiliation and the disgrace. Remember that our enemies will always be on the watch and if we fail to discharge our duties properly the fact of the country will be sealed. Speaking for myself, I have no such craven fears. I am confident that we shall all loyally co-operate with the Government in promoting the welfare of the country. And I am equally confident that such co-operation will strength existing authority and impart to the administration an efficiency which a foreign bureaucracy with the best intentions can never hope to attain.

To the impatient reformer who thinks that the proposed measures are in some respects inadequate my answer is, as we all know, that to disdain anything short of an organic change in institutions is nothing short of political madness. Reckless change is dangerous, and the most ardent patriot must see the wisdom of accepting reforms, which if they give satisfactory results are sure to lead up to larger reforms. Remember there is no finality in politics. Of one thing I am certain. One thing I know. The nation as a whole will accept these reforms not in a spirit of carping criticism, but with the deepest gratitude.

And this reminds me that if ever there was a time when we ought to rally to the support of Government, of law and of order, if ever there was a time in which all loyal subjects ought to co-operate with the Government, that time is this. And here I must say that we cannot be too grateful to Lord Minto, who has displayed a rare courage and firmness in trying times and has steadily refused though determined to put down lawlessness to follow the unwise policy of his predecessor, which has given rise to all those troubles he is meeting so manfully.

Lord Curzon seems to think that he has seized the full meaning of the 'new movement. In his Lordship's opinion, and we know that what Lord Curzon asserts even one must be true, the whole of the unrest is due to the study of Mill on Liberty and Burke on the French Revolution. He forgot, I may note in passing, to refer to his own Indian speeches, which we can assure him were very widely read by the people of this country. Lord Curzon also speaks of the victory of Japan over Russia and the whispering galleries of the East, and protests against the notion that the re-adjustment of the boundaries of Bengal—his euphemism for the partition of my own province—has in any way contributed to the ferment. Now I confess I cannot speak, nobody can, with the authority of his Lordship; for I know of no calculus which can integrate the minute but powerful forces which are stirring in the hearts of New India.

The history of the unrest was sketched by a masterhand only the other day in England and I am not presumptuous enough to think, I am sure you will all agree with me, that I can improve on the picture then drawn by my friend, Mr. Gokhale. I may, however, venture to add that acquittals are very light sentences in some criminal cases in which the accused belonged to the governing race have contributed not a little to the general discontent. Another potent cause which many thoughtful Englishmen have noticed with deep regret is the insolence and over-bearing language of some members of the ruling class. Of course, we do not, for obvious reasons, expect to find in the manners of every Englishman in this country the repose which stamps the caste of *Vere de Vere*, but aggressive rudeness in language and behaviour might easily be avoided.

By one of those strange ironies of fate, so common in political history, Lord Minto was called upon to face the unhappy consequences of Lord Curzon's policy. He left himself compelled owing to the growing discontent to enact repressive laws to retrain freedom of speech and of public meetings. Now, all experience tells us secret crime invariably dogs the footsteps of coercion. That which has happened in every other country happened in India,—discontent was driven beneath the surface.

The effect on those who are too young to be wise, too impulsive to be rational, was simply disastrous. Some of them who at first refused to meddle with Caesar or with the things that belonged to Caesar and said they would obey him in his place, began to dally with treason; and the first false step in all such cases generally leads by a tragic necessity to that easy descent with which we are all familiar. But the number of such persons was very small, infinitesimally small. And Mr. Tilak, for many years the central figure in the new movement in which he played a notable part, shall be my witness. That gentleman very candidly told an Englishman who was travelling in this country last year, I need not mention the name "Certainly, there is a very small party which talks about abolishing British rule at once and completely, that does not concern us; it is much too far in the future. Unorganised, disarmed, and still disunited we should not have a chance of shaking the British Suzerainty." It cannot certainly be shaken by a little picric acid and a few flasks of gunpowder.

And this reminds me that we have been charged with having maintained an ignoble silence in this time of crisis. Our first answer to this indictment, is that we have not been silent. Our second answer is, that we have no faith in mere protestations of loyalty which must be superfluous. When certain British subjects in the Cape told Lord Milner that they were loyal to the Crown; his Lordship replied, "Loyal of course you are loyal, it would be monstrous if you were not." Let us free our minds of cant, of "nonsense talk" to use a phrase which, I believe is destined to be historical. What, I ask, would an Englishman say if he was asked to join in a loyal demonstration, what would be his feeling, would not treat the invitation as an insult? As I said only the other day from my place in the Viceregal Council, we must be mad if we were really disloyal. But we disdain all spurious loyalty. We are not Pharisees. We do not wear our loyalty on our sleeves, for our loyalty is above all suspicion. To doubt our loyalty is to doubt our sanity. We condemn from the bottom of our hearts all seditious movements, and we condemn anarchism most because it is opposed to the laws of God as well as of man.

But with the reforms in the administration we are confident that sedition will wear itself out. Anarchism sometimes may die hard. But it will die, it is bound to die in this country, because it is in opposition to the best traditions of our race. Anarchism, I repeat, is bound to die, because it is in opposition to all those precepts of pity and of compassion for the lowest of God's creatures, which are our great, our priceless heritage, and which have raised man from a brute, to a height a little only a little lower than the angels.

A season of universal rejoicing is not perhaps the time to make unfriendly criticisms on the action of the Government in enacting repressive laws, and I hope and trust that the memory of these drastic measures will now be buried in oblivion in the same grave with the misdeeds of a few misguided political fanatics. We must also remember that though the Government have been armed with some new weapons they have been rarely used. Thus the Public Meetings Act was put into force only in one district and that only for one year. The Press Act again has been called in aid only in three cases. Speaking for myself, I am not enamoured no lawyer less possibly be enamoured of a measure which is a serious menace to the freedom of the Press. But in fairness to Government we should remember that in the present state of the country a temporary measure of the kind was perhaps necessary. The distinction between the approval of a recent crime and the discussion of an abstract proposition, like the mortality of the action of Harmonius and Aristogiton, is always very fine; and those who engage in such discussions in times of public excitement should know that they can do so only at their peril. But though incitements to violence must be punished and organized lawlessness must be put down with the strong hand, the expediency of prosecuting people for seditious writings or speeches is open to the gravest question. A sustained campaign of repression may be necessary in case of grave peril to law and order, but you cannot prevent the spread of opinions, however mischievous, by sending the speaker or writer to goal. You cannot imprison the mind. It is in its own place. Outrages, and direct incitements to outrages, must, I repeat, be punished and punished severely. But

argument can only be met by argument. Coercion and even the appearance of coercion tend to create only distrust and suspicion. We all know the story of Jupiter and the rustic who listened with attention as long as the god tried to convince him by argument, but when, on his happening to hint a doubt, Jupiter threatened him with his thunder, said, "Now I know that you are wrong, Jupiter, for you never appeal to your thunder when you are right."

And this brings me to the numerous prosecutions for sedition during the course of the year. There have been altogether, I believe about twenty prosecutions and as many convictions. In moments of political passion when feeling runs high, and editor or speaker who is convicted of sedition, however rightly, is sure to be regarded by a section of the people as a martyr. But we do not want any fresh additions to the new Indian hagiology. The roll is already long enough. "He has set his heart upon being martyr," said William the Third of an acrimonious Jacobite, "and I have set mine on disappointing him." Lord Macaulay contrasts the policy of William the Third with that of his father-in-law, who refused to remit a cruel sentence of flogging passed upon a clergyman, saying, "Mr. Johnson has the spirit of a martyr, and it is fit that he should be one." "These two speeches," observes the historian, "would alone suffice to explain the widely different fates of the two princes." I am, I know, stating a mere commonplace fit to adorn copy books, when I say, that criticism, however trenchant or drastic, cannot do much harm, so long as the administration is in a sound condition. It is sure to come to nought for it must always be powerless against the innate conservatism of a settled and civilized society. The true secret of the power of the agitator is, as Macaulay pointed out long ago, the obstinacy of the rulers. A liberal government always makes a moderate people and this is as true of the East as of the West.

It has been said by a well known writer on constitutional law, on English constitutional law I may say, that the legal definition of a seditious libel might, if rigidly interpreted, put down all prevailing forms of political agitation. But a Jury

are not bound by a too strict interpretation of law, and a man, therefore, may publish anything in England, which twelve of his own countrymen think is not blameable. In India, where in trials for sedition, the safeguard of a Jury composed of countrymen of the accused is wanting, a prosecution can only be justified when the public peace is imperilled by wild writings of speeches. As the Court of Directors said, not only should justice be done, but people should be made to see that justice is being done. Where, however, an Indian is convicted of a political offence, I do not know of any glasses which will make his friends see that justice has been done.

However this may be, the severity of the sentences in many cases has undoubtedly called forth very strong comments even from those who have no sympathy whatever with seditious utterances. Braxfield was not a model judge. But no candid man can deny that the convention which sat in Edinburgh towards the end of eighteenth century aimed at revolution. It was only the harsh sentences that sank deep into the minds of the Scottish people, whose feelings found expression half a century afterwards in the Martyr's Memorial on Cotton Hill. Now the East may be the East, and the West may be the West, as the uncrowned Poet Laureate of the new imperialism assures us. But the propriety of a sentence is not a question of latitude and longitude. It is also permissible to doubt whether a system which places political offenders on a level with ordinary criminals is absolutely perfect. They should at least be spared the humiliation of herding with felons.

Would it be too presumptuous to hope that if everything goes on well and the country settles down, as it must in a short time, a general amnesty will be granted to all political offenders and that those who have been deported will be restored to their homes? Would it again be too presumptuous to hope that the partition of Bengal will be modified? A more unpopular measure was never passed [by the Government. Our grievance may be a mere sentimental grievance, but a sentimental grievance means a grievance that is felt. The wound which was inflicted in 1905, will never heal, and it would be lamentable if the success of Lord Morley's liberal policy was

jeopardised in the slightest degree by his failure to undo a grave administrative error,—the greatest blunder, according to Lord McDonnell, ever made in India. I have pleaded more than once for the modification of the partition, and have no desire on the present occasion to repeat myself. But this I am bound to say, even the liberal concessions now made may, in some measure, lose their savour, if this great administrative blunder is long allowed to remain unredressed. The partition may be a settled fact, but it is still an unsettled question.

I find I must stop. I should have liked to say a few words on the rapid and appalling growth of military expenditure and the recent addition of an annual burden of Rupees 45,000,000, against which Lord Minto and his Council always watchful of the interests of the Indian tax-payer, have entered a strong protest. I should have also liked to make a few remarks on the high mortality from plague and malaria, on the University Act and Regulations which many people fear are likely to hinder the growth of high education in this country. But, I feel, I cannot detain you much longer.

I cannot, however, conclude without referring to the very serious loss which the Indian National Congress has sustained in the death of Mr. Ananda Charlu. India was still mourning the loss of her foremost lawyer when our friend followed Sir Bhashyam Aiyangar to the grave. A distinguished scholar and a great lawyer, Mr. Charlu will perhaps be best remembered as one of the pioneers of the Congress movement. Behind a playful of humour there was in him a singleness of purpose, a devotion to duty and an independence of character, which made him a most prominent figure in the public life not only of Madras but of the whole country. He has been taken away from us at a most critical moment when more than ever his wisdom and experience would have helped us in our deliberations. But as I have said more than once men like Mr. Ananda Charlu do not really die, but join the

“Choir invisible

**Of those immortal dead, who live again,
In minds made better by their presence.”**