

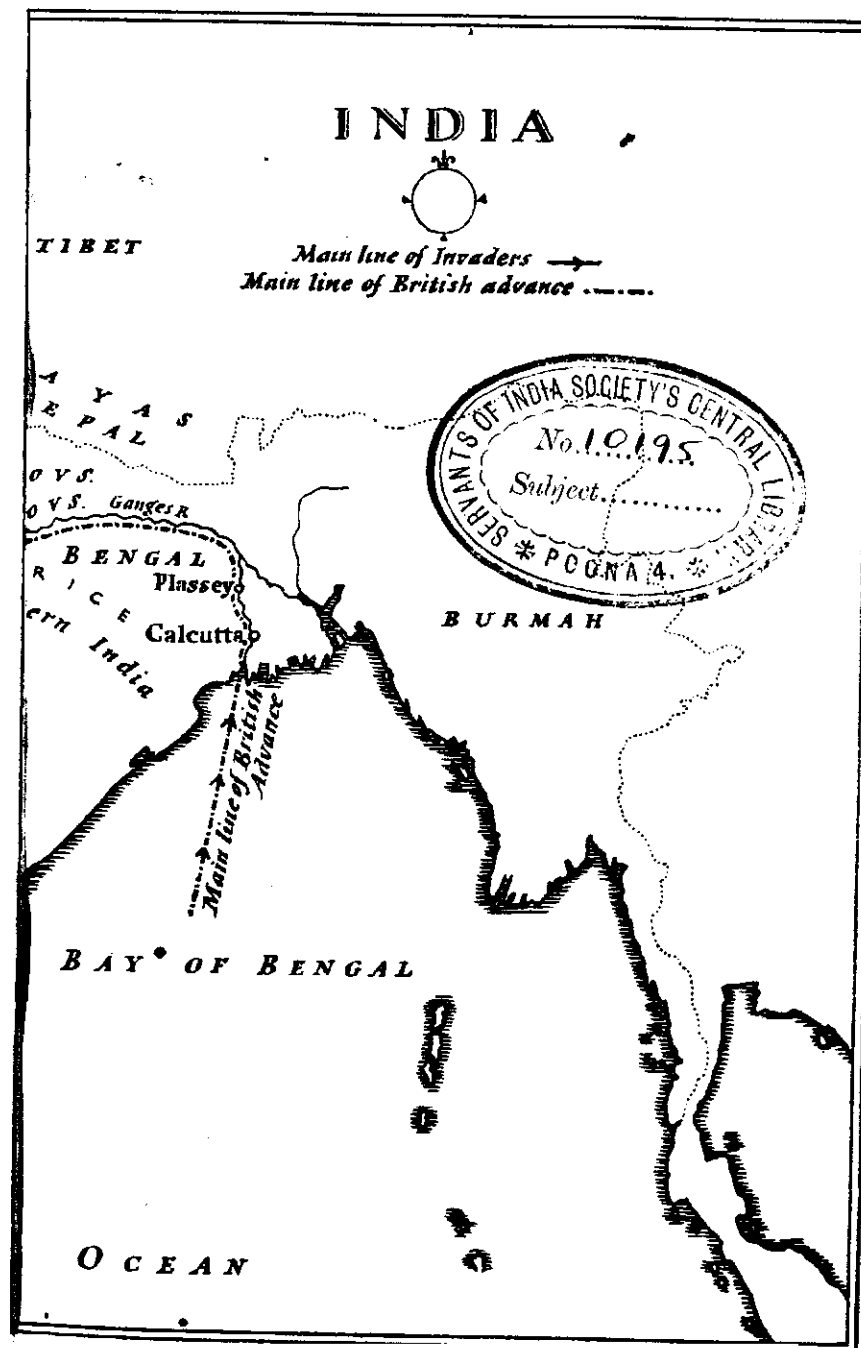
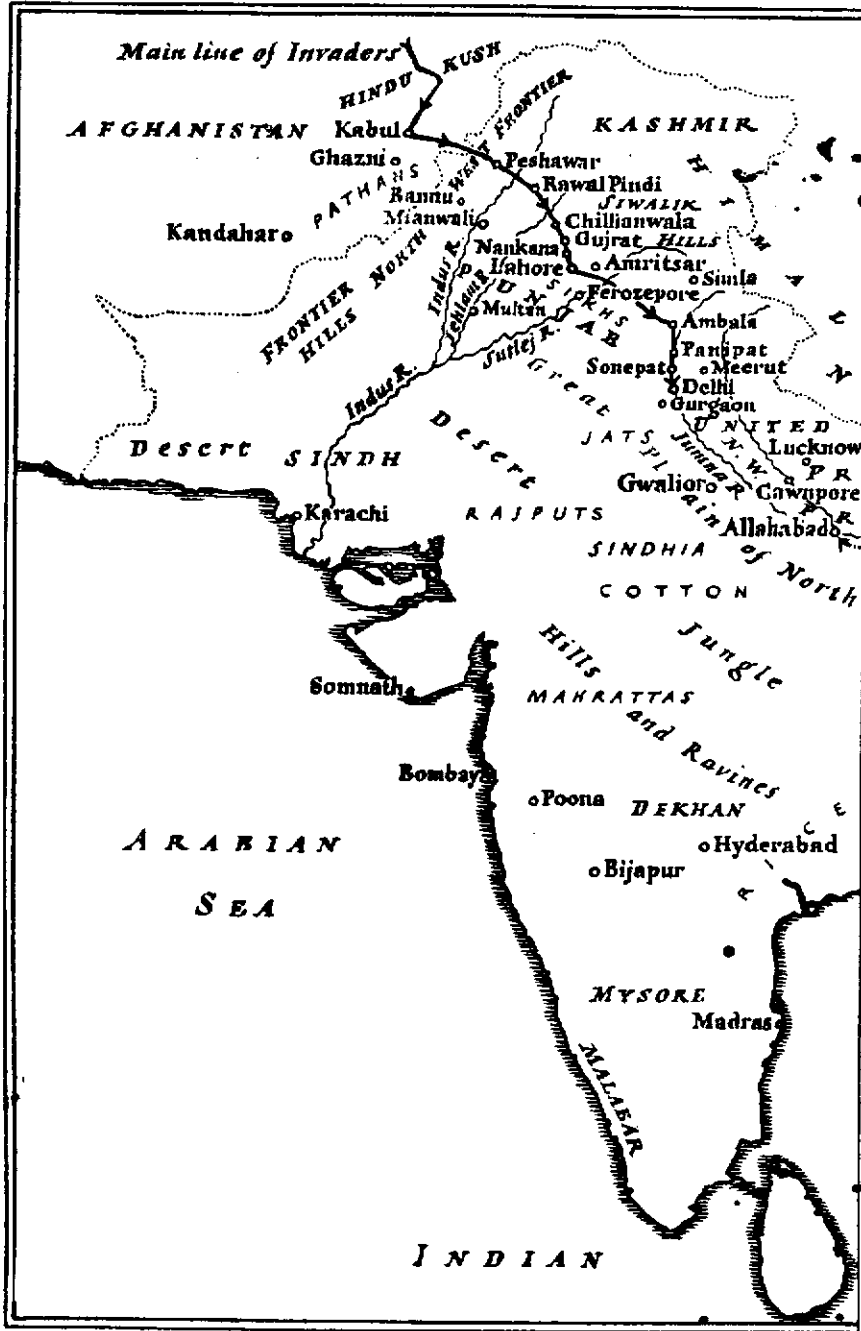
INDIAN BABEL



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INDIAN BABEL

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INDIAN BABEL

BY

HUGH K. TREVASKIS

★

*"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city
and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven"*

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CHAPTER I

India and Her Invaders

I. ANCIENT INDIA

"I am sick of hearing about India" is the Englishman's normal reaction when offered any fresh information on the subject. His brain is fatigued with the flood of contradictory statements that have been poured into his ears. To Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, indeed, the problem of India may seem simple enough, and its solution may provide him with pleasant pastime in the intervals between ruling England and settling the economic affairs of Europe; but the retired Indian Civilian growls that after a lifetime spent in India he understands the Indian less than ever.

India is a land as vast as Europe without Russia, administered from a tiny hilltop at one extremity, just as though Mr. Ramsay Macdonald were ruling Europe from Lossiemouth. Also, like Sir James Jeans's Universe, it contains the infinitely small and the infinitely big. Its atoms are the Indian villages, each one a tiny world in itself. Its religions are equally bewildering, ranging from the extremes of asceticism to temple prostitutes and from the multifarious gods of Hinduism to the Moslem's uncompromising hatred of idolatry. If the Bengalis are cowards, the Sikhs and Punjabi Muhammadans are the bravest men on earth. If the livers and testy tempers of numberless retired colonels testify to the heat of India, it is also a fact that the young lady about to visit her cousin in Sialkot was advised to take out a fur coat.

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India is a country that no formula will fit. One might almost feel that it is hopeless to try to understand it and be tempted to leave it to any charlatan or quack who professes himself able to deal with it. And yet—if Englishmen do not trouble to learn about India, our rulers will lose it for us. With India must go the British Empire—a disaster that would bring ruin for many and unemployment for more.

The Three Indias What is our idea of India? First of all in our minds there is the India of the picture books, the India of nabobs and palanquins, of suttees and rice fields and mango topes, of elephants and tomtoms and “tinkly temple-bells”—the India of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay—the India with which the British first made contact, an India of salaaming natives.

Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed.

It is the India of the proud priestly Brahmin and the pariah untouchable and now alas! the India of the Babu and the Congress wala—of the agitator who shrieks by day and the murder that stabs by night, and other sinister forces behind Gandhi-ism. It is an India whose economic basis is the endless sloppy rice fields whose cultivation demands endless toil and binds the peasant in eternal bondage to priests and other parasites.

But there is another India—the India of the North—an India of mighty rivers rolling down to the sea through vast plains green with wheat or millet—the India of the martial races—of Sikh and Pathan, of Rajput and Jat and Punjabi Muhammadan, the India of fearless riders and the tramp of armed men. The climate here is suited to breed a hardy martial manhood. Instead of the enervating damp greenhouse heat of Bengal or Bombay

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there are fierce extremes, a Punjab winter of frosty nights and Riviera-like days and a summer which has been described as the hottest outside hell.

And between these lives yet another India—the India of the *Jungle Book*, of cobras and tigers, of trackless forest and wild primitive aboriginal races

new-caught sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half child.

It is an India for the botanist and the naturalist, but in politics its chief importance is its central position between the two other Indias. It is the breakwater on which so many invasions have broken in vain; and it is flanked on the west by the great Indian desert which, even more than the mountain ranges of Afghanistan, has proved the real frontier of India.

The Nomads of Yet invaders there were. Indeed the *Central Asia* history of India has been largely the history of its invaders.

To the north of the great mountain barrier of India lie the great plains of Central Asia, rainless and almost waterless. In such a land, agriculture is impossible, and man has to specialize as a pastoral nomad, following his sheep and herds, and ever seeking fresh fields and pastures new. Such yearly shift in search of new ground is not a flitting on a holiday tour: it is as much a part of the year's life as the change of raiment between summer and winter. Everything is taken, and every man, woman, and child of the family has a recognized share in the general shift.

This moving camp requires a quasi-military organization. There can be no freedom for the individualist who thinks differently from other people and would rather

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go his own way. Orders must be given by someone, and by whom better than by the father with his wider experience? His women accompany him and are therefore permanently married to him, and they, together with the children and animals, form the family of which he is the patriarch. Children he needs must have to look after the young animals—and the well-being of the patriarchal family depends so much on the number of its flocks that it can do with almost any number of children. Children are, in fact, a paying form of property.

And so the patriarchal family soon expands into a tribe whose organization and mobility render it a peculiarly effective military machine. The strenuous outdoor life eliminates the unfit, and occasional brushes with neighbouring tribes approximate the conditions to those of continuous active service. Finally the lean years come. Withered pastures no longer support the ever-growing numbers. A leader of genius alone is needed—a Joshua, an Attila, or a Tamerlane—to consolidate the neighbouring tribes into one united band, and soon this band is rushing with irresistible force on the fertile plains of the nearest cultivated land, be it Palestine, Hungary or India.

The Frontier Yet the penetration of India has never proved an easy task. To the north the towering heights of the Himalayas, four miles high and a thousand miles long, form an impermeable wall whose glacis is the empty icy waste of the Tibetan plateau. To the west the river Indus, with the Indian desert behind and the Afghan hills in front, is nearly unassailable. But between these two is the joint in the harness, the Achilles' heel of India. There but a single ridge, the

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Hindu Kush, separates the plains of Bactria from the Afghan valley of Kabul, and it is a ridge that can be crossed in summer through passes as low as twelve thousand feet.

The Frontier pierced It is a barrier, no doubt, but not an effective barrier, and the secret once discovered could never be forgotten. Judging from the stories of Genesis in the past, and from what happens in the Punjab to-day, one would expect the nomads to appear in the settled land first as peaceful traders. With famine they would come in larger numbers, till their intentions began to be suspected. "Ye are spies, to see the nakedness of land, ye are come," said Joseph to his famine-stricken brethren in Egypt. These were the words I spoke in my frontier district of Mianwali to some intruders whom I suspected as the forerunners of a plundering expedition. But to be formidable such marauders must be well-led, generally by one who like Moses, Attila, Jenghiz Khan, Tamerlane, or Babar has just that tincture of culture which can turn a nomad chief into a statesman. Then and not till then comes the successful invasion.

India accustomed to foreign rule Such invasions continually repeated formed the early history of India. Self-government is a conception alien to the vocabulary of India, whose fertile plains have been continuously under the rule of foreign military adventurers—adventurers who maintained their rule only so long as they were recruited from external stocks, and who fell as soon as they became Indianized. Thus it is that in India there has never been any general identity between rulers and their subjects. The people are indifferent to changes

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of government. They have been accustomed from time immemorial to the domination of foreigners.

The Such invaders were the Aryans, from whom *Dravidians* the modern Hindus of high-caste are proud to trace their descent. They found the great plains already possessing civilization of a sort—Dravidian we call it, with a religion of the Sun and the Serpent recalling the widespread ancient culture which we associate with Stonehenge. It was a civilization whose demoralizing effect on the untutored nomad invader is graphically illustrated in the Book of Genesis, where man fell from his Eden of primitive innocence on attaining the knowledge of good and evil through the cult symbolized by the Serpent.

The The Aryans disliked and despised the dark-skinned *Aryans* Dravidians. These Aryans were not altogether nomads, for in Hungary, whence they came, they had already learnt the rudiments of agriculture. Thence they had sallied forth to be the Keltic and Teutonic conquerors of France, Britain and Germany, and the Sabines and Latins of early Italy. To the south, they burst into Greece and broke up the old Ægean civilization they found there. To the east, successive bands crossed the Bosphorus and, avoiding the old civilization of Mesopotamia, overflowed into Bactria. Thence about 1500 B.C. (when Joshua was invading the land of Canaan) they began to filter through into India.

The religion of these primitive tribes reflected the simplicity of their life. The great powers of nature were recognized in the worship of the Sun, the Sky, the Dawn, and the Storm, with perhaps a vague

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monotheistic idea that there was a great God and Father over all. Nearer to the individual came the simple sacrifices and oblation, performed by the head of the family, the patriarch who, like Melchisedec, King of Salem, was both king and priest of his family.

The Theirs was a culture widely different from that *Brahmins* of the Serpent-worshipping Dravidians whom they conquered. At first the conquerors took wives from their despised subjects, but later on fear of complete absorption led them to hold aloof. A priestly class, that of the Brahmins, was evolved, and this class drew up rigid caste rules, strictly forbidding inter-marriage with the aborigines, and insisting on the strict performance of an exaggerated version of the old nomad ceremonies which they promulgated in their religious textbook, the Vedas.

The Brahmin aristocracy claimed to monopolize the knowledge of the customary and religious law, and to have exclusive possession of the principles by which quarrels were decided. There was nothing specially peculiar to India in this. Before the invention of writing and during the infancy of the art, an aristocracy invested with judicial privileges formed the only expedient by which the accurate preservation of the customs of a race or tribe could be anywhere attained. The patricians claimed a similar monopoly of knowledge in early Rome. But the Brahmins, alone among early priesthoods, maintained their monopoly of power and learning long after the circumstances which originally justified it had passed away. The Brahmins alone could perform sacrifices properly, and accordingly Brahminism first laid emphasis on the ceremonial of sacrifice, and on the blessings which a sacrifice correctly offered by a Brahmin would

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bring to the offender in this world and the next. This done, nothing else very much mattered. Morality was a matter of trivial importance.

Buddhism Obviously such a system could not satisfy the cravings of the soul. So at least found a certain Prince Gautama, who lived about 525 B.C., at a time when a wave of religious feeling was abroad, when the later Hebrew prophets were prophesying and when Aeschylus was publishing tragedies which rose to something like prophetic strain. The Prince was blessed with a father who was out to give his son a good time; but self-indulgence carried to extremes is never satisfying, being always beset by the grim spectres of age, disease, and death—from which Brahmin methods offered no way of escape. Gautama tried them and revolted; and being a Prince, he revolted successfully. He proclaimed that the gods of the Brahmins were false, that all evil sprang from the lusts of the flesh, that peace could only come with release from the bonds of incarnation, and with absorption into the absolute, and that the means to this end was the extinction of desire. The Buddhism of Gautama had no theology, it was hardly a religion; it was rather a system of duty, morality and benevolence without deity, prayer, or priest. But, unlike Hinduism, it gave its followers a man to revere, a man whose personal character was worthy of reverence, and for the first time in the religious experience of India it urged repentance on its hearers. The new faith called its followers to a new life. They must be born again.

Alexander the Great Gautama was not the only prince to revolt against Brahmin methods. The Magian priests of Persia were Brahmins in all but name; and

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while Gautama was teaching the Way towards the bliss of extinction in India, his contemporary Darius was employing more drastic methods with the Magians in Persia. Once and for all he stamped them out, restored the old religion of Zoroaster in all its purity, and paved the way to the greatness of Persia. Two and a half millenniums ago Darius had learnt what the British Government of to-day fails to realize, that Brahminism is political nihilism, fatal to the government of great empires. The Persian Empire advanced beyond the Indus, its flank secured by the annexation of Bactria. When Persia fell, Alexander would have advanced further, and his heavy armed troops invaded the Punjab in all the hopefulness of a Punjab winter. But by July the heat was intolerable. There was only one more river to cross between them and the Ganges valley, but they refused to cross it. And for two thousand years no European entered India, save as a suppliant or a slave.

The Buddhist Empires When Alexander was encamped on the Indus he was joined by a soldier of fortune who was probably not an Indian though he afterwards assumed the Indian name of Chandragupta Maurya. This able adventurer fired the great conqueror with the plan of subduing the unwarlike valley of the Ganges. The Macedonian soldiers were not to be tempted, but after Alexander had departed, Chandragupta himself collected a force of frontier tribes (then, as now, always ready for a fight) and with them overran the Punjab and the Ganges valley. His empire soon stretched from sea to sea, and northward as far as the Hindu Kush, that scientific frontier sighed for in vain by his English successors, and never held in

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its entirety even by the great Moguls. His chief adviser was a subtle Brahmin who devised for him a royal pedigree, and whose unprincipled maxims of statecraft outdo Machiavelli at his worst. Yet, even so, Chandragupta could not stand the Brahmins. No great political leader ever can. Then, as now, their secretive methods and destructive cunning proved fatal to good government. As Darius turned to Zoroaster, so Chandragupta sought the Buddha as an ally against the growth of Brahmin power.

His grandson Asoka, lauded by H. G. Wells as a star among monarchs, was a Buddhist heart and soul. He ruled wisely and well. But when it is said that his empire stretched from the Hindu Kush to Madras, we are talking in hyperbole. The vanity of Indian monarchs has always led them to include in their dominions any outside state which is not in a state of actual hostility to them. Analogous reasoning would lead Mr. Ramsay Macdonald to call himself Emperor of the World. The Congress leaders are never tired of recalling the glorious days of Asoka and the other Buddhist Empires that succeeded him. But it should be remembered that (1) these Empires were relatively small, never covering the whole of India, (2) they were founded by foreign adventurers who decayed as soon as they became Indianized, and (3) above all they were Buddhist not Brahmin. With the revival of Brahminism disintegration set in.

Extinction of Buddhism flourished in the Punjab, and a huge mound near Rawalpindi still marks the site of the gigantic memorial built to the Buddhist saint who gave himself up to feed a starving tigress. It is this kind of saintliness that Mr. Gandhi

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affects. He may be described as a Brahminical wolf in the clothing of a Buddhist sheep.

The Buddhists were too sheep-like. From the plains of Central Asia emerged a new set of invaders, the Huns, more savage and ferocious than any of their predecessors. From the English Channel to the Bay of Bengal no country was safe from their desolations. Mihiragula (A.D. 528), their most capable leader, has been styled the Attila of India. One of his favourite amusements was the expensive one of rolling elephants down precipitous places in order to watch their sufferings. Such a king could not pretend to be a very enthusiastic worshipper at the shrine of the saint who sacrificed himself to feed a starving tigress. And to do him justice, Mihiragula was no hypocrite. Spurred on by the Brahmins, he subjected the unfortunate Buddhist monks to a fierce persecution.

But he only extinguished the embers of a faith which was already half-dead. A religion with no God, no theology, no priests and no promise for the future, gave little to sustain its followers in the hour of trial. For against this vague ethical system the Brahmins were mobilizing forces of tremendous power. To the old nature gods of the Aryans, they added the more primitive, but also more terrible deities of the old Dravidian civilization. Above all the great god Shiv, the god of Lust and Hate, seduced the weak and hardened the cruel. Under his terrible leadership all the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil were mobilized by the Brahmins for the extinction of Buddhism, till its last feeble survivals in Behar (the country of its origin) were finally extinguished by the first Muhammadan invasion (A.D. 1200).

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II. HINDUISM

The new Hinduism This new Hinduism—for it was a new thing—derived its force from the combination of the intellectual power and political cunning of the Brahmins with the emotional force and popular appeal of unedifying cults. There is no ritual however stupid, no deity however debased, which the Brahmins would not justify by some plausible sophistry, or weave into some high-flown theory. Popular deities and local godlings one and all were marshalled under the Brahmin banner. Vishnu, the Preserver, and Shiv, the destroyer and regenerator—

the god of the sensuous fire
That moulds all Nature in forms divine
The symbols of death, and of man's desire,
The organs of birth, and the circlet of bones,
And the light loves carved on the temple stones.

—these two were only the foremost of a whole troop of gods and goddesses. Such a system must, of necessity, be immoral. The aspects of Nature are manifold and can reasonably be allotted to a multiplicity of gods, each supreme in his separate province; but only one standard of right and wrong is possible, and it cannot conveniently be either formulated or enforced by a Divine Committee.

Obscene Cults This leaves the field clear for every foul and evil passion to rear its head and consecrate its cult. Human nature being what it is, the worship of the organs of generation is, to say the least of it, an unnecessarily realistic way of recognizing the creative powers of Nature, however much the Brahmins

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may justify it as typifying the union of soul with body, or the inpouring of spirit into flesh. But when men worship, not a stone image of the organ but the living organ itself, religion sheds its last rays of theology and stalks forth as Lust, naked and unashamed. Similarly the "light loves carved on the temple stones" in every posture, natural and unnatural, may, like the gargoyles on our Cathedrals, be explained as symbolizing the evil that is expelled from the inward purity of the shrine. But to the ordinary unsophisticated human being they seem rather to justify the remark of the Moslem sepoy to his British officer: "Why don't the British rise in their wrath, and sweep this foul religion from off the face of the earth?"

Echoes of the worship of Moloch are heard in the story of the Bombay Hindu baker, who caught a little boy and baked him alive as a sacrifice to the god of his new oven, that it might thenceforth bake good loaves.

The good side of Hinduism Of course there is another side to Hinduism. It would not be half so deadly were it altogether vile. It has a place for the good as well as the bad. It has converted the Buddhist Way to its own uses, and recognizes the virtues of St. Francis of Assisi no less than the vices of Cæsar Borgia. It is this sort of ascetic saintliness that Mr. Gandhi affects and thereby impresses the unsophisticated European. In the villages too, God has not left himself without witness, and the life of the Hindu villager is generally clean and wholesome: but it is in spite of, not because of, his religion. The great defect of Hinduism is that it defends rather than denounces evil cults. While Christianity hates the sin while loving the sinner, Hinduism excuses the sin though it may despise and

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deride those who fall into temptation. And this is as true of the Hinduism of to-day as of that of 1500 years ago.

Brahmin For Hinduism knows of only one deadly sin, *worship* and that is failure to recognize the superiority of the Brahmin. The Brahmin is ready to compromise with anything or anybody that will venerate his authority, for a Brahmin is even more sacred than a cow. And the Hindu religious textbooks, in whole tomes of perverted apocalyptic, elaborate the horrors of the unfortunate who, even unwittingly, inflicts the slightest harm on a cow or a Brahmin.

The Caste system To enforce their authority, the Brahmins devised an effective machinery. Had they tried alone and unsupported to maintain their extraordinary privileges against the vast mass of the unprivileged, they would inevitably have suffered the fate of the Roman patricians, and ultimately must have succumbed to the united proletariat. So they graded the whole population into a vast hierarchy, the Brahmins on top, and the rest ranged rank on rank, one below the other, with the untouchables at the bottom. Under this arrangement all save the very lowest caste had something to lose by the abolition of the Hindu system. Mr. Gandhi parades his sympathy with the untouchables, but he talks like a Prince who can yet condescend to love the lowest of the low. For Mr. Gandhi is a Bania, a member of the caste which combines shopkeeping with money-lending, a caste which, for reasons which will appear, ranks high in the hierarchy. And so, though not himself a Brahmin, Mr. Gandhi is one of the stoutest defenders of the Brahmin system.

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High position of the money-lending castes Of course the Brahmins did not get to work in this obvious manner. They were too clever for that. Caste is instinctive in human nature. And the Brahmins found in the tribal divisions of the people, and in the hereditary nature of occupation which had sprung from them, an institution suited to their purpose and ready to their hands. In every village the most recent conquerors dominated the rest, and often successive conquerors had formed successive layers in the village aristocracy. But it was in the towns that the caste system found its most congenial home. For the castes were primarily occupational. And in the towns the castes traced their origins to groups similar to the guilds of mediæval Europe, or the Trade Unions of to-day.

When a number of people in daily intercourse with one another have to earn their living in difficulties, and rely on one another's aid in contending with those difficulties, a feeling of brotherhood almost inevitably grows up. In India such a group formed a caste. These town castes of traders and money-lenders made rules which secured for their goods a high-priced if limited market among the surrounding villagers. For them the caste system was bound up with the maintenance of trade monopolies, which enabled them to take a heavy toll of the labour of the countryside; and consequently, next to the Brahmins, the traders of the towns formed the most strenuous supporters of the caste system, and were allotted a correspondingly high position in the social scale of castes. It is for this reason that in India the caste aristocracy consists, not of the fighting classes, or the lords of the land, but of those sedentary shopkeepers whose poor physique and pettifogging mentalities have in other countries brought them contempt

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rather than honour. This explains the proud pretensions and puny stature of a member of the money-lending caste.

The Un-touchables Outside these higher castes remained many aboriginal tribes of vagrant habits, who wandered about from jungle to jungle and from village to village, feeding on jackals, foxes, and lizards, and eating such dead bodies as fell in their way. The grasses which fringed the village pond were plaited by them into a thatch to shelter them from the sun, or into baskets to carry their scanty possessions. Living with their women very much in common, they were always ready to prostitute them when occasion offered; and they were always on the watch for opportunities of pilfering. Many such tribes abandoned their vagrant habits and settled as menials in a village, where they were graded as the lowest caste, ranging from the un-touchables, who will contaminate a Brahmin at a range of sixty yards, to those who might approach quite close without doing any damage.

The Bonds of caste Class differentiation was not peculiar to India, and is not unknown in England to-day, where it is said that it takes three generations to make a gentleman. In India three thousand would not avail. For occupation and caste are hereditary. A tribe or a caste or a section of one might improve its position slowly through the generations by its enthusiasm for the Brahmins, or by affecting social exclusiveness or special sanctity after the manner of Mr. Gandhi. But no individual however capable or enterprising could emancipate himself from the social station of the caste to which he belonged; and, to rivet

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the bonds of caste yet more tightly, marriage outside the caste was forbidden, nor might those of different castes eat together. Disobedience to these rules brought social boycott, for the outcast had no caste. He might not even associate with untouchables. The whole of Hindu society was bound in rigid fetters, to escape from which was to incur terrible penalties in this life and worse in the life to come.

For four hundred years (say A.D. 600 to 1000) the Brahmins had their own way, unhindered by invader from without or enemy within. Invasions had stopped. The great tidal wave of Moslem expansion had spent its force by the time it reached India, but it overwhelmed Bactria and so blocked the gateway through which alone invasions could come from Central Asia.

The Why did not the Brahmins seize the opportunity
Rajputs to build up a strong national organization?

Because they were mentally incapable of doing so. An aristocracy of lawyers and shopkeepers kept the people in subjection, but it was totally unfitted for the arts of government, as may be seen from the behaviour of its spiritual heirs, the Congress leaders of to-day. At the same time, someone must govern, and consequently a new caste arose, the Rajputs, whose function was to govern, to organize and to fight. And this fighting became more a form of manly sport, according to rules laid down by the Brahmins, than a fight to the death between deadly foes. As with the Free Companies of mediæval Italy, their methods of warfare were only effective against each other or the populace; they collapsed at once when an outside invader appeared on the scene. Though brave and chivalrous and devoted to

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their clan and chief, their loyalty went no further. The recently appointed "Indian States Enquiry Committee" recommended the abolition of all contributions of a feudal nature under the New Federal Constitution. A little knowledge of Indian history would have taught the British Government that feudalism is completely foreign to India. A feudal India might have resisted the onslaughts of Islam. But no such bond united the Rajput chiefs either with each other or with the population as a whole. In practice the Rajputs were always subject to Brahmin control and were paralysed for effective resistance to the new invaders who were once more to break through the isolation of India.

III. THE SWORD OF ISLAM

Islam In a sense the Moslem invasions were merely a repetition of the nomad invasions which had always characterized the history of India. But they were a repetition with a difference, and that difference was a vital one. The older invaders had allowed themselves to be absorbed into the Brahmin system, whose caste prejudices were so fatal to military efficiency. But the Moslems brought with them a faith which allowed of no compromise with Brahmin tenets. To the caste system it opposed the equality of all believers and the inferiority of all others whether Brahmins or non-Brahmins; to cow-worship it opposed cow-sacrifice; to an army graded on caste principles it opposed a system under which every private carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack. Above all, to a medley of conflicting gods acting at cross purposes, it opposed belief in One God, whose law was righteousness.

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Moslem military discipline Hinduism stood for laxity—laxity of thought, principle, and practice; while Islam, the Moslem religion, stood for discipline, whether military, religious or political. It was the tribal discipline of the nomad Arabs crystallized and enforced by religious sanctions. The orders of the Moslem army commander had the force of the orders of God, and this divine sanction enabled the Moslem leaders to keep their cavalry in hand, and by the use of shock tactics to bring them into action at the critical moment. The elephant, on which Hindu tradition placed extensive reliance, proved to be useless, or worse than useless, against well-equipped active cavalry; while, with the Hindus, the military principle of unity of command was always hampered by tribal, sectarian and caste divisions. Valour and capacity could and did raise Moslem slaves into kings, as in the case of the Slave Dynasty of Delhi. But nothing availed the low-caste Hindu, however brilliant. His only hope of rising lay in turning Moslem.

Moral discipline Just as Moslem military discipline had a divine sanction, so religious discipline was enforced by military methods. Prayer and fasting were part of the routine of a Moslem army, for every Moslem was both a warrior and a priest, and Islam was at the same time a mighty army and a vast theological college. Through their military and religious exercises was enforced a moral discipline that was unknown to Hinduism. Even to-day the Moslem in India has words which are unknown to the Hindu vocabulary, words recognizing the duty of maintaining faith, of a sense of honour, of loyalty to one whose salt he has eaten, and of courage in face of danger. In all these things Islam owed no-

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thing to the ancient and traditional world of Asia, with its immemorial etiquette, and its bottomless and bewildering philosophies. That ancient Asia felt the entrance of Islam as something foreign and western and warlike, piercing it like a spear.

Moslem raids into India Within a century and a quarter (A.D. 622 to A.D. 749) the vigorous impulse of this new faith had carried the creed of the Arabian Prophet Muhammad from the Indus to the Atlantic and from the borders of China to Upper Egypt. In A.D. 713 one adventurer even crossed the Indus to wreak vengeance on a Hindu prince, who claimed the sovereign rights at every bridal, and in the exercise of this royal privilege committed incest with his own sister. The girl prayed to heaven for vengeance, and the king and the city fell before the Moslem invader. But the event, though ominous, led to no immediate result. Decay had rotted Islam at its centre; and it was only slowly that the new religion spread through the mountain tribes of Afghanistan, those reputed descendants of the ten lost tribes, which Assyria had deported to the East and who claimed descent from Afghana, the son of Saul. On these mountaineers the hoards of money accumulated in Hindu palaces and temples acted like a magnet, and to their cupidity was added religious zeal. Mahmud of Ghazni was the first to discover the weakness of the Hindus, amongst whom he marched at will till he reached Somnath on the Arabian Sea, where stood the temple of a celebrated Hindu deity. The trembling Brahmins offered an enormous sum for its ransom, but Mahmud refused to be a merchant of idols. The treasure of pearls and rubies,

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concealed in the belly of the god's statue, amply rewarded the piety of the Moslem.

Moslem Kingdom of Delhi Other raiders followed in Mahmud's footsteps till after 200 years (A.D. 1000 to 1200) one of them, Muhammad Ghori (Ghori by name and gory by nature), captured Delhi. The strategical advantages of Delhi, on the main route from the Frontier to the valley of the Ganges, were quickly appreciated by the Moslem invaders, and Delhi thenceforward remained the centre of Muhammadan rule in India. Dynasty succeeded dynasty in rapid succession. One ruler subdued nearly the whole of India, but his success was short-lived. As the vigorous foreign stocks became Indianized, they deteriorated and eventually collapsed.

IV. THE GREAT MOGULS

The Mongols Far from being Indians, most of these Delhi Kings were from the Turkish branch of the great Tartar race, which sallied forth from the plains of Central Asia to provide rulers for the whole of Asia. In the thirteenth century another branch, the Mongol, successfully overran the whole of the Russian and Chinese pre-war empires, together with Burma, Persia and Mesopotamia. In each country they adopted the religion of the civilized countries they conquered; in China, Buddhism, and in Western Asia, Islam. Throughout the Middle Ages the Mongols remained a terror to the civilizations of Asia, till in 1398 Tamerlane invaded India. His wild followers could subsist where others would have perished, and cutting through the deserts to the south of the Punjab, he arrived suddenly at the

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gates of Delhi. There—seventeen years before the date of Agincourt—his small force completely defeated the vast and unwieldy hosts of the last of the now Indianized and demoralized Delhi Kings. A terrible massacre of the whole population of Delhi and other massacres in proportion paralysed the whole of Northern India for a century, for Tamerlane himself left India behind him.

Babar But in 1524, more than a century later, a new invader appeared whose coming opened a new chapter in the history of India. Babar, a Turk born of a Mongol mother, traced his descent from Tamerlane, and after many adventures in Central Asia he invaded India. His conquests were due to the same methods which had given victory to every previous invader from Alexander to Tamerlane—unity of command, and a massed cavalry charge directed at the right time and place on an unwieldy enemy. Though his armies were small they were braced by the vigour of the north, and he could rely when necessary on an unlimited supply of recruits from the finest fighting races of Asia. When he died in 1530 he had conquered all the great plain of Northern India from Afghanistan to Bengal.

Akbar: the Lord Irwin of Islam Babar's grandson Akbar was perhaps the most remarkable man who ever sat on an Indian throne, viceregal or royal. To the physical strength and military capacity of his grandfather he added a gift for administration which has never been surpassed in India. He endowed the Mogul¹ Empire with an administrative "steel framework" which enabled it to carry on long after its vitality

¹ *Mogul*. The Persian pronunciation of Mongol.

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had gone, and which, adopted by the British, still survives to-day as the last barrier between the Government of India and anarchy. For our modern constitution-mongering does not deal, or attempt or profess to deal, with administration. It only prescribes rules for the dog-fight under which various factions may struggle for the control of an administrative system already there. It was Akbar's military and administrative capacity which enabled him to indulge with impunity in philosophical speculations and experiments that would have been fatal to a lesser man.

Ruler of a great empire, Akbar did seriously consider how his administration could best be conducted for the benefit, not only of his Muhammadan subjects, but also of all his subjects, of whom by far the greater portion were Hindus. His predecessors, in so far as they were not mere plunderers and tyrants, had as their aim the conversion of the infidel and the bringing of India into the fold of the true faith of Islam. This was the meaning of all those slaughterings of infidels, smashing of idols, and destruction of temples, which to us seem so extraordinary. Yet, in spite of their overwhelming military superiority, the Moslems had failed. Possibly they had lost the single-minded fervour which had inspired the great Prophet of Arabia and his immediate successors. Possibly gentler methods would have been less irritating and more successful. Certainly there can be no greater tribute to the resisting power of the Brahmin system than the fact that India was the only country conquered by the Moslems where the conquered refused to adopt the faith of the victor.

Paradoxically enough, the Moslem conquest had increased rather than diminished the power of the Brahmins. Just as the destruction of the Irish aristocracy by

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the English in Elizabeth's reign left the Irish with no leaders but the priests, so the Moslems in India destroyed the power of the Rajputs, the Hindu princes who stood for the better, chivalric side of Hinduism, and left the Brahmins incontestably the highest caste, with brains and cunning and an age-long tradition all dedicated to the maintenance of their superiority and of the system on which that superiority depended. Akbar thus found himself ruling an empire divided into two bitterly hostile classes, one of which (the Moslem) had nearly all the military and executive capacity, while in the other (the Hindu) were included the acutest brains, the financial ability, and the great majority of his subjects.

Under these circumstances Akbar decided on a policy similar to that of his great contemporary Elizabeth. He aimed at uniting all his subjects in one Faith which, combining the best qualities of both the prevailing religions, should confirm his subjects in their allegiance to himself. If he failed it was only because he attempted the impossible. Even his genius and despotic authority over half India could not reconcile the irreconcilable. No wonder then that our Indian Round Tables are futile in attempting the same task.

The glory of By a fortunate accident Akbar's Empire
Shah Jehan descended to a succession of strong rulers.

His son and grandson were both men of masculine fibre and vigorous intelligence. The latter, Shah Jehan, born of a Rajput mother, showed the Hindu passion for wealth and display. Not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like Shah Jehan, whose private rooms covered more than twice the space of any contemporary European palace, whose Audience Hall was roofed with silver, and whose throne, standing

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on four feet of solid gold set around with pearls, blazed with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, a peacock flashing a tail of sapphires and other stones above it, and the Koh-i-Noor sending a dull gleam from the front of its pearl-fringed canopy.

The sons of Shah Jehan A succession war between the sons of the deceased king was an ordinary incident of oriental monarchies, and none of the Mogul emperors had succeeded to his throne without such a struggle. But in the succession to the throne of Shah Jehan much more was involved than the question as to which one of four capable young princes should sit on the Peacock Throne. Of Shah Jehan's four sons, Murad and Shujah, it is true, hardly represented anything but themselves. But Dara, frank and generous, though arrogant and overbearing, in religion almost a free-thinker, the idol of the Rajputs, was eminently suited to complete the work of Akbar and to transmute the Mogul Empire into a Hindu monarchy.

But this tendency aroused bitter resentment in strict Moslems, and above all in Dara's brother Aurungzeb. Born in the purple, this prince was nevertheless more suited to the raiment of camel's hair and the leathern girdle of the prophet. He saw that under the proud and sensual Shah Jehan and the free-thinking Dara the old burning faith of the desert prophet was dead. It was to him that the call came to reawaken the sleepers and to rouse the faithful once more to the duties and responsibilities of Islam. Shah Jehan had found his paradise in the imposing Hall of Audience which he had built as a monument to his power. But from this pomp and splendour Aurungzeb turned away to the beautiful gem-like purity of the Pearl Mosque, where,

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unhelped and unhindered by priest or preacher, he could meet his God alone.

Aurangzeb succeeds to the throne For Aurungzeb the end justified the means, and he set about his task with a duplicity characteristically oriental.

Professing a hatred of the world and a longing to escape from it, he joined Murad in a crusade against the infidel Dara. The two brothers were victorious, and Murad was then overcome in a drunken sleep and subsequently murdered. The wretched Dara was paraded in chains through the streets of Delhi. The people were all on the side of this generous romantic figure, but none dare lift a finger to save him. They were accustomed to be ruled by the sword, and the fortunes of war had declared against Dara.

The Moslem revival To all good Moslems Aurungzeb is the greatest of the Moguls. Unlike his predecessors he came out definitely on the side of Islam, and was more anxious to spread the Faith than to consolidate his rule. His policy alienated Hindus everywhere and led the way to the decline and fall of the Mogul Empire. Like his contemporary Louis XIV of France, Aurungzeb's long reign from 1658-1707 weakened the empire by unwise expansion combined with increased centralization, leaving it helpless when his commanding personality was removed. But while the outer shell of the Mogul Empire crumbled and fell, Islam itself awoke to renewed vigour. Conversions were frequent. In the Punjab whole tribes went over bodily to Islam, and the Punjab now took over that predominantly Moslem character which has distinguished it ever since.

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The Hindu attempt to absorb Islam was definitely checked and defeated by Aurungzeb. Hinduism has always met its enemies with the wiles of Delilah rather than with the sword of Goliath. Thus it swallowed up Buddhism and many a lesser faith, and thus it tried to swallow up Islam. It is due to Aurungzeb that Islam remained in India as a standing protest against the caste system and the idolatry of Hinduism; it is due to Aurungzeb that the Congress Party does not dominate the whole of India to-day.

The Had Aurungzeb been more single-minded he *Mahrattas* might have been more successful. But with something of the megalomania of his contemporary Louis XIV, he combined with religious fanaticism a passion for dominion which led the Mogul armies far afield. Far beyond the jungle breakwater of Central India survived three Moslem kingdoms—relics of the pre-Mogul invaders. A statesmanlike policy would have supported these as the bulwarks not only of Islam, but also of law and order in the south. Not so Aurungzeb, who wasted the whole strength of the Mogul Empire in their reduction. He succeeded: but failure could hardly have been more ruinous than such a success.

This distant warfare led the Moguls into the country of the Mahrattas, a Hindu people of mixed Tartar origin, with something of the characteristics of a nation. That wild country of jungle, hill and chasm was admirably suited to the guerilla warfare at which the Mahrattas were adepts. They joined and deserted either side with equal impartiality, with results demoralizing to both sides. One of their leaders, Sivaji, had rebelled against the King of Bijapur, who sent an expedition

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under Afzal Khan to bring him to submission. Feigning submission, Sivaji flung himself at his feet. Afzal Khan kindly raised him only to receive in his side the "tiger's claw", the dagger concealed in Sivaji's hand. His death was the signal for a Mahratta attack, and this typical example of Hindu treachery at once raised Sivaji to leadership among the Mahrattas; and though at first nominally the ally of the Mogul, he was soon strong enough to defy both sides. The fall of the southern Moslem kingdoms left the Moguls still to cope with the Mahrattas, and against this elusive enemy their unwieldy armies struggled in vain. The death of Aurungzeb found the Mahrattas still unbeaten, and already marked out as the leaders of Hindu reaction against Moslem rule.

Decline and Fall of the Mogul Empire The armies so fruitlessly wasted in the south might better have been employed on the northern Frontier whence the Persians and Afghans slowly but surely ousted the Moguls, leaving the high roads from Central Asia again open to invaders. The death-blow to the dying empire was dealt by Nadir Shah, the Persian soldier of fortune, with the sack of Delhi thirty years after the death of Aurungzeb (1738). He was followed by Ahmad Shah the Abdalee Afghani, who overran the Punjab between 1748 and 1751. Meanwhile from the south the Mahrattas were swarming up like a devastating flood. The Mogul Empire, like the British Empire in India to-day, was a plaything in the grasp of stronger forces than itself. And just as in the English Wars of the Roses the anarchic baronage gradually ranged themselves under the standards of York or Lancaster, so it was with the self-made princes and marauding adven-

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turers who were parcelling out India among themselves.

Roughly speaking the Mahrattas represented the Hindu revolt against Moslem dominion, while the Moslem leaders (whether or not they nominally owed allegiance to the moribund Mogul Empire) followed the standard of the Abdalee. But the latter was the better general, and pinned the Mahrattas to the north of Delhi, starving and shivering in the unaccustomed cold of a Punjab winter (5 January 1761). Nor was he to be conquered by Mahratta treachery, pleading for terms of peace. "Oaths are not chains," said the sturdy Afghan, with a spirit which might be an example to the British to-day in dealing with Hindu guile; "they are only words—things that will never bind the enemy when once he has escaped from danger. By one effort we can get this thorn out of our sides." He was as good as his word, and few Mahrattas escaped alive from his hands to tell their kinsmen of this fatal check to the Hindu revival. But the results of the victory were disproportionate to the sternness of the contest. Laden with booty, the troops of Ahmad Shah returned to their highlands. Mahratta expansion was checked, but the political vacuum thereby created was not effectively filled up. It was a far different competitor who took the place left clear by the Abdalee in the Indian sun.

CHAPTER II

British Dominion

I. BRITAIN AND HER RIVALS

East Indian Traders Ivory, apes, and peacocks came to King Solomon from India; and probably rice, sandalwood and cottons also. But trade with India was much earlier than that, and the stories of Sinbad the Sailor seem a reflection of those early voyages. From time immemorial India has been a magnet for the precious riches she has hoarded, and in return she has sent costly goods of small bulk unobtainable elsewhere. The profits on this trade have always been enormous. They gave an evanescent glory to the kingdom of Solomon, they enriched the Assyrian, the Persian and Byzantine Empires, and, as Constantinople declined under Turkish attacks, Venice and Genoa "held the gorgeous East in fee", till the Turkish conquest of Egypt closed the Red Sea route.

Portugal When the prizes of Eastern commerce became open to Western Europe, Portugal was the first to take the field. The Cape once rounded, the trade was hers for the asking, for the East had no warships fit to fight the Portuguese, and a string of naval bases soon consolidated what was in effect an Empire of the Indian Ocean. But Portugal tried to do too much. Her strength was overtaxed by enterprises carried on simultaneously in Asia, Africa and Brazil, and in 1580 all the vitality was crushed out of her by annexation to Spain,

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who proceeded to drain Portuguese resources in the interests of Spanish military adventures in Europe and America.

Holland and England The Eastern trade was now doubly important. The insistent European demand for pepper, cinnamon, cloves, mace and nutmegs arose partly from their use in preserving meat for winter consumption and partly from the taste of the time; and the Indian demand for the precious metals offered a profitable means of disposal of the gold and silver which poured into Spain from the mines of Mexico and Peru. The profits to be obtained excited the cupidity of the Dutch, who had successfully asserted their independence of Spain and were now free to attack her Portuguese dependency. The latter soon succumbed; and the Dutch advanced from trading voyages to "factories" or trading ports, then to forts to protect the factories, and finally to territorial sovereignty in the neighbourhood. The English were imitators of the Dutch, but were considerably weaker till the end of the seventeenth century, when French attacks on Holland weakened the Dutch at their base and drove them virtually to abandon India and concentrate on the spice islands to the East. India was thus left free to the English East India Company, whose charter from the Crown devolved certain necessary sovereign rights—in particular that of waging war—on a body formed originally for the purpose of trade only.

France and England But this was the golden age of the French Monarchy, and France, not to be outdone in the race for wealth, had her East India Company too. But while the English Company lent

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money to the home Government the French Company borrowed; so that the French Government was much more inclined to dictate policy to its Indian Company than was the English. Much as Englishmen on the spot suffered from unwise interference from home, it was nothing to what their French antagonists had to endure. And the consequent freedom to act in accordance with the needs of the local situation told steadily in favour of the English in the approaching contest.

British sea Yet at first the advantage was on the side *power decisive* of the French, whose Governor Dupleix had the genius to perceive the decisive effect with which European troops and European-led native levies might be used in the interminable conflicts between the residuary legatees of the Mogul Empire—capable usurpers with no right, rightful heirs with no capacity, military leaders carving out principalities, provincial Viceroyes trying to found dynasties, Mahratta captains and Afghan adventurers—each fighting for his own hand, and each willing in an emergency to call in the European. Even when the official war between England and France closed in 1748, the contest between the two companies continued *sub rosa*, as they lent assistance to the various native powers. Yet the stars in their courses fought against Dupleix, whose genius struggled vainly under the handicaps of the vacillating Louis XV, misguided by mistresses and incompetent ministers. When war broke out again in 1756, and Pitt took the helm in England, the issue was no longer in doubt. British sea power cut off the French in India from their base, and the contest for supremacy in South India was in 1761 terminated decisively and inevitably in favour of the British.

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II. THE CONQUEST OF INDIA

Bengal The way was now cleared for British advance in India. And the right road to supremacy lay through Bengal, where navigable channels gave passage into the heart of a rich country inhabited by the most unwarlike people in India. It invited a conquest which would provide an economic base for future advance.

Clive Bengal also marked the nadir of Mogul degeneracy. Virtually independent under a hereditary governor, it came under the rule of a weak and vicious prince who forced the British into action by the massacre of the Black Hole of Calcutta. The army of vengeance was commanded by Clive, a man of energy and decision, and his victory at Plassey proved conclusively the superiority of the British and British-led native troops to the treacherous *condottieri* who were the mainstay of the Muhammadan rulerships. Soon however even these mercenaries began to transfer their services to the British, whom they found to be people who always paid, who usually won, who were invariably in the front line of battle, and who did the hardest fighting with a *corps d'élite* of their own countrymen. The pressure of the Mahrattas slowly drove the Muhammadan rulerships—the flotsam and jetsam of the derelict Mogul Empire—into the arms of the British; and, with Bengal as their economic base, with a reliable army, and with an increasing number of States seeking their protection, the British were now in a position to face the storm which, originating in America, spread round the world till it reached the Bay of Bengal.

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Warren Hastings The crisis called forth the man to meet it. The Governorship of Warren Hastings (1772-1785) coincided almost exactly with the duration of the American War of Independence, and his long tenure of office enabled him to accumulate an experience in handling Indian problems which is entirely lacking in the short-lived Viceroys of to-day. These also lack the preliminary apprenticeship of twenty-two years, the period which Hastings had already served in India. Yet all his wisdom and experience hardly sufficed to atone for the difficulties created by a rebellious Council, a stiff-necked Judiciary, and incompetent subordinates. At the outset the Bombay Government embarked on a fatuous adventure, which involved Hastings in a war with the whole force of the Mahratta Empire. It was a responsibility he could not evade, though the central position of the Mahrattas enabled them to threaten effectively the three divided English Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bengal, to intrigue successfully with the Moslem states of Mysore and Hyderabad, and to communicate with the French, who had now joined the rebellious Americans.

The Mahrattas and Hyder Ali Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, was himself a most formidable enemy, whose rise to power was due to the force of personality alone. His subjects were almost entirely Hindu, while he was a fanatical Moslem, whom the vacillations of English policy had rendered a vindictive enemy long before the Governorship of Hastings. He now seized his opportunity, made peace with his old enemies the Hindu Mahrattas, and wasted the Madras territories with fire and sword. Hastings had thus two enemies on his hands. But Mahratta unity was weakening, and Sindhia, who

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was fast becoming the most powerful chief of their confederacy, had aims of his own—to seize Delhi and exploit the Mogul name to his own advantage. A few hard knocks from the British convinced him that his interest lay in coming to terms, so he agreed to mediate between the Mahrattas and the British on condition that the latter would not interfere with his designs on the last relics of the Mogul Empire. This masterly diplomacy left Hastings free to deal with Hyder Ali, who was effectively under control before the French were able to render any useful aid. It was due to Hastings and Hastings alone that England, at the lowest ebb of her fortunes and ringed about with enemies, in India emerged from the struggle uninjured, though not unshaken.

Cornwallis Hastings had won through by force of personality alone; his successor, Cornwallis, brought to India—for the first time—rank and an outside reputation, and a well-defined supreme authority, military as well as civil. He made every endeavour to carry out the peaceful policy ordered from England. In vain! Tippu, Hyder Ali's son and successor, was a Moslem fanatic who intrigued with France and Turkey against England, and Cornwallis had no option but to fight. Tippu's distant allies were of no real assistance, and within a short time Cornwallis, with the help of Hyderabad and the Mahrattas, had reduced Tippu to submission, though the latter still plotted revenge.

Wellesley But if Cornwallis suffered from pacifist instructions, his successor, Lord Wellesley, was handicapped by no such limitations. Arriving in India at a time when England was maintaining, single-handed,

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the struggle against Revolutionary France (1798), he consistently viewed Indian affairs against a wider background. The star of Napoleon was rapidly rising in the political firmament, and that clear brain had already perceived that the key to world dominion lay in the East. "This little Europe" (Napoleon grumbled) "offers too contracted a field. One must go to the East to gain power and greatness. Europe is a mere molehill; it is only in the East, where there are 600 million human beings, that there have ever been vast empires and mighty revolutions." The road to the East lay through Egypt, and thither he accordingly went—to find his ambitions foiled by the English at the walls of Acre. The idea, however, was never abandoned, and indeed fresh plans for an invasion of India were at the root of his overtures to Russia.

England supreme in the South But while Napoleon schemed, Wellesley acted. French intrigue roused the latent hostility of Tippu, though France was impotent to help him, and the pacifist policy of Cornwallis had weakened English prestige in India. It required all Wellesley's masterly diplomacy to bring Hyderabad and the Mahrattas into the field against Tippu, but the victory of the allies was largely due to the activity and advice of Lord Wellesley's brother, Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington. Tippu's capital was stormed, Tippu slain, and the nucleus of his kingdom restored to the old Hindu rulers of Mysore, whom Hyder Ali had ejected.

Subsidiary treaties with Oudh and Hyderabad The southern sea coast was now British, with no possibility of access to the French. But Lord

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Wellesley looked further, and aimed at filling the vacuum caused by the decline of the Mogul Empire, and asserting British Paramountcy over the native kingdoms. He began with those dismembered bits of wreckage of the Moguls, the Muhammadan kingdoms of Oudh and Hyderabad. Neither was in any condition to resist his proposals. Each agreed to disband its army, to rely on the British for military protection, and to assign large territories as payment for such assistance. Such a system, though convenient for the ruling prince at the time, was fatal to his successors. Asia must be ruled by men of iron, hammered out under the blows of competitive conflict. No longer could the feeble heirs of such princes be ejected by capable usurpers. Vice-sodden and effeminate, they were yet protected by British bayonets, till misgovernment and maladministration often compelled the suzerain power to intervene still further.

Sindhia and the Mahrattas A hardier enemy still dominated the hills and jungles of Central India. From Delhi to Hyderabad, from Bombay to the frontiers of Bengal, the Mahrattas raided and looted where they did not govern. But their confederacy was gradually splitting into hereditary military rulerships. The most powerful of these, Sindhia, had seized Delhi and the Mogul Emperor, and the Mogul Empire received a new vitality when exploited by the leading Mahratta chief. Discarding the old Mahratta guerilla tactics, he had built up a powerful army disciplined by French officers, and recruited from the hardy martial races of Northern India.

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Britain supreme in India But this army soon became the chief object of Lord Wellesley to disband or destroy, for restless ambition in Asiatics was to him a thing intolerable. Mahratta rivalries gave him his opening, and a British army was soon encamped at Poona, the headquarters of the Peshwa, nominal head of the confederacy, who was induced to invite British assistance against his unruly vassals. War with Sindhia soon followed. But the Jats and Rajputs of the northern plains, who now formed the backbone of Sindhia's armies, were more than a match for the rice-fed Bengali and Madrasi sepoy of the Company, and it was fortunate that most of his French officers had left Sindhia's service when the critical struggle took place.

Fortunately Arthur Wellesley and Lake, the British generals, were both men of the highest capacity. They were also invested with full diplomatic authority and could thus freely exercise their military and political talents unhampered. A series of well-contested and hard-won victories brought Sindhia to his knees; and the result was decisive. Though Sindhia's disciplined troops had proved invincible against native rivals, once destroyed they could not be replaced. By abandoning the traditional Mahratta guerilla tactics and replacing the quasi-national Mahratta levies by a mercenary army, Sindhia had given hostages to fortune.

His defeat left the British supreme in India, in occupation of the Imperial cities of Agra and Delhi, and in charge of the person and family of the Mogul Emperor, whose Imperial sign-manual was no longer to be at the disposal of any adventurer who could occupy Delhi or overawe the powerless Mogul court. The Emperor was relegated to the position of a State pensioner, and the British were left face to face with the rising Sikh power

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in the Punjab, which alone remained free to contest their claim to paramountcy over the whole of India.

III. THE PROBLEM OF THE FRONTIER

The North-West Frontier Wellesley's methods were expensive, and after his departure his Imperialistic schemes were abandoned by his successors, whom orders from home condemned to a more passive rôle. But Napoleon's alliance with Russia and the threats of a joint invasion of India (1807) drew attention to the politics of the North-West Frontier, where a formidable military power had arisen on the banks of the Sutlej.

Baba Nanak founds the Sikh religion The vitality of this power lay in a new religion which had as its basis one of the inevitable revolts of the human soul against Brahmin domination. Many of these revolts were strangled at birth, but Sikhism, like Buddhism, came to fruition. Its founder Baba Nanak, a high caste Hindu, was born at Nankana Sahib, near Lahore, a spot held in reverence by the Sikhs as the birthplace of their founder till a ghastly massacre of his disciples recently (1921) turned the hallowed shrine into a place of horror.

Babar was still an adventurer in Central Asia, and the Moguls no more than a name in India, when Nanak, like Buddha a thousand years earlier, revolted against the ceremonial and social restrictions of Hinduism. Buddha knew nought but the many gods of the Brahmins, and these he rejected, preaching that there was no god. Nanak, on the other hand, was brought up in a land where the One God of Islam rivalled the many gods of Hinduism; and he taught that there was One

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God—who was neither the Allah of the Moslem nor the Divine Essence of the Hindu, but the God of the Universe and of all mankind and of all religions. He did not despise or attack the Hindu and Moslem teachers—he held, indeed, that they too had been sent from God—but he preached a higher and purer religion, one embracing all that was best in both, but purged of much of the evil that had been allowed in either because of the hardness of men’s hearts. He respected the Hindu veneration of the cow, and the Moslem abhorrence of the hog, but recommended, as a higher rule than either, total abstinence from flesh. In short he attacked nothing, he condemned nobody. He sought to draw men’s minds from the shadow to the substance, to glorifying what was highest and best in the religion of each. He was content to leave to all men, for a while at least, the outward and visible signs to which each was accustomed, if only he might bring home to their hearts the inward and spiritual grace which the empty form might conceal and obstruct but could not wholly destroy. Nothing could have been more gentle or less aggressive than his doctrine: nothing more unlike the teaching of his great successor Govind.

The Golden Temple at Amritsar Nine Gurus, or teachers, succeeded Nanak. The fourth, Ram Das, was one of the holy men whom the tolerant Mogul Emperor Akbar heard gladly, granting him a piece of land to the east of Lahore. Here he made a tank, the Pool of the Water of Life, wherein still stands the Golden Temple, the holy place that is to the Sikhs what Mecca is to the Moslems, and Benares to Hindus. In this pool the Sikhs are baptised by complete immersion before they pass into the great Temple, enriched

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with spoils from Mogul tomb and palace, where the white-robed priest reads the Granth (the Sikh Bible) and receives their offerings. Fans wave to and fro above the Granth, embroidered canopies enwrap it, and brooms of peacock feathers sweep the dust of the worshippers from the temple floor. But these splendours were undreamt of by Ram Das, in whose day the Sikhs were still a small and obscure sect of no wealth or importance.

Organization and discipline came with the next Guru Arjan, who gave the Sikhs a written rule of faith in the Granth, and a common rallying point in the sacred city of Amritsar. He combined the business instincts of the trader with religious zeal. The gifts of the devout were employed in mercantile transactions, and the obscure quietist sect became a flourishing commercial community.

Sikh feud Politics proved his bane. He backed one of *with Islam* the Emperor Jhangir's sons in an unsuccessful rebellion against his father; and the harsh imprisonment which followed resulted in his death. Though the punishment was political rather than religious, it resulted in a feud between the two monotheistic faiths of Sikhism and Islam, which time never healed, and which rankles deep to-day.

His successor Har Govind called the Sikhs to arms. He encouraged them to eat flesh to whet their martial instincts, and made zeal for the cause, rather than saintliness of life, the price of salvation. These disciplined warriors were now the open enemies of the Mogul Government, driven from Amritsar into the wild hills and ravines to the north, whence they waged a guerilla warfare on the Mogul armies. The climax

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was reached when the Mogul Emperor Aurungzeb, a stern ruler and a fanatical Moslem, captured and executed the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur, as an infidel, a robber and a rebel.

The political Sikhism of Guru Govind Singh (1675-1708) The tide turned under the last and greatest Guru, his son, Govind Singh. He determined to form the Sikhs into a religious and military commonwealth; and he executed his design in the systematic spirit of the Spartan Lycurgus. Following the example of his Moslem enemies, he used religion as the basis of political power, till his bands of plundering marauders had the fervour and discipline of Cromwell's Ironsides. He flouted the distinction of caste, teaching the equality of all Sikhs before God, all united by one "gate" of initiation, and all eating of one sacramental dish. Though this lost him many from the higher castes, the agricultural classes and the lower orders flocked in numbers to his standard. In the long hair, which every Sikh was now commanded to retain, Govind Singh systematized and utilized an Eastern ritual which was already ancient in the time of the Hebrew hero Samson. It was an invaluable protection against sword-cuts, and it sharply distinguished the Sikh brother from the uninitiated. The title "Singh" or lion marked each Sikh as a warrior, while abstinence from the unclean tobacco gave him the spiritual pride of the ascetic.

His religious creed was in many respects the same as that of Nanak; the God, the Guru and the Granth remained unchanged. But while Nanak had substituted holiness of life for religious ceremonies, Govind demanded brave deeds and zealous devotion to the cause as proof of faith: and though he retained Nanak's

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tolerant attitude towards the Hindu gods and worship, he preached undying hatred against the Moslem persecutors. The religious was entirely eclipsed by the military spirit, and thus for the second time in history a religion became a political power, and for the first time in India a nation arose, embracing all races and all classes and grades of society and banded together in the face of a foreign foe.

The Sikh struggle with Islam Thus inspired, the Sikhs proved a thorn in the flesh to the decaying Mogul Empire. Mosques were destroyed and Muhammadan doctors of religion murdered, nor was the Sikh's rage restrained by any consideration of age or sex. Whole towns were massacred with wanton barbarity, and even the bodies of the dead were dug up, and thrown out as carrion for greedy vultures and pariah dogs. For a time indeed the Sikhs were ground down under the iron heel of Ahmad Shah, the protagonist of Islam, who after his victory at Panipat (1761) routed the Sikhs completely, and pursued them across the Sutlej. On his homeward march he destroyed the town of Amritsar, blew up the Golden Temple, filled the Sacred Tank with mud, and defiled the holy place with the slaughter of cows. But as his grasp on the Punjab relaxed, the Sikh combination became closer and more vigorous, until by 1785 they had mastered the whole Punjab from the Jhelum to the Sutlej, and were threatening Delhi.

Ranjit Singh Valiant in the field when well led, the Sikh was almost invincible behind entrenchments: ever genial, good-tempered and uncomplaining, a fair horseman, a stubborn infantry soldier, as steady

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under fire as he was eager for the charge. Leadership alone was necessary to weld the Sikhs into a nation, and at the end of the eighteenth century a leader appeared.

The position of Ranjit Singh among the Sikhs may be paralleled by that of Frederick the Great in Germany, who rose to power not so much as King of Prussia, but as the one man to whom all Germans could look as likely to raise that medley of principalities and electorates into a nation. So Ranjit Singh stood out, not so much as the head of one of the leagues into which the Sikh confederacy was divided and to whom the grandson of Ahmad Shah had granted the governorship of Lahore, but as the one man of genius the Sikhs had produced. Mean in appearance, his face pitted and one eye closed by the ravages of small-pox, he was yet a splendid horseman, a bold leader, a cool unscrupulous schemer, and an unerring judge of character. His pluck, patience and guile soon broke the Afghan power in the Punjab, and put down every Sikh rival west of the Sutlej.

In spite of Sikh opposition his strength of character enabled him to create a disciplined army after the English model, recruited from all classes and officered largely by foreigners, which after the six years of anarchy which followed his death nearly shattered the fabric of British dominion in India, despite divided counsels and treacherous leadership. Meantime his unscrupulous statecraft employed the anti-Moslem fervour of his people in conquering Peshawar and the Indus valley up to the utmost bounds of far Kashmir. He was only restrained from invading Sindh to the south and attacking the Sikhs to the east of the Sutlej by the political sagacity which ever warned him against a collision with the English.

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Pacification of Central India To the English indeed this revival of Hindu nationalism in Upper India was exceedingly serviceable. An invasion by some great military leader at the head of the fighting tribes of Central Asia might even then have threatened their none too stable supremacy. But the Sikhs were making it impossible for any such army to penetrate even the Punjab, let alone the great plains beyond, without encountering the obstinate resistance of men united to defend their faith against Moslem invaders in a spirit very different from the quiescence of ordinary Hinduism.

This was just as well. For as usual, pacifism led to chaos, and chaos to war. The British attempt to withdraw within their own territories, while liquidating their obligations in Central India, was driving into that jungle-infested country all the discharged mercenaries, marauding bands, and irresponsible banditti of the whole of India; till by 1819 one notable military adventurer was living in Rajputana with a compact army of 30,000 men and a strong artillery, entirely unconnected with any recognizable government or fixed territory, acknowledging no political or civil responsibility. The wretched Rajput states appealed in desperation to the British for deliverance, urging them, as the legitimate successors of the Mogul Empire, to fulfil their proper function as protectors of the weak against the tyranny of the strong.

The challenge was taken up by Lord Hastings, whose long Viceroyalty (1813-23) finally consummated British supremacy in India. The remaining Mahratta States were reduced to dependence, the banditti were suppressed, and the whole confused jungle of Central India was marked out into recognized rulerships, so that no

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part of it remained outside the jurisdiction of some responsible authority.

External conquests But, while the British were thus rising to dominion in India, other rulerships were rising simultaneously, and by a not dissimilar process, on its outskirts. In the sixty years succeeding Plassey, strong men had formed kingdoms in Nepal, Burma, Afghanistan and the Punjab. But the political sagacity of Ranjit Singh found no imitators. A successful Oriental Kingdom must go on expanding till it bursts. Nepal and Burmah came successively into conflict with the British, and successively they lost both territory and prestige to such an extent that from Bengal to Kashmir the whole line of the British eastern and north-eastern frontier was sealed and secured.

Afghanistan and Sindh To the north-west the uneasy friendship of Ranjit Singh secured British India from invasion. The Sikh ruler had already cast envious eyes on Sindh, a country ethnographically, commercially and geographically a dependency of the Punjab kingdom. But the British veto was imposed on such ambitions, and Ranjit Singh, headed off from the south, directed his aims north-west, where Afghanistan was already weakened by attack from Persia, backed by the irresistible weight of the Russia steamroller. From its situation, its natural strength and high strategic value, Afghanistan had always been an object of anxiety to the rulers of India, and the British Government at home now laid down the principle, big with import for the future, that the independence and integrity of Afghanistan were essential to the security of India.

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The Afghan disaster Unfortunately this principle was applied in the wrong way. Instead of consolidating the power of Dost Muhammad, the *de facto* ruler, Lord Auckland, a viceroy of the pig-headed variety, planned an expedition to reinstate Shah Shuja (the descendant of Ahmad Shah the Abdalee), an incompetent whose unpopularity had once already lost him the Afghan throne. To the crafty Sikh ruler at Lahore the English must have appeared to be going mad, and although he agreed to become an accomplice in the expedition, it was under conditions of very limited liability. As a result of the campaign Shah Shuja was easily replaced on the Afghan throne, and the English remained in military occupation of the strategic Kabul-Kandahar line for two years. But the whole plan had been ill-conceived politically, and from a strategic point of view the expedition had been rash and dangerous. The base of operations for the invasion lay in Sindh, whose rulers were justifiably somewhat suspicious of British designs, while its communications lay through the Punjab, which Ranjit Singh's death (1839) left open to anti-British influences. That a disastrous retreat (1841-2) should result from the untenable position at Kabul was hardly surprising, and after honour had been satisfied by the recapture of Kabul, the British withdrew their forces from Afghanistan, evacuated the country and abandoned the enterprise.

Annexation of Sindh It was the first serious disaster to British arms in India, and it was pregnant with evil omen for the future. Viceroys were more bombastic and less capable than of yore. The annexation of Sindh (1843) was indeed excused by the very lukewarm assistance given by the Sindh rulers to the

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Afghan expedition. It was strategically sound both in conception and execution, but it marked a definite departure from the unaggressive policy which had hitherto characterized the British in India. Two effective Indian armies still remained independent of the British, that of the Sikhs and that mercenary Hindustani army of the Mahratta leader Sindhia whose dominions had been reduced to the territory round Gwalior. Both were alarmed at these new encroachments. But the Gwalior army was attacked and dispersed before the difficulties with the more formidable Punjab army came to a head.

Sikh Good leaders had always been few among the *intrigues* democratic Sikhs, and this defect had been accentuated by Ranjit Singh's jealousy of possible rivals. Moreover all the outstanding men, including Ranjit Singh's legitimate heirs, were rapidly removed by the series of assassinations which followed on his death. The only capable survivor of this game of political skittles was Gulab Singh. Born in the low hills beneath the Himalayas, of humble origin and mixed Rajput descent, his good looks, insinuating manners, ability and undoubted courage had early gained for him the favour of Ranjit Singh. With the Sikhs themselves he was never popular. Hearty, boisterous, greedy and unscrupulous, they were never unnecessarily cruel; and they shrank from a chief who massacred prisoners in cold blood, when he did not flay them alive, stuffing their skins and hanging them up as scarecrows. Yet in the six years of increasing disorder following Ranjit Singh's death, this cruel intriguer had become master of Kashmir and the hills beneath. Secure in his mountains, he had acquiesced in the bestowal of the empty

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title of Maharaja on Dhulip Singh, the child by an unknown father of a nautch-girl named Jindan, who had cleverly affiliated the boy on Ranjīt Singh.

The Sikh army But it required more than intrigues to manage the Sikh army, which was rapidly assuming the power of a Praetorian Guard. Clubs were formed in each regiment, whose representatives in the Capital assumed the functions of a Sikh Parliament. But the appetite of the army was only whetted by the donations showered on it by the rival politicians, till its increasing demands made it a nuisance both to Gulab Singh and the Queen Mother, the Rani Jindan herself. For the plotters there was only one way of escape—war with the English. Defeat would get rid of the unruly army, while victory would revive the waning prestige of the rulers.

The First Sikh War All unconsciously the English furthered these plans. As long as they had remained involved in the Afghan bungle they had carefully abstained from provocative action against the Sikhs. But the Sindh and Gwalior episodes alarmed the Sikhs: each side suspected the other, till war was rendered inevitable by an English advance to the Sutlej. The Sikh Parliament, now in permanent session in Lahore, suddenly (1845) called the Sikh nation to arms, and marched their army to the Sutlej. In the war that ensued lions were on both sides led by asses, the Rani's paramour Lal Singh, his second-in-command Tej Singh, and the British Commander-in-Chief Sir Hugh Gough, being all equally incompetent. The British soldier for the first time in India met his match in the Sikh infantryman, who was far superior to the Hindustani sepoy of the

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British army, shivering in the cold of a Punjab winter.

Two rational courses were open to the Sikhs: either to entrench on the Sutlej, which would have presented a formidable strategical barrier to the British advance, or to cross it, destroy the small British force at Ferozepore, and sweep on to Delhi. Actually they did the worst thing possible, crossing the Sutlej, and yet failing to attack Ferozepore, whither Gough was hastening with reinforcements. But the British General, whose strategical conceptions were those of a company commander, and who failed to appreciate the military value of the Sikh forces, nearly brought on disaster by making a precipitate attack with the bayonet; and the situation was only saved by the still greater incompetence (or worse) of Tej Singh, who withdrew across the Sutlej when victory was almost within the grasp of the Sikhs. But the English had now learnt caution, and when the Sikhs repeated their previous error by again crossing the Sutlej and entrenching near Ludhiana, they were given no opportunity of retrieving it. After hard fighting the Sikh entrenchments were forced, the river in their rear turned the retreat into a rout, and the Sikh army was destroyed.

The The profits of the First Sikh War were divided
Regency between the British and the cowards and traitors at Lahore at the expense of the valiant Sikh soldiery. The cunning opportunist, Gulab Singh, got Kashmir as the result of his treacherous neutrality; the British took all Sikh territory as far as the Sutlej; and the Lahore State was reconstructed under the influence of the Queen Mother, with Henry Lawrence as British Resident. In this diminished Kingdom only the area round Lahore and Amritsar was essentially Sikh, the

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territory to the west and south being predominantly Moslem. But Henry Lawrence had a difficult job. Reforms were urgent, yet he could do nothing except through the Queen Mother and her Prime Minister and paramour Lal Singh, who steadily rejected any diminution of income to their parasites. Twice Henry Lawrence broke down under the strain, and twice his place was taken by his brother John, who lacked Henry's finesse, and proceeded to reorganize the government as if the Lahore State was already conquered and annexed. Sikh revenue officers, hitherto quasi-sovereigns in their districts, were imprisoned like felons if they failed to pay up promptly. This might be justice, but it was hardly wisdom. Having sown the wind, John Lawrence proceeded on furlough, leaving his successor Sir Frederick Currie to reap the whirlwind.

Rising at One of the Sikh administrators who had been
Multan specially singled out for castigation by John Lawrence was Mulraj, a conceited weakling in charge of Multan. Badgered and harassed by John Lawrence, he showed no apparent opposition when a British officer was sent to supersede him. But discontent was rife, and a scuffle ensued, resulting in the murder of the British officer and his assistant. The rebels were Moslems, but Mulraj, who now showed energy and capacity, did his best to inflame the Sikhs. The danger was accentuated by the Fabian procrastination of the Government of India. Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, who had been granted a peerage for his mismanagement of the First Sikh War, hoped for future honours from another successful campaign. But he wanted it waged comfortably the next cold weather. Dalhousie, the new Viceroy, was agreeable to a delay,

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which might give the Sikhs time to commit themselves, and thus afford him a pretext for annexing the Punjab. Meanwhile they were both perfectly happy in Simla, paralysing the unfortunate Currie with instructions to the effect that the matter concerned the Sikh Government at Lahore, and had nothing to do with the British.

It was left to the straightforward Englishmen in the plains to take the initiative. They knew little and cared less for the vaulting ambition of Gough and the Machiavellian schemes of Dalhousie; for them it sufficed that two Englishmen had been murdered and that Multan was in rebellion against what was practically a British Government. Edwardes, whose name is still a household word on the Frontier, roused the Moslems of the west for the impending struggle with their hereditary foes and oppressors the Sikhs. For a Sikh war was now inevitable. The Sikh regulars, despatched by Currie to join in the siege of Multan, went over to Mulraj, and their action finally decided the wavering Sikhs.

The Second Sikh War But they were as unprepared as the British. The Sikh regular army was for the most part dispersed among the hostile Moslem population of the Frontier, and it was not till the beginning of the cold weather that it was able to assemble. Even then it was massed to the north of the Punjab amongst a mainly Moslem population, and isolated from its real base, the essentially Sikh districts round Lahore and Amritsar. But this time it was well led, and policy demanded that the British should await the capture of Multan and the release of its besiegers before attacking the capable Sikh general Sher Singh. Unfortunately Gough, stung to action by the captious criticisms of

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Dalhousie, launched a headlong attack on a carefully-chosen Sikh position at Chillianwalla, which the capable generalship of Sher Singh nearly turned into a disaster for the British. But the Sikhs failed to follow up their success. Lack of supplies in a barren, half-hostile country drove them into the open, and there the British, now reinforced by the besiegers of Multan, inflicted a crushing and final defeat on them near Gujrat. The Sikh power was finally broken, and the British were now, in name as in fact, the rulers of the Punjab, and without a rival in India (1849).

IV. THE MUTINY AND AFTER

Causes of the Mutiny There is an old Indian proverb that 1 plus 1 equals not 2 but 11. Two people working together have not twice but eleven times the power of one. And the same may be said of political or psychological forces. The causes of the Indian Mutiny were numerous, and each cause reinforced the others. But the spearhead of the outbreak was a military revolt. In Asia a triumphant mercenary army, like the Janissaries or Mamelukes, almost always becomes ungovernable so soon as it becomes stationary.

Reforms Previously, piping tunes of peace had led to mutinies, but in 1857 many causes of discontent were at work to give the outbreak something of the qualities of a national uprising. The old policy of the East India Company had been to let native customs alone; but during the first half of the nineteenth century a series of energetic Viceroys had been at work clearing away the dense jungle growth of abuses of hoary antiquity or of relatively modern growth. Hordes of

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robbers and freebooters of every description, great and small, criminal and semi-respectable, were now without a livelihood. Thousands of the hangers-on of suppressed native courts were reduced from affluence to beggary. Horrible practices such as thuggee (ritual murder) and suttee (widow burning) were abolished, and their abolition seemed premonitory to an attack on Brahmin ascendancy. Little respect was shown to the pale ghost of the mighty Mogul name. Most of the dispossessed thoroughly deserved their fate, but hard cases were many, and a wiser policy would have shown more consideration even to the undeserving.

The benefits of these sweeping reforms accrued to the peasantry, now for the first time free to till their lands in peace. But their gratitude, so far as it was felt, was unorganized and inarticulate, while the dispossessed were vocal and influential. Moreover, even the peasant suffered from a legal system which gave every advantage to the money-lender, and from a rigid land revenue system which expropriated the peasant who could not pay. Everywhere was change, and the Oriental hates change, even for the better; clearly the time had come to call a temporary halt and allow old feuds to heal and the discontented to settle down.

Dalhousie: Unfortunately this was just the moment *Viceroy 1848-56* chosen for a process of speeding-up. With all his merits, and they were many, the Viceroy Dalhousie was a doctrinaire. And to a doctrinaire the system is everything, the individual nothing. While the statesman is content to administer reforms in small homœopathic doses, the doctrinaire gives the patient the whole bottle. Nowadays the doctrinaire medicine for India is complete Indianization; then, it

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was the complete abolition of any vestige of Indian rule. Thanks to Dalhousie, numberless scions of ruling houses, men with traditions of rulership unknown to the Congress politicians of to-day, were compelled to eat out their hearts in obscurity, some in poverty, others with enormous pensions, which they could spend freely in subsidizing intrigue and discontent. By forbidding the Hindu right to adopt an heir, Dalhousie was enabled to declare that a number of Native States had lapsed to the Crown—a proceeding which effectively secured the hostility of all the parasites and hangers-on in every Native State. For none knew whose turn would come next.

Sepoy Doctrinaire methods were seen at their worst *discontent* in the administration of the North-Western (now the United) Provinces, where the old peasant proprietors were being rapidly expropriated by auction purchasers and moneylenders. It was from these peasant proprietors that the majority of the Bengal army was recruited, and agrarian discontent served to accentuate the fears and suspicions which the rapid introduction of Western methods of government had inspired in these high-caste sepoys. The general pacification of the whole country after the Sikh wars had left this mercenary army idle and restless, with time to ponder over its grievances, real and imaginary. During the Afghan and Sikh wars its numbers had been greatly increased, while the number of British regiments had remained nearly stationary, and of these the great majority were now garrisoning the Punjab. The best British officers, disgusted with these piping tunes of peace, left military service for civil appointments which, in the Punjab, offered unlimited scope for enterprise

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and initiative. Thus in the North-Western Provinces, seething as they were with discontent, the English dominion was almost wholly represented by a few doctrinaire civilians (the most capable having gone to the Punjab) and a large number of pampered semi-mutinous sepoy regiments, each indifferently supervised by a routinist Colonel and Major, an adjutant, and a few English boys, many of them still learning their drill and the rudiments of Hindustani. Generals of seventy reviewed their troops in buggies, while Colonels of sixty held parades in pyjamas from the tops of bungalows. Thus all the requisite conditions were prepared for a mutiny on a large scale, when Dalhousie, by the annexation of Oudh, extended the doctrinaire system to the central sepoy recruiting ground, and threatened the Oudh sepoys also with that expropriation from their lands, which seemed the inevitable accompaniment of British rule.

The greased cartridges Upon materials thus highly inflammable a live spark was unfortunately dropped.

Cartridges, greased with the fat of swine and cows, were issued to the sepoys with the new Enfield rifle—swine the abomination of Moslems, and cows the sacred worship of Hindus. The charge was denied, but the denial was false and the sepoys knew the truth. Manifestations of unrest became increasingly frequent in the early months of 1857, but the first serious outbreak was at Meerut, where Colonel Carmichael Smyth resolved to restore discipline and take the bull by the horns.

The Mutiny at Meerut In such a state of simmering discontent the authorities are forced into the defensive.

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They must remain continuously on their guard, leaving the initiative to the subversive elements. But by a bold attack which forces their adversaries into the open the position is reversed—a method by which, time and again, Sir Michael O'Dwyer forestalled the agitators during his administration of the Punjab. And such was the policy of Colonel Carmichael Smyth at Meerut.

But to be effective, such an attack must be well thought out. Trouble must be anticipated, and must be prepared for beforehand. Support must be assured from higher authority. Smyth acted on his own authority without adequate preparation. The cartridges were produced, and those who refused to use them were paraded in chains. The fat was in the fire. The situation at Meerut was bungled, and the Mutiny spread to Delhi.

Yet, muddled as it was, Smyth's action had forced the mutineers into the open before they were ready. And so the story of the Mutiny is one of successive explosions each in turn just too late to be completely effective.

The The revolt of Delhi, where the shadowy Mogul *Punjab* Emperor was dragged out to an ephemeral rulership, had cut off the Punjab and the Commander-in-Chief from the rest of India. But the Punjab was well capable of looking after itself. It was fortunately some thirty years behind the North-Western Provinces in what the doctrinaires denominated "progress". Its hardy peasantry had learned to appreciate freedom from Sikh oppression, and had not yet come under the more humiliating domination of the lawyer and the money-lender. The offensive airs of the Hindustani

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garrison were particularly galling to the martial Sikhs, who attributed their defeat to the hard fighting of the English private alone, and burned to avenge themselves on the insolent sepoy, who had never dared to meet them face to face in the bloody battles near Ferozepore and Chillianwalla. They recollected too with bitterness that it was the Hindustanis in the Sikh service, who had originally been foremost in urging on that war with the British, which had lost them their independence. Since that war not only had the Sikh fatherland been garrisoned by those double-faced intruders, but also every post of civil emolument had been held by them.

John Lawrence The Sikhs, then, and indeed the Punjab generally, were ready enough to fight the mutinous sepoy, given some guarantee that the British were worthy of their allegiance. The guarantee was soon provided. Their confidence was won and their admiration excited by the swift stern measures taken by the Chief-Commissioner John Lawrence and his galaxy of brilliant subordinates, who did not hesitate to disarm the Hindustani regiments in the Punjab on the first news of the Mutiny being wired from Delhi. The measures taken by the civil authorities find a parallel in the action of Sir Michael O'Dwyer in the 1919 disturbances, the rural population eagerly co-operating and the money-lenders evincing niggardly distrust.

The Fall of Delhi Yet till Delhi was taken nothing was safe. Strategy dictated a gradual advance, and a leisurely siege. Political considerations demanded an immediate advance on the rebel capital. The country around Delhi had reverted to pre-British

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anarchy. Old feuds broke out afresh. Tribes and villages made war on each other, each side appealing to the British or the mutineers for assistance in quarrels which were really parochial in their origin. Meanwhile the leisurely Commander-in-Chief, an excellent whist player, had slowly descended from Simla, and talked of entrenching himself at Ambala, till he was goaded into action by John Lawrence, who quoted a maxim from the Chief's guide to whist: "When in doubt take the trick, clubs not spades are trumps".

The capture of Delhi would prove the deathblow to the Mutiny, and accordingly John Lawrence staked the whole military strength of the Punjab on this apparently desperate undertaking. Large levies were recruited from the martial tribes of the Punjab, Sikhs, Punjabi Moslems, and Frontier tribesmen. Conspicuous in this work was John Nicholson, a military officer in civil employ, who reverted to military duty and led a strong column to reinforce the army before Delhi. To his energy and devotion was due the success of the attack on the city in which he lost his life.

End of the Mutiny The fall of the Imperial Capital left the ultimate issue no longer in doubt, though there was still much work to be done. Massacres of English men, women and children were rife in the Upper Ganges valley, where regiment after regiment mutinied. Conspicuous in tragedy were the ghastly horrors of Cawnpore. So long had the British maintained their prestige that they had forgotten what must inevitably be their fate were they vanquished in a contest with Orientals. Seventy years later, under the beneficent rule of Lord Irwin, hundreds of Moslem women were not only massacred but also outraged by

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Hindus. It was a second Cawnpore massacre; yet England remained unmoved.

But the England of 1857 was appalled at the news from Cawnpore and vowed vengeance on the murderers of women and children; troops poured in through Calcutta, till Lucknow, the second rebel headquarters, was finally taken. Late in the day, too late for any hope of ultimate success, large bodies of sepoy mutinied in Central India. Led by Tantia Topi, the one capable commander the rebels threw up, their reduction proved a formidable enough task. Had Delhi then stood, it would have been tenfold more difficult. As it was, the ultimate issue was never in doubt. Still later a foolish proclamation of the Viceroy, Lord Canning, confiscating the lands of the chiefs of Oudh, provoked the only really national rising of the war. Lawrence would have offered an amnesty to all who had not been guilty of murder. "No mutineer", he wrote, "ever surrenders; for directly he is caught, he is shot or hanged." But his warning was disregarded and it was not till the beginning of 1859, after nearly two years of desperate fighting, that the last of the organized forces of the rebels finally dispersed.

The North-West Frontier As a result of the Mutiny, India was transferred from the Company to the Crown, and military considerations gave way to those of administration. The Frontier alone needed—or seemed to need—an army in being. Till 1863 all remained quiet on the North-West Frontier. Dost Muhammad, the Afghan Amir, and the firm ally of the British, kept his turbulent realm under control; while the wild tribes on the borders were effectively managed by the Punjab Government, which had evolved

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a traditional technique in handling these slippery customers.

The Afghan War 1878-9 But already the baleful effect of English politics was beginning to be felt in India, first of all in Frontier policy. The Crimean War had driven Russia to expansion in Central Asia, and, rightly or wrongly, English politicians pictured India as the Russian objective. Sher Ali, Dost Muhammad's son and eventual successor, wanted an alliance with England against Russia, but the Gladstone Government rebuffed his overtures. This drove him into the arms of Russia, and in 1878 he received a Russian mission in Kabul. Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy, demanded that a British mission should also be received with equal ceremony. He acted in flagrant disobedience to the orders of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet, which had told him to wait till an explanation was received from Russia. Yet, to his honour, Lord Beaconsfield refused to let down the man on the spot, insubordinate though he was. Afghanistan was invaded, and a British mission installed at Kabul, only to be massacred. Roberts's brilliant march from Kabul to Kandahar was required to restore British prestige.

Frontier Expeditions Two schools of thought dictated British foreign policy. Beaconsfield considered the welfare of his country, Gladstone that of his party. But Beaconsfield's backing of Lord Lytton, however statesmanlike, gave Gladstone a political advantage which he was quick to seize. In 1880 the Conservatives were defeated, Lord Lytton resigned, and Gladstone abandoned Kandahar against the advice of Lord Roberts and the wishes of Queen Victoria. But the

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resultant loss of prestige led to stirring times on the Frontier, where the tactful handling of the Punjab Government was upset by perpetual Viceregal interference. Expedition after expedition was sent to enforce that order on the Frontier which had previously been maintained by a few unarmed Punjab officials. All the burden of transport had to be borne by the Punjab, where in 1897 no less than 160,000 animals and 40,000 attendants were impressed to meet the demands of the Commissariat Transport Department.

Lord Curzon The genius of Lord Curzon untied the tangle. He fell back on the old Punjab system of enlisting the goodwill of the tribes themselves in the cause of order and border defence. He made it worth their while to behave as friendly neighbours, persuading them to protect their own caravan routes with local levies, organized as regiments under British officers. Meanwhile a system of lateral roads and railways economized transport charges, and rendered easy the application of military force at any point necessary.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 Unfortunately Lord Curzon always did the right thing in the wrong way. His pompous, overbearing manner provoked that quarrel with Lord Kitchener which resulted in his resignation. He infuriated Sir Macworth Young, the then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, who vainly protested against the dismemberment of his Province by the detaching of its Frontier districts, an action of very doubtful expediency. But Lord Curzon's policy was otherwise effective enough, and Frontier expeditions became a thing of the past. Russia too was no longer a cause of anxiety. Russia's

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eyes were turned elsewhere. Germany had entered into the field of *welt-politik*, and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 marked the close of an epoch in Frontier policy.

CHAPTER III

The Governance of India

I. HINDU RULERSHIPS

The White Paper paradox To call the White Paper the death-warrant to native methods of rule in India may sound a specious paradox. Yet it is not very far from the truth. Before the introduction of the methods of Western democracy, British rule in India copied the methods of the Mogul Empire; and that Empire was only a more efficient edition of its Moslem and Hindu predecessors, their roots based on the tradition of an immemorial past. It is the native system of government that the White Paper seeks to destroy, and to replace by the methods evolved under the peculiar conditions of an island off the coast of Europe.

The Aryan tribal system In India, as in other countries, large political aggregations arose from military dictatorship. In the case of the Aryan invaders of primitive India these were at first only temporary, the largest political unit being that of the tribe, occupying an area similar to that of one of the tribes of Israel and about the size of an English county. It was ruled over by a committee of elders, the heads of the clans into which the tribe was divided, which arranged for the allotment of conquered lands among members of the tribe, and acted at once as a council of war and as arbiter on points of customary law and religious ceremonial. Its elected president bore the title

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of *raja*, which afterwards came to mean king, but which then, like the Homeric *βασιλεύς* or the early Roman *rex*, had not yet acquired the full meaning that was later associated with kingship. No pomp or ceremony surrounded these elders, yet their authority was unquestioned, resting as it did on custom rather than on force. Important administrative business, however, and the more important judicial acts were carried out in public assembly, at which young and old alike were present.

Growth of Kingship But this quasi-democratic system soon broke down under the stern stress of war. Capable leaders found in the tribal system a military organization ready to their hand. Naturally they were chosen at first from the clan elders; and the clan with the best leader would generally be most victorious against the Dravidians, and would also begin to claim priority over other clans. Its leader would assume a more dominating position, he would naturally be elected president of the council of elders, and his title of *raja* would begin to approximate in meaning to what we understand by "king". The old priestly functions of the patriarch would devolve on a special class of priests, the Brahmins, who would in return for the king's support exalt his office, and make out for him a divine pedigree from the Sun or Moon. In the stress of warfare a capable leader might even be chosen from outside the body of patriarchal elders, his position being regularized by a fictitious divine parentage concocted by the priests.

The status gained by the king in warfare would be retained in peace. He would act as an impartial arbiter in disputes between families or clans, taking care at first to do no more than enforce the generally recognized custom. Such a kingdom would be

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more efficient in war and better organized in peace than the surrounding loosely-knit confederacies of patriarchal clans, who would themselves begin to demand a king "that he may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles".

The King's administration The rise of these Aryan kingdoms coincided roughly in time with that of the Israelite monarchy (i.e. about 1000 B.C.).

At first the king was weak. He wanted support and advice. Just as the Homeric kings had their *γερονσία* and the Roman kings their Senate, so the new Aryan monarchs depended at first on the old council of tribal elders; and the cry of nomad conservatism "To your tents, O Israel" must have had its equivalent in the Indo-Gangetic plain. But in the clash of inter-tribal warfare these councils gradually broke up; the king would extend his authority over several tribes, and his most useful advisers and most powerful supporters were then the Brahmin priests, who in their turn exalted his position. Samuel anointed Saul, and Saul consulted Samuel at first: it was only later that they quarrelled. King and priest generally worked together when they were weak, and came into collision when they were strong. It was under the advice of his Brahmin ministers that the Hindu king could be certain that he was not acting contrary to old established custom: they could shoulder responsibility for unpopular acts, and advise him how to avoid such acts in future. After his death they could secure the succession to his son.

Taxation But the king was a costly luxury. Then as now, the cost of administration rose with its increasing complexity. A more efficient but very ex-

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pensive band of mercenaries gradually superseded the old tribal levy, and such things cost money. So taxes were levied on trade, and even on trading guilds. An excise duty was levied on liquor, and all unoccupied land was declared the peculiar property of the king.

Land administration But the main source of revenue was from the land, and for this purpose the kingdom was divided into distinct territories.

The king himself took charge of a royal domain in the centre, generally the richest territory, and he deputed chiefs to take charge of the surrounding districts, the frontier most exposed to danger of any kind being entrusted to the one who, as Captain of the Host, had the greatest military skill. An ancient Hindu kingdom of this kind may be pictured as about the size of one of the kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy (say Wessex), one county (say Hampshire) constituting the royal domain, while each of the other counties was allotted to a subordinate chief.

Under the Dravidians the ruler had been allotted the entire produce of certain lands. But this did not suffice for the needs of the more highly organized Aryan monarchy. Each cultivator was now required to contribute a share of the produce of his land to the king, levied in kind. The amount varied. At first perhaps no more than a tenth, it was gradually increased to a sixth, which was generally regarded as the maximum which a ruler might justifiably take, though in war time the share might be raised to a fourth. This was about the same as the fifth share of the produce taken by Pharaoh of Egypt in the time of Joseph (so we read in Genesis). The present British Government of India takes from a twelfth to a sixth share of the produce, not very much

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less than these early kings, but in return for this it gives economic, administrative and educational facilities of which its predecessors would not even have thought.

This only applied to the royal domain. In the outlying territories the royal share went to the ruling chiefs, and even in his own lands the king often made grants to favourite courtiers or cadets of the royal family. Above all the Brahmin must be rewarded, and every Hindu king distinguished himself by his liberality to the priestly class, and by frequent grants of the royal share of produce for the support of temples and shrines.

The old Dravidian village was ruled by an hereditary headman, and his traditional influence made him a useful official in the Aryan king's service. But he needed watching. He was probably illiterate, so a village accountant would accordingly be appointed to watch the headman and keep the state accounts. His office eventually became hereditary; but, provided the revenue was punctually paid, the village community was left to itself and no attempt was made to interfere with its internal administration or its local customs. The same balance was observed in the administration of larger areas, and over the usual unit of eighty-four villages a similar pair of officials was appointed, one to discharge executive functions and the other to keep accounts.

These officials enabled a strong king to maintain the public peace. Crime, when it occurred, was punished with terrible severity, the torture of witnesses and the mutilation of offenders being normal incidents of criminal procedure.

Dismemberment of the Kingdom Two things are necessary to a young state which is to have a great future—
a government strong enough to enforce

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order, and yet a government restrained by moral limits from using its power unnecessarily. Both of these conditions were present in early Rome and in early England, but there were no moral limits to the power of the Hindu kings. His Brahmin ministers, interested only in consolidating their own power, dared not face the king in the interests of righteousness, as did the Hebrew prophets, or of political expediency, as did the Roman patricians. Consequently the very efficiency of the royal organization proved its ruin. The reasonable system, under which, when agricultural work was slack, lazy villagers could be compelled to assist in the making of an embankment or watercourse or other work of utility to the community as a whole, gradually developed into a conscriptive *corvée*, whose oppressive nature resembled that which caused the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The taxing machine ground more and more from the life-blood of the poor to maintain the luxury and dissipation of the royal court. Impoverished at home, the peasants were led to the slaughter in the perpetual wars which an ambitious king felt it necessary to wage with all his neighbours.

Such a king trusted nobody, not even his own sons. As he grew more and more isolated from his subjects by a mass of male and female guards, his administration fell into the hands of unscrupulous officials, who encouraged the king in those habits of luxury and vice which left them free to plunder the people. His death would be followed by an internecine war between his sons, unless one of them had forestalled this eventuality by murdering his father and brothers. The last degenerate scion of such a line, with his luxurious court and impoverished people, would fall before the sword of a foreign conqueror or a mutinous

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subject, and so incur the final nemesis of an oriental dynasty.

The Assyrian Empire Such a kingdom, whose area lay between that of Yorkshire and Wales, constituted the largest Indian political unit till fresh ideas were imported from the West, where the Assyrians were the pioneers of Empire. Their first essays spread terror and dismay by means of gigantic raids. Permanent occupation came later. Rebellious nations were ground down by gang slavery on public works at Asshur or Nineveh, and then carted still further to the east and dumped down amongst unknown gods and nations, where it took them at least a generation to find their bearings.

The Persian Empire Such an Empire could possess no cohesion against attacks from without. The lesson was not lost on the Persians, whose administration was to prove the first and last word in oriental¹ political science, offering as it did a happy compromise between centralization and local self-government. There was a League of Nations atmosphere about the Persian Empire, which has received less than justice from those University Professors who write Greek histories. From the Indus to the Ægean, from Scythia to the Sudan, the natives were allowed to follow their own laws, religion and customs, subject only to payment of their annual subscription, and to their not making war on one another. But to the Greeks freedom meant liberty to make war, and their first noble gesture was to sack and burn the defenceless city of Sardis, slaughtering the inhabitants. This great blow

¹ Excluding China, which formed a world of its own.

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for freedom excites the admiration of our historians, who fail to realize that liberty and peace are incommensurables, that peace implies coercion, and that the Persian king succeeded in doing what the League of Nations twenty-four centuries later is still vainly attempting.

Persian administration In the Persian Empire liberty was permitted to subject nations, so far as it was compatible with the preservation of peace.

The Ionian Greek cities might have a democracy or oligarchy, the Jews a theocracy, just as they preferred. Details were left to the man on the spot (the satrap, or civil governor). "Trust the man on the spot" might have been the slogan of Darius, the man who really made the Persian Empire. "Trust him, give him a free hand in dealing with all local questions, back him up through thick and thin—and if he lets you down, then treat him as one should treat a man who betrays his trust."

As a further check on the satrap, the military and police force of his satrapy (or province) was under a separate military governor, who was responsible not to the satrap but to the king. Both were watched by a secretary who was himself responsible directly to the king and through whose hands all the orders of the satrap had to pass. These three rival powers created a balance which left everything depending on the king, if only he had the industry and mental grasp required to keep the system in order. Under a capable administrator like Darius such an empire flourished exceedingly, and the efficiency of the Persian organization for the collection of geographical and scientific information is shown by the material put at the disposal of the un-

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grateful Herodotus. The Empire was linked together by great arterial roads on which rapid communication was ensured by a system of royal posts. At regular intervals post horses stood always ready to carry the government messenger, or a traveller with a government permit, on to the next stage of his journey.

Seeds of decay The Persian Empire was the best thing Western Asia had produced or was ever to produce; but it had two serious drawbacks. League of Nations methods are not conducive to military efficiency, as the Greeks very soon discovered; and Xerxes' attempt to punish the recalcitrant Athenians had much of the ineffectiveness of the League of Nations in dealing with Japan. The Roman Empire, which crushed all the individuality out of its subjects, had a far more efficient army.

Still—as long as it was under a capable ruler—these difficulties might be overcome. It was at the centre of the Empire, in the reigning family itself, that the decay eventually set in which corrupted the whole. And the very efficiency of the system proved its ultimate ruin. Unemployed armies degenerate, like the Janissaries or Praetorian Guards, and become useless against the enemy and dangerous to their master. War and conquest were necessary to the stability of such an empire. Driven on, therefore, by the law of its being, to wider and ever wider dominion, its bounds eventually exceeded those consistent with efficient administration. There was no practical limit to the taxes which such an empire could extort from its subjects; and a moral limit was hardly conceived of. It therefore followed the cycle of the oriental kingdom on a larger and consequently a more disastrous scale. It is this which

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explains the collapse of such apparently flourishing empires as the Persian and its Indian models, the Maurya, Gupta, and Mogul Empires.

The model of all Oriental Empires It may seem a far cry from the Persian Empire to the India of to-day. But political ideas have a tendency to persist. British administrative methods in India were based on those of the Mogul Empire, which again was based on the standard plan of empires for Western Asia originating in the Empire of Darius. One thing always proved fatal to such empires—the Brahmin system. So Darius discovered and exterminated the quasi-Hindu Magi. The Hindu Indian Emperors took the tip and patronized Buddhism. But Hindu empires vanished with the revival of Brahminism—and a similar fate appears to await the Brahmin-ruled British Empire in India.

II. THE MOGUL EMPIRE

Administration of the Delhi kings The message of Islam was to the individual, not to the state. In politics the Islamic state was based on the system it superseded. In India it reintroduced the Persian model, and with the suppression of the Brahmins large empires began again to flourish on Indian soil. But at first the Moslem rulers had neither the numbers nor administrative experience nor local knowledge sufficient for civil administration in more than a limited area. Thus while under the Delhi kings the great provincial governors were always Muhammadan, the local administration was generally left in the hands of the tribal chiefs, who professed allegiance and paid tribute to the Delhi kings.

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Short shrift was given to rebels and wrongdoers, and the punishments inflicted were Assyrian in their ferocity. The skins of those flayed alive were often stuffed with straw, and hung at the city gates as a warning to others. "I punish the most trifling act of contumacy with death," said Muhammad Tughlaq (a Delhi king, not specially ferocious).

But the punishments inflicted were inspired by a rough sense of justice, and were generally calculated to protect the poor from their oppressors. Dealers who gave short weight had equal weights of flesh cut off from their buttocks—a punishment by King Aladdin which did for a time stop a form of oppression that still survives after one hundred and fifty years of British rule. Such grotesque endeavours to make the punishment fit the crime sufficiently mark the difference between oriental conceptions of justice and our own.

The Mogul Empire The Mogul Empire was a great improvement on its predecessors, and the successive long reigns of four capable rulers raised it to a high state of efficiency. It is the one pre-British Indian Empire about which detailed evidence is available; and the framework of its administrative structure still survives under British rule, in spite of the numerous accretions due to English legal and democratic theories.

As in the Persian, so in the Mogul Empire administration was based on the devolution of power to the man on the spot, the Empire being divided into provinces, the provinces into districts, and the districts into subdivisions. Over each of these areas an officer was appointed in whose hands were concentrated all the administrative functions, judicial and executive, military and civil, the collection of revenue, and the control

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over expenditure; subject only to the control of the officer above him, provincial Governors taking their orders from the Emperor. Akbar maintained this administrative machinery at a high state of efficiency. His two successors were slacker, while Aurungzeb neither trusted good subordinates nor punished bad ones, and was consequently ill-served, with resulting disorganization throughout the Empire.

The Imperial Service The Indian Civil Service of a few years ago was the legitimate descendant of Akbar's Imperial Service. Each was mainly recruited from outside India, and was so well paid that it attracted the best men available. The prizes of the Mogul Service were princely indeed. The salary of a modern Viceroy is a mere pittance when compared with the sums paid to Akbar's provincial Governors, and the rates of pay increased under his successors. So the Imperial Service attracted to the Mogul Court the ablest and most enterprising men of Western Asia; for Akbar, though pro-Hindu, was no believer in Indianization, still less in the administrative capacity of the lawyer and money-lender class from which Indian politicians are now recruited. Only 30 per cent of his Imperial Service was recruited from India, and half of these were Moslems. Of the 15 per cent of Hindus, the great majority were of the military class of Rajputs. The provincial services followed the same system, the provincial Governor taking the place of the Emperor.

The uneconomic effect of heavy death duties is a lesson that may be learnt from the practice of the Mogul officials, the whole of whose property escheated to the Emperor at death. From their princely salaries they could make no provision for their families, and the vast

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wealth accumulated was squandered in luxury and display, in vast retinues of servants and in elephants and horses whose trappings were stiff with gold and silver. Few were content to accumulate riches for the ultimate benefit of the State, and with nearly all the higher appointments in their hands the Moslems still remained poor and thriftless. The capital of the country remained in the hands of the mean and miserly Hindu money-lender.

Law and order in the towns In important towns a special Executive Officer was appointed, who suppressed crime by severe punishments and thus rendered life and property generally secure, though wealthy criminals might escape on the payment of a heavy fine, which approximated to what we should call a bribe. With the decay of the Mogul Empire occurred a symptom that is now once more appearing under the decay of British rule. Armed gangs of robbers began to infest the neighbourhood of the principal cities, often with the connivance of the local Governors, who benefited both by the bribes they received from the robbers and by the savings in police expenditure. Some check on corruption was afforded by the severity of the punishments inflicted by the Emperors, a basket full of poisonous snakes being kept by Shah Jehan ready to bite convicted bribe-takers.

Collection of land revenue But the maintenance of law and order was only a secondary function of the Mogul administrator; his chief preoccupation was the collection of land revenue. The Moslem invaders had defined and crystallized the Hindu revenue systems and provided them with a valuable terminology still

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used by the British. The Mogul administrators performed for land revenue theory in India the service which the Romans did for law in Europe. They created and defined revenue concepts with a clearness which had not been attained by their mystically-minded Hindu predecessors.

Mogul administrators The theory was that one-third of the gross produce should be collected from the
(1) *Feudal* actual cultivators of the soil. In practice the administration (and therefore the revenue collection) of large areas was left in the hands of men of local influence (known as Zemindars) who could do pretty much as they liked as long as they paid a reasonable revenue. Their position was generally hereditary, and they therefore had an interest in the prosperity of their domain, which made for good government. But this very interest in the prosperity of their peasants tended to prevent a single-minded attention to instructions from above. It both gave them a motive for disobedience and the power to disobey.

(2) *Salaried officials* The unruliness of these quasi-feudal Zemindars led Akbar to aim at a more direct form of administration under officials with fixed salaries paid by himself. This made it necessary to collect the land revenue in cash also. The value of the produce was assessed at each harvest by a specially-appointed land revenue staff. In theory the area under each crop was measured, but in practice rough estimates were generally agreed to between the official staff and the land-holder. Under this system the peasant took most of the risk, and (in theory) all the extra profit,

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since his payments were determined by the crops sown and not by the harvests gathered.

(3) *Officials paid by land grants* The system was, however, unpopular with officials, on account of the delays in getting their salaries from the Treasury, which procrastinated even more (and that is saying a good deal) than its modern counterpart. They preferred the old system under which the land revenue of a definite area of land was assigned to them in *lieu* of salary. To save trouble, Akbar's successors generally reverted to the old system, transferring the local Governors frequently to prevent their becoming too powerful. Consequently, knowing that their tenure was short, the Governors extorted as much as they could in a short time, with disastrous results to the unfortunate rack-rented peasantry—thus preparing the way for the economic collapse of the Empire as a whole.

(4) *Revenue Farmers* With the extension of the Empire, detailed control of subordinates became more difficult. It was found easier to contract out for the payment of lump sums of land revenue by revenue farmers, who became responsible for the general administration of the areas under them. These appointments, big and little, tended to become hereditary. As the amount which such a farmer could take from the cultivator was only limited by the capacity of the cultivator to resist or run away, he enjoyed in practice all the rights of land ownership. Little mercy was shown to a cultivator who could not (or would not) pay. His family might be sold into slavery, or forcibly circumcised and converted to Islam, while he himself might in summer be bastinadoed, or in winter be stripped

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naked and sprinkled with water. The oppression of the smaller peasantry in the decay of the Mogul Empire was crystallized in the pathetic saying "We have no one to look to but God, and God is far off."

III. BRITISH RULE

The East India Company "The constitution of the (East India) Company began in commerce and ended in Empire. It is a State in the disguise of a merchant—a delegation of the whole power and sovereignty of this kingdom sent into the East." So said Burke. Actually the East India Company consisted of a body of specialists in Indian experience, through whom all British relations with that sub-continent were transacted, whether commercial, military, or administrative. On the whole the system worked admirably. Responsibility lay in the hands of those whose interests were identified with the maintenance of British power and prestige in the East—in India, the man on the spot; in England, men with Indian experience. The East India Company effectively warded off that irresponsible arm-chair criticism which was in later days to be the bugbear of British administration in India.

Genesis of the Indian Civil Service Clive's conquest of Bengal transformed the Company's clerks into prancing pro-consuls, and for the first and last time in Indian history corruption was rife among British officials. But the strong hand of Clive cleansed the Augean stable once and for all; for the miserable pittance which the Company gave its commercial clerks, he substituted princely salaries, which rendered bribes unnecessary, while his punishments

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rendered them undesirable. His position was regularized by obtaining for the Company the *Diwani* or financial administration of Bengal, which gave the Company much of the power and much less of the responsibility of administration. At the cost of his own personal popularity, Clive had laid down the lines of the future administration of India by a *corps d'élite* of highly paid officers on the lines of the Mogul Imperial Service.

This Indian Civil Service (as it came to be called) gradually came to be the real steel framework on which the British Indian Empire was built. It developed an administrative tradition and a *flair*, which rose to a fine art, for dealing with the complex problems arising from ruling such a medley of races, castes and religions. In each district the administrative experience of each district officer was handed on to his successor, till it might be said that no difficulty could arise which had not already been foreseen and solved in advance. The pathetic contentment of the people of India, which Mr. Montagu found so reprehensible, was not due to stagnation, but to the highly balanced controls exercised over the upheavals of vast forces by the ablest body of administrators the world has ever known. Even the provincial governors of the Roman Empire in the time of the Antonines might have learnt many lessons in the art of governing from the Indian Civil Service.

The Regulating Act of 1773 But all this lay in the future. Under Clive the Company controlled Bengal finance but shirked responsibility for law and order, which were left in the hands of the native Nawab. Experience soon showed that a province could not serve two masters. In Bengal, this dyarchy resulted

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in masterless confusion. The magistracy, the police, and the revenue officers, being diverse bodies working on different systems under no common head, vied with each other in mismanagement. The resulting scandals caused Parliament to interfere; and, under the Regulating Act of 1773, Warren Hastings was appointed Governor General. In spite of the handicap of a mutinous Council over which he had no authority, and a Supreme Court of Justice which denied him any powers of legislation, he was nevertheless able to exercise his authority sufficiently to save India for the British. Under him the Company became in form, as well as in fact, the sovereign ruler of Bengal.

Pitt's India Act of 1784 While Warren Hastings was saving an Empire in India, Lord Cornwallis had lost one in America. But Cornwallis was a member of the ruling oligarchy in England, while Warren Hastings was not; and it was therefore not unnatural that Warren Hastings should be impeached, while Cornwallis should be appointed Governor General with powers greatly enhanced by Pitt's India Act of 1784. The Governor General could now in emergencies act without consulting his Council, he and his Council were supreme over the Madras and Bombay authorities, and they could legislate by means of "Regulations" which the Supreme Court was bound to respect. Above all, the Governor General was responsible to the Home Government and not merely to the East India Company. Thus the Ministry of the day became responsible for his actions, which they more and more tended to control through a board of six Commissioners, subsequently known as the Board of Control. The Directors of the East India Company were still left with all the trap-

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pings of greatness, their grand house, their magnificent banquets, their vast patronage; they were still the grandest corporation in the greatest city of the world, but a check-string behind this machinery controlled all their movements, and that check-string was the Board of Control.

The great Viceroy The Governors General (or Viceroys as they came to be called) who succeeded Warren Hastings were far from being the weak mediocrities whom we have recently learnt to associate with the name. Being members of the English ruling aristocracy, who had all made a name before they came to India, and with their terms of office in all cases longer than those of their modern successors, they were in a position to make their personalities felt. Wellesley (1798-1805) was mainly occupied with conquest, Lord Hastings (1813-23) with consolidation, but Lord William Bentinck (1828-35) a sentimentalist before his time, combined (as sentimentalists so often do) a desire to further the spread of democracy with efforts to eradicate practices to which the Indian democracy was deeply attached.

Lord William Bentinck (1828-35) Yet even the most fervent admirer of Indian customs will hardly defend suttee and thuggee, two characteristic Hindu practices suppressed by Bentinck.

Suppression of Suttee Early tribal custom—a custom still obtaining amongst the agricultural tribes of the Punjab—allotted a widow to the next of kin, who (as in Deuteronomy xxv, 5) “should raise up seed to his brother”. This led to frequent disputes, as the

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widow often preferred someone else, and went off out of the family—taking the family jewellery with her. Public opinion therefore tended to support the theory developed by the Brahmins that a widow should not remarry, and that the best thing for her to do was to immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

Suppression of thuggee Not even that justification can be found for the practice of thuggee, or ritual murder.

Some of our modern crime stories have evolved a theory of the perfect (i.e. perfectly safe) murder, in which murder is committed for murder's sake, and where the murderer cannot be traced owing to absence of motive. But these writers do not seem to be aware that this idea is no new one, but was the basis of an Indian secret society as old and as widespread as Hinduism. The members (*thugs* as they were called) were usually unarmed and were disguised as pilgrims, holy men, or other harmless wayfarers. They were expert at gaining the confidence of travellers, with whom they associated till the place for murder was reached, where a grave had already been dug in advance. There the unfortunate victim was suddenly seized—three *thugs* to each victim, two holding his feet, while one strangled him with a noose. Their organization was worthy of a better cause—being one of the few things efficiently managed in India. To each member was allotted his special part as strangler, leg holder, grave-digger, scout or conversationalist, and the whole murder procedure was so carefully rehearsed beforehand as to become automatic. A secret code of words and signs united *thugs* all over India. The sacramental partaking of raw sugar was supposed to (and actually did) fire them with the blood-lust to murder—the victims being regarded

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as sacrifices to the Hindu goddess Kali, on whose protection they relied with unquestioning faith. Predestined to murder as they believed themselves to be, as their victims were to death, they saw no reason to feel compunction or remorse. Though booty was always acceptable, murder—not robbery—was their main object, and the strangling of a half-starved peasant gave them nearly as much pleasure as that of a fat shopkeeper.

Prior to the advent of the British, the *thugs* enjoyed almost complete immunity. A few were executed now and then by Muhammadan rulers, but such fitful efforts were powerless against an organization secretly supported by many chiefs, landholders, and ostensibly respectable merchants. There was no organized public opinion against them, and previous to the British rule no government (not even the Mogul) had had either the will or the power to make a systematic attack. But now, backed by Bentinck, Thuggee Sleeman (as Sir William Sleeman was called) took his life in his hands and hunted the murder gangs down. A special Thuggee Act deprived them of the protection afforded by the technicalities of our legal system; numbers were hanged, and numbers became informers, admitting with awe that the *iqbal* (good fortune) of the Company was greater even than the power of the goddess Kali.

Thuggee disappeared, stamped out by the British. Its recent revival in Bengal is an eloquent reminder that Hinduism in its worst forms is a snake scotched but not killed.

The District Officer The suppression of suttee and thuggee was no doubt due to Viceregal initiative; but the essential factor in British rule was not the Viceroy but the District Officer, the most important

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agent in the hierarchy of subordinate officials which the British had inherited from the Mogul administration. The benevolent despot of an area about the size of an English county, he gave India what it is always crying for—peace and justice. He was seen at his best in the pre-Mutiny Punjab, where he was able to profit by the mistakes of his predecessors in Bengal and Oudh, and was yet unhampered by the growth of bureaucracy and departmentalism.

The Punjab started on its career with a splendid set of administrators, half of them picked civilians from the Ganges valley, the others selected military men who preferred the pay and power of administrative work to routinism in a regiment.

And in those halcyon days the work of a district officer was such as might have inspired the most cynical with enthusiasm. Work for and among the people in the repression of crime, the promotion of education, the definition of the various interests in the soil, the settlement of the land-revenue assessments on an equitable basis, the close supervision of the great mass of Indian officials who formed the body of the organization of which the British were the head—such varying activities fired even the most sluggish with the enthusiasm of youth and high resolve, as if on him alone depended the evolution of order and prosperity out of the chaos of past confusion and misery. In the hands of these seeming despots were concentrated, in the belief of their subjects, all the powers of an earthly Providence.

John Nicholson as a District Officer It may be doubted whether any administration at any time or in any country has cared more for the in-

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terests of the governed than did the District Officers in India, as long as their hands were untied from above and unfettered from below. Trade and the currency, civil justice and law and order, public works and agricultural progress—everything that made for the prosperity and happiness of those entrusted to their care, came under their notice; and they were dealt with by the methods of common sense rather than rules or regulations. John Nicholson, the Mutiny hero, in his previous life as District Officer of the Frontier district of Bannu, used to kick Government regulations across the floor as soon as they arrived. Under his strong and impartial administration, the Bannu district experienced a tranquillity which it never knew before or since, and is still regretfully recalled by the inhabitants. His police investigations were so thorough that no criminal could escape them, and corrupt officials were invariably brought to heel. But he could suffer fools and knaves gladly when they were useful to him. "Never remove a native official" (he said) "unless you know that you can replace him by a better one, otherwise you will get an equally stupid or corrupt man *minus* the experience of his predecessor." He warned repeatedly before he struck, giving the worst offenders a chance of turning over a new leaf. Corruption disappeared, without it being necessary often to inflict punishment. He rushed to the scene of crime or dispute so as to get at the truth and hear the people as well as the police. Cases were settled by him without delay, and he used the lash freely on vagabonds and petty ruffians instead of loading the jails and hardening men in crime. Under him the whole subordinate staff was alive, and all acknowledged the touch of his master-hand. In the picturesque language of a frontier tribes-

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man, "The sound of his horse's hoofs was heard from Attock to the Khaibar pass."

Growth of Such were the men who rallied the Punjab
bureaucracy to the British side during the crisis of the Mutiny. But, as time went on, the hands of District Officers throughout India became gradually tied by rules and regulations compiled by the intellectual experts of the Imperial or Provincial Secretariat. British administration in India was a specialized product. British officials were periodically taking leave, and this meant frequent changes in appointments, so that the supervising staff was generally more or less in a state of flux. This tended to diminish the personal element and put a premium on uniformity, which prevented time being wasted in learning new codes or systems of work, but which carried with it the disadvantage that local custom had to be adapted to the code, rather than code to custom. This involved an elaboration of checks which could be more or less mechanically applied, and this again necessitated keeping a record in writing of as many official transactions as possible, so that a new official could pick up the threads of the questions with which he had to deal. There resulted an accumulation of correspondence, reports, registers, returns of work done, records, statistical compilations, codes, rules and circular orders, of which the tendency was to further elaboration. For when any defect had been brought to notice, it was natural to add a column to a register, or a paragraph to a rule in order to provide against the recurrence. Naturally, as the administration grew more intricate, more checks were required, whilst the establishments resisted the reduction of work, and preferred their own expansion with all the attendant

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possibilities of finding employment for friends and relations.

The Secretariat The supervision of this mass of clerical work was the privilege and pleasure of the officials of the Provincial Secretariat. These were, however, but the figure-heads for a vast army of clerks who, being permanent, tended to exercise more control over the administration than their temporary heads. Behind the imposing and well-furnished chamber in which the Chief Secretary frowned on his visitors, was a disorderly warren of offices inhabited by those who were for many purposes the real rulers of the country. Their superiors acted mainly on precedents, and it lay with these subordinates to decide whether or not a precedent should be forthcoming. The Chief Secretary was no Hercules that he should himself endeavour to cleanse this Augean Stable, or he would have found that within this maze there was a still more intricate maze, the Record Room, an unclassified limbo whither files descended, most of them never to return. There they accumulated under a covering of dust and cobwebs, a process feebly checked by fitful efforts at "destruction". The real remedy for this chaos, the introduction of a proper system of filing based on scientific classification, was never even attempted; and any suggestion of improvement was stoutly resisted by the clerks, whose importance depended on their being the only guides through this trackless waste of paper.

The Simla Secretariat But the bureaucracies of the district and even of the province were mere brushwood when compared with the dense jungle growth of the Government of India Secretariat, which

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compiled the complicated codes of instructions, executive directions and financial restrictions, through which the Government of India sought to control the details not only of the administration but even of the daily life of the vast sub-continent. Such a Government was bound to make mistakes. That its errors were patent to its own subordinates and to the people as a whole was a matter of indifference, as long as criticisms were prevented from reaching Parliament and the Secretary of State. For this reason those officials who were in contact with realities, and were in a position to point out the practical results of the theories so beautifully woven in the Simla Secretariat, were steadily discouraged from giving expression to their opinions.

Defects of the bureaucratic system As a result the function of opposition to unwise Government measures was thrown into the hands of those who were the declared enemies of the British. The Hindu seditious clique, whose vocal instrument was the Indian National Congress, enlisted the sympathy of many who would not have been otherwise attracted to it, by the fact that through it alone could Government be made to listen to any criticism of its actions. Impartial observers from England, too, were disinclined to help in eternally bolstering up a Government which refused to tackle seriously the problem of agricultural debt or of urban sanitation. Even Simla itself, under the very nose of the Viceroy, with a natural drainage fall to gladden the heart of any Sanitary Engineer, still stank with a sanitary system which would have been condemned as hopelessly inadequate by Servius Tullius.¹

¹ King of Rome, about 600 B.C. The Cloaca Maxima, the great Roman sewer, ante-dated him considerably.

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The use of electric light to brighten the long winter nights, and of electric fans to cool the long summer days of northern India, was discouraged by ill-considered legislation.

Electricity I can endorse this from my own personal
criminal experience as Sub-Divisional Officer at Sonapat near Delhi (in 1917). I there induced a local factory owner to use the power thus generated to light the shops and streets of the local market. I dared to do this in anticipation of the necessary sanction under the Electricity Act, which was really intended to apply to large electrical schemes involving dangerous voltages and not to small ventures such as that at Sonapat. For this I was publicly reprimanded by the Commissioner; all the electric wiring and fittings were forcibly removed without any compensation to the factory owner, who was considered my accessory in crime. For three nights only Sonapat glowed with electric light, an amenity of civilization which it had never experienced before, and (certainly till 1927) never knew since.

As long as the people of India were the only sufferers, public opinion in England was fairly indifferent. But the mismanagement of the Mesopotamian campaign by the chocolate soldiers of Simla, emphasized by their failure to provide the necessary medical comforts for the sick and wounded, and their obstinate refusal to remedy the error when it was pointed out to them by a courageous medical officer, gradually enlightened the British public as to the nature of bureaucratic rule in India. Every soldier invalided home cursed the frock-coated bureaucrats and the red-tabbed carpet knights who were responsible for his misery. Like the French

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monarchy of the eighteenth century, the bureaucracy had lost the confidence of the public in India, of its own subordinates, and even of itself. It was therefore only too ready to sell the pass, and secure its own immunity by the betrayal of its own loyal subordinates and the dumb millions entrusted to its care—betrayal of them to those who were bent on effecting the downfall of British rule in India.

IV. BRITISH LAND ADMINISTRATION

Indian land Administration a technical subject Land administration in India is a subject which is carefully avoided by British politicians. It is dull and technical. The land systems on which it is based are quite foreign to English conceptions, and are made unnecessarily unintelligible by the uncouth jargon in which Anglo-Indian administrators have seen fit to describe them. They would in any case be difficult to understand, as the elementary knowledge which is the key to them has for the most part never been reduced to writing at all.

Its importance And yet it is by their administration of the land that governments in India stand or fall. The Mogul Empire was based on the land systems of Akbar, and with them it declined and fell. The bomb throwers of Bengal are the direct result of the Permanent Settlement of that province. Doctrinaire theories of land ownership in Oudh resulted in the Mutiny. The recognition of peasant-proprietorship in the Punjab rallied the Sikhs and Frontier tribesmen to the side of the British. The present preoccupation of District Officers with politics and their consequent

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neglect of the duties of land administration are one of the primary causes of the present unrest.

Mogul land administration in Bengal— It was unfortunate that the first British essay at administration should be in Bengal, where the Mogul land revenue system had reached the last stage of degeneracy. The Mogul Governor had become virtually an independent ruler. He collected his revenue through farmers, some of them the heirs of old Hindu chiefs but many of them speculators, courtiers, and *quondam* officials. The farmer could eject any cultivator for failure to pay land revenue; so that his powers approximated to those of a landlord (in the English sense), thus enabling him to rack-rent his tenants without scruple. The revenue staff of village accountants and their supervisors became unnecessary, and this valuable check on the accounts of the revenue farmer gradually disappeared, and could not be revived even when such revival was considered desirable. The village community was destroyed and all village rights were obliterated.

Warren Hastings— Such was the condition of things when Warren Hastings took over the administration of Bengal. Hindu theory had recognized the royal right to a share of the produce of the land. Moslem theory recognized the right of the conqueror to take the land of the infidel; but when this right was remitted on payment of a land tax, Moslem and Hindu theory was much the same. In practice, however, the right to plunder the infidel did render State claims more exorbitant than formerly, and when these were enforced by revenue farmers, they approximated to those of English landlords.

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The Permanent Settlement of Bengal Hastings made every effort to protect the cultivator from extortion or eviction by these revenue farmers. But the sympathies of his successor Cornwallis were entirely with the latter. For Cornwallis was a landlord himself, at a time when English landlords were inaugurating widespread improvements in English agriculture, though at the cost of the virtual extinction of the English yeomanry and smallholders. This (to him) admirable system he determined to transfer to the totally dissimilar conditions of Bengal. All other rights were abolished except those of the revenue farmers, and they were declared landlords (in the English sense of the word) subject to the payment of a land revenue which was fixed in perpetuity.

This Permanent Settlement (as it was called) of the land revenue in Bengal was haphazard and arbitrary, sometimes lenient and sometimes severe—it ultimately resulted in the landlordship of practically the whole of Bengal passing into the hands of the Hindu money-lending classes, thus giving them a power to which they were not accustomed, and which they used not in the interests of the peasant or the land, but in the advancement of their own class at the expense of the rest of the community. Such methods were bound ultimately to conflict with British ideas of justice. The Terrorist agitation and the murder cult of Bengal had its roots in the Permanent Settlement.

British land systems in Madras and Bombay In the North-Western Provinces of the Ganges valley the cultivator occupied a more prominent position, and the desirability of dealing with him direct rather than through revenue farmers or other inter-

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mediaries was further emphasized by the new arrangements in Madras and Bombay. In Madras a succession of conquests had reduced all village cultivators to a common level. It was therefore decided to deal direct with the individual cultivator, assessing each field separately to land revenue every year, in proportion to its productivity, proximity to markets, and other considerations affecting the value of the produce. In Bombay the system of revenue farming had been adopted by the Mahrattas, and its results were disastrous to the country. The system was abandoned by the British in favour of the Madras system of dealing direct with the individual cultivator.

Early land administration in the North-Western Provinces But the growth of these views was slow, and in the meantime the North-Western Provinces lay crushed under the heel of the Bengal administration, which was practically equivalent to the Government of India, and was still obsessed with the idea of a "permanent settlement". It was very difficult for their ideas to get beyond those of the English lawyers of the period, whose phraseology was expressed in terms of the Whig landlord system of the eighteenth century in England, a system which they had defined in terms of a legal jargon whose mystery gave it a peculiar sanctity to the uninitiated.

Doctrinairism And to the jargon of the lawyers was added that of the new political economists, whose practical experience was similarly limited to the England of the period. Observing how the Whig landlords rack-rented their tenants, these "economists" laid down that such competitive rents were "natural"

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rents, and they came to regard all other rents as being against nature. From this the inference was easy that every piece of land must have a landlord, that that landlord should have tenants, and that those tenants might justifiably be rack-rented. Out of this system of bad jurisprudence and worse political economy grew the English Whig doctrinairism of the nineteenth century, a fungus growth which affected the mentality of the Indian Secretariats of the period. "The age of chivalry was gone; that of sophists, economists and calculators had succeeded". Dominated by these ideas, the Calcutta Government gave rights of ownership to revenue farmers and big men generally, overlooking the claims of the small peasant owners entirely.

Bad as was the process of assessment, the means employed for collection was far worse. Payments of land revenue fell into arrears, estates were put up to auction, often at the instance of a revenue official or one of his underlings who had contrived the default and now bought up the estate and became landlord. The establishment of law and order by the British was hardly adequate compensation for the rigid and irresistible inelasticity of the new revenue system. The evils of native rule had been tempered by the chances of fortune, the excitement of a fight, and the occasional prizes offered to ability and skill. But from the inexorable British land system there seemed no escape. The powerful machinery of a civilized government was rapidly breaking up the village communities which had survived the crushing exactions of the tyrannies it had replaced. It was the extension of this system to Oudh that led to Mutiny.

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Record of rights in land drawn up All this was done amid violent protests from the British officers on the spot, who alone saw things as they really were. The ultimate result of their remonstrances was to give the District Officer power to decide summarily on all cases connected with rights in land, subject to an appeal to the Civil Courts. This transferred the first hearing of such disputes from the office to the camp, where they were heard in the village in the presence of the assembled brotherhood. Village boundaries were laid down, and an Indian Domesday Book drawn up showing the rights and interests of every person sharing in the ownership of the soil. Though originally drawn up as a basis for the assessment of land revenue, this record of past and present rights in land performed a valuable public service unknown in most other countries.

Land administration in the Punjab By the time the Punjab was annexed, British land administration had been purged of its initial blunders, and the brilliant officers who supervised the introduction of British rule started that Province with a land system superior to any that had been previously seen in India. The determination of rights in land was entrusted to Settlement Officers engaged in assessing land revenue on the spot. Till they had decided, Civil Courts were debarred from interference. A large number of cases dealing with land were permanently taken from the Civil Courts and handed over to executive officers who could deal with them rapidly on the spot. Crop inspections were made at each harvest by the village accountants, and, based on these, a Village Note-book giving all the most important agricultural statistics was drawn up for each village.

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The District Officer The land revenue staff which carried out these multifarious duties kept the District Officer in touch with every inch of his territory. And it was so close-knit, so well-established, and so thoroughly understood by the people that it simultaneously discharged easily and efficiently an immense number of other duties. It dealt with the management of indebted estates, loans to agriculturists, and famine relief. Because it controlled land revenue, which depended on agriculture, the supreme interest of the people, it naturally served also as the general administration staff. The land revenue officials, and to a much more limited extent the police, conveyed the orders of Government to the people in a hundred ways. Several other specialized services existed with staffs of their own, such as the establishments for irrigation, roads and buildings, agriculture, industries, factories, and co-operative credit. These were controlled not by the District Officer, but by their departmental heads, who may be regarded as a different set of strings connecting government and the people. But in varying degrees the District Officer influenced the policy in all these matters, and he was always there in the background to lend his support or, if need be, to mediate between a specialized service and the people.

One of the most fatal results of modern political policy has been the weakening of the influence of the District Officer. The resulting paralysis of all the complicated nervous system connecting Government and the people has been the chief factor in promoting the present unrest.

CHAPTER IV

Indian Democracy

I. THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Democracy in the West Prof. R. K. Sorabji once said that he came to England as a missionary to convert the people to Christianity. Perhaps an Oriental has a higher sense of religious values (good or bad) than a European. But he might have added with even more justice that he could explain to the people of England the true meaning of democracy. For (after all) the much lauded democracy of the West is really a sham. The people may think they govern; actually they are hoodwinked into handing over the government into the hands of a set of lawyers, Jews, financiers, and political adventurers, who do not hesitate to exploit their power quite contrary to the plainly expressed will of the people.

Democracy in the East But in India survives the truest form of democracy—that in which the will of the people can really make itself heard and felt—the village community. Kings, empires, governments, officials of every description mattered not at all for 90 per cent of the people of India. For them all interest, social, political and economic was bounded by the village. The grave dignified procedure of the Committee of Elders, the more unconventional methods of the Village Assembly, occasional difficulties with the village menials—these formed the normal politics of the self-sufficing

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village. Occasionally a nightmare would burst in on this happy little life, a fell disease, an army on the march, a king or a royal official who refused to be satisfied with a reasonable share of grain. But for the most part its calm contented life was as happy as that of the nation which has no history.

The Indian Village Community When the primitive agricultural tribes ceased to wander and settled down to cultivate a fixed area of land and to inhabit dwellings of a more or less permanent nature, the advantage to be gained by grouping those dwellings together in a village became early manifest. Unity is strength, and the conditions of early agriculture in India specially called for some kind of union. Cultivating a clearance in the midst of the jungle, the inhabitants were better able, if united, to protect each other against the depredations of deer and swine on the crops, and the danger to human life from the larger beasts of the forest. In a more open country there would also be human enemies to fear, and a place of refuge would be required from the attacks of the wandering nomad. Mud walls and stout gates would be built, within which the cattle could be secured and the cultivators find refuge against a foray.

But such an aggregate must be limited in size. The cultivator's house must not be too far from his field; and the elementary organization of the time would become unmanageable if many more than two hundred families were congregated together. Often the nature of the ground would limit the houses to a much smaller number, more resembling a hamlet than a village.

Such a village community was not peculiar to India. Similar causes led to similar aggregations in all early

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agricultural communities. But in India the powers of nature have always been more formidable than elsewhere; earthquakes, floods, wild beasts, and still wilder man, rendered union not only desirable but imperative, and it was in India that the village community attained, and often still retains, its most perfect form.

The actual structure of such a village would depend on climate and local situation. In mountainous districts or where the rainfall was heavy, a style of building was evolved not unlike that of a Swiss cottage. The walls were built of wood from the forest, or stone from the mountain side. Split slabs of wood, or, better still, great rough-hewn slates roofed in the inmates against the deluging rains of the monsoon. Such buildings were grouped in small hamlets on the scattered terraces of cultivated land.

In the plains of Northern India the groups were larger. Flat-roofed houses of sun-dried mud bricks were grouped together on the highest eminence in the fertile land near the rivers, these dwellings forming a dry refuge for their inhabitants during the monsoon floods. As the flimsy houses fell down, others would be built over them, the village site rising higher and higher till it formed the most conspicuous landmark in the boundless plain; and at the present day the antiquity of a site may be roughly gauged by its height above the level plain surrounding it. The earth for building the houses and for the walls of the village was obtained by digging out one or more ponds, which soon filled with water and afforded a drinking place for cattle and even (in the dryer tracts) for man, and a wallowing place for the water-loving buffalo in the hot weather.

Such was, and still is over most of India, the structure of the Indian village. In olden times it was generally

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enclosed by a wall or stockade with gates. These, too, often still survive. Outside lay the arable land, guarded from intrusive birds and beasts by fences, snares and field-watchmen.

Village In the earliest village each man cultivated *organization* the land which he had himself reclaimed from the jungle, or which he had inherited or acquired from such a reclamer. Then as now the land lay open, the different fields being separated only by balks, or banks of unploughed earth, and the waste land surrounding the village was used by all for grazing and woodcutting. Disputes were settled by an hereditary headman.

Village Communication with the outside world was so *Servants* unsafe that a village had to be self-supporting, and to include a complete establishment of occupations and trades: a night watchman for police work, a messenger for communication with the outside world, a potter to furnish simple household utensils, a cobbler to make the villagers' shoes and plough harness and gear, a carpenter to fashion agricultural implements and the woodwork in the houses, and a money-lender to finance those who required it. Sometimes a dancing girl was added to the village, always a barber, who acted also as marriage broker and surgeon—a curious combination! Sometimes also there was an astrologer and even a witch-finder.

Such village servants were not paid by the job but by a regular annual income, on receipt of which they were bound to work for every village resident without further payment. Originally they were granted holdings of land, large for the headman, small in the case

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of other servants, but later they were generally given definite shares when the grain was divided at harvest.

Primitive though this organization was, it inspired a spirit of mutual goodwill and friendliness. Isolation and even insecurity bred a corporate spirit, which civilization with its individualising touch has almost destroyed.

Slowly and with difficulty the social reformer of to-day is endeavouring by means of co-operation to call back to life that joyous mutual endeavour towards the common weal which characterized the village life of the Merrie England of the Middle Ages, and which still characterizes those Indian villages that have not yet been poisoned by the apples of discord of the lawyer and the politician.

The Joint Village Community This primitive type of village community survived in the South of India almost unchanged till the arrival of the British. In the North the nomad invasions introduced tribal influences, and the structure of the village community was modified on patriarchal lines. The conquering clansmen constituted a strong joint-body, generally claiming descent from a single head, which while jealously insisting on equality among members, maintained its superiority to the original inhabitants. These latter were reduced to the position of tenants and servants to the conquerors, allowed in the village only on sufferance, or perhaps on payment of small dues to the ruling body. It was this joint-body that owned the waste land and let it out for grazing or fishing.

The Committee of Elders Clan methods of administration were followed in the village, the heads of the leading families constituting a Commit-

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tee of Elders, with an elected president, subject to the control of a public assembly of all the joint body. Such a body, with its equality among numbers and superiority to outsiders, with its real or assumed kinship and its managing committee, presents striking analogies to the *gens* of ancient Rome, and the *γένος* of Ancient Athens, themselves also the relics of the still more ancient patriarchal past of the nomad Aryan invaders of Italy and Greece.

The patriarchal family The patriarchal family, whose head sat on the Committee of Elders, was a much bigger thing than the modern European family, which generally consists only of a father with his wife and children. In India, all the descendants of an old man still living would (and still do) constitute a family of close-kindred. But such a family group might be still further extended. The same patriarch who now saw his great-grandchildren around him might well recollect his own great-grandfather sitting as head of the household at the same hearth. Thus the extreme natural reach of the head of the household might cover seven generations. So kindred to the seventh degree came to be a recognized limit of the wider kindred within which members all recognized themselves as akin. Such a kindred often cultivated lands in association.

Large joint families of this kind characterized early tribal India, and the same principle governs the Hindu joint family of to-day. Nor has it been confined to India. In ancient Rome and Greece, in the Palestine of the Old Testament, in tribal Wales and mediæval Europe, similar extensions of the family bore witness to the descent of the inhabitants from patriarchal nomads.

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Under these overlords were the older inhabitants, who continued to cultivate the land. Reduced though they were to the status of tenants and compelled to reside apart on the outskirts of the village, both equity and policy forbade their ejection from the land they cultivated. Land in those days was plentiful, and cultivators scarce, and if treated too harshly they might run away. The right of a man to the land which he had broken up for tillage was still recognized. But while a clansman would cultivate it free, unless it was more than his proportionate share, a non-clansman would have to pay the joint-body of clansmen a rent, which generally took the form of a share of the produce.

In a properly focused view of Indian history, the drums and trumpets of warlike invaders, the richly caparisoned elephants of proud princes, the marchings and counter-marchings of predatory armies, fade into the background, blurred and indistinct, while the village community advances into the foreground as the real unit of economics and administration. Indian histories are for the most part dull, because they describe the politics of inorganic states rather than the village background of the immense mixed multitudes in a country which is a museum of economics and sociology.

Survival of the Village Community The chaos that followed on the decline and fall of the Mogul Empire subjected the village community to the law of the survival of the fittest. In Madras the primitive type of village community still survived, free from the tribal influences which had modified the village constitutions of Northern India; and even where high-caste families or colonizing adventurers had once established groups of superior joint-owners, the results

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of later Hindu and Muhammadan conquests had been to destroy such rights and restore the old type of village community. In Bengal, under the farming system, the village community was destroyed and all village rights were obliterated. But the joint villages of Northern India were of a harder mould. The chaotic conditions prevailing previous to the advent of the British counteracted the centralizing tendencies of the Mogul government, and restored to the old tribal groups something of their old importance. Then (as now once again with the decline of British power), the collapse of the central government forced men to cling to any political authority that offered itself. Tribes, clans and village communities once more came into the foreground, and their tiny systems of mutual alliance or hostility recall the history of Ancient Greece. The shopkeepers and trading classes were as dependent on the tribal leaders as in feudal Europe.

Village Communities in the Punjab The revival of the old tribal and village groups prevented any extension of the revenue-farming system to the Punjab, where the Mogul Empire died a relatively sudden death and did not perish by gradual decay as in Bengal. The old democratic tribal feeling (of equality amongst tribesmen combined with superiority to the rest of the world) joined with the levelling effects of Mogul, Afghan and Sikh rule to prevent that submergence of the Punjab peasant, which had characterized his brethren of the Ganges basin. This weakness of the tribal chiefs in the Punjab left the village community there the only instrument of local self-government; though it had to be relatively strong to have any chance of survival. A fortified village surrounded by a

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wall, and entered by gates with a portcullis, could give sufficient trouble to a Mogul, Afghan, or Sikh revenue collector to render him reasonable. It was more worth his while to compound for an equitable amount of revenue than to be put to the expense and inconvenience of attacking and destroying the village. Moreover, the joint village body would arrange for the cultivation of their land, and so save him the trouble of dealing directly with the individual peasants. If necessary they would call in cultivators from outside to help make up the heavy revenue demanded, giving the latter as compensation a subordinate interest in the fields they cultivated.

Such a village community developed much of the political and administrative sagacity which characterized the Greek or Italian city states in their prime. Matters of common interest were discussed by the body of joint owners (corresponding to the Roman Comitia and the Athenian Ecclesia), while weightier matters were reserved for the Committee of Elders (corresponding to the Senate and the Arcopagus). The relationship of such a body to the local Mogul or Sikh government might be paralleled by that of a Greek Ionian city to the local Persian satrap. Probably the satrap could destroy the city if he really wanted to, but it was more in the interests of both parties to come to terms.

The village community was seen at its best in the Punjab just before British annexation. In Northern India generally the joint village flourished as a vital organization. In the South and in Bombay the British found the primitive Dravidian village. In Bengal alone had the village community perished utterly.

More and more British administrators came to appreciate the advantage of preserving this indigenous

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organic growth. Unfortunately their efforts were almost powerless against the insidious forces of doctrinaire legal and economic theories which dominated English political thought in the nineteenth century.

II. THE POLITICAL SUPREMACY OF THE LAWYER

English Law "English Law assuredly travels to its conclusions by a path more tortuous and more interrupted by fictions and unnecessary distinctions than any system of jurisprudence in the world." So said the jurist Maine, and the reasons may be found in that paralysis of the English executive which resulted from the civil strife of the seventeenth century. This left the lawyers free to develop the mysteries of their profession, a task which was only too congenial to the Whig oligarchy of the eighteenth century, who desired a plausible justification for enclosing the lands of their poorer neighbours and turning the machinery of administration into a gigantic establishment for the maintenance of their protégés. The legal system then evolved, while inflicting the most ferocious punishments on the petty pilferings of the poor, could always find a plausible pretext for the usurpations of the favoured few, no longer checked by a strong King or an independent Church.

Even the judges themselves were restrained from making any effective improvements in the system which they nominally controlled. The secret lay in the control of the English Bench by professional opinion—a control exerted all the more stringently when the questions brought before the courts were merely insulated fragments of particular branches of law. English law was, in fact, confided to the custody of a great corporation,

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of which the Bar, not the Judges, were far the largest and most influential part.

“The numerousness of those that devoted themselves to this profession” (said Swift) “was such that the fair and justifiable advantage and income of the profession was not sufficient for the decent and handsome maintenance of multitudes of those who followed it. Hence it came to pass that it was needful to supply that by artifice and cunning, which could not be procured by just and honest methods; the better to bring which about, many men were bred up from their youth in the art of proving that White is Black, and Black is White, according as they are paid.”

The “Law’s delays” The most powerful weapon in the hands of the lawyer was delay. His Fabian tactics could wear down the boldest spirits. Even in Shakespeare’s time the “law’s delays” were as proverbial as the “insolence of office”. “My advocate must proceed with great caution” (said Swift) “for since the maintenance of so many depends on the keeping up of business, should he proceed too summarily he is sure to gain the ill-will and hatred of his brethren as being by them esteemed one that would lessen the practice of the Law.” “Verbosity” (writes Lord Riddell to-day) “pervades the law-courts, with the result that cases are unduly prolonged to the detriment of judges, juries and litigants,” though not (he might have added) of the lawyers. These characteristics were seen at their worst in the English Court of Chancery, which had circumvented the English Common Law by an equity based on a peculiarly complicated series of legal fictions.

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Hastings and the Supreme Court of Bengal It was a misfortune for India that her conquerors should have brought with them this remarkably unscientific system of jurisprudence. For a time, however, the convenient fiction that it was subordinate to the Mogul Emperor preserved the Bengal administration from the interference of English judges. But with the arrival of the Supreme Court of Calcutta this Arcadian simplicity was rudely disturbed.

“The authors of the Regulating Act of 1773” (says Macaulay) “had established two independent powers, the one judicial, the other political; and, with a carelessness scandalously common in English legislation, they had omitted to define the limits of either. The judges took advantage of the indistinctness, and attempted to draw to themselves supreme authority, not only within Calcutta but through the whole of the Bengal Presidency.

“A reign of terror began, a terror heightened by mystery. No man knew what was next to be expected from this strange tribunal. It came from beyond the black water, as the people of India, with mysterious horror, call the sea. It consisted of judges, not one of whom was familiar with the usages of the millions over whom they claimed boundless authority. It had already collected around itself an army of the worst part of the native population, informers and false witnesses, and common barrators and agents of chicane, and above all a banditti of bailiff’s followers compared with whom the retainers of the worst English spunging houses, in the worst times, might be considered upright and tender-hearted.

“Many natives, highly considered among their countrymen, were seized, hurried away to Calcutta, and

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there flung into the common jail merely as a precaution till their cause should come to trial. There were instances in which men of the most venerable dignity, persecuted without a cause by extortioners, died of rage and shame in the gripe of the vile alguazils of Impey.¹ The harems of noble Muhammadans, sanctuaries respected in the East by Governments that respected nothing else, were burst open by gangs of bailiffs. The Mussalmans, braver and less accustomed to submission than the Hindus, sometimes stood on their defence, and there were instances in which they shed their blood in the doorway while, sword in hand, defending the sacred apartments of their women. Nay, it seemed as if even the faint-hearted Bengalee would at length find courage in despair. All the injustice of former oppressors appeared as a blessing when compared with the justice of the Supreme Court."

Fortunately Hastings was the man to deal with any situation. The Chief Justice could not be overruled, but he could be squared; and by a tactful arrangement Bengal was saved the scandal of a civil war between the Government and the Supreme Court.

The new legal mystery and its initiates The first epidemic outbreak of a disease is generally the most virulent, and the ravages of the English legal bacillus never again devastated India so effectively as under Chief Justice Sir Elijah Impey. Gradually the distemper assumed an endemic form, whose wasting effects more resembled those produced by malarial fever than the more terrifying symptoms of cholera and plague. The technicalities of English Chancery procedure sprouted into a dense jungle growth on their

¹ Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

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introduction to the tropical atmosphere of multifarious Indian custom.

Nor did the new cult long lack new hierophants. The subtle Brahmin intellect, which had successively swallowed and digested the primitive Dravidian rites and Buddhist doctrines and had (under Akbar) very nearly absorbed the uncompromising spirit of Islam, was admirably adapted to the propagation of the new ritual. The ascendancy of the Brahmins had always been based on their knowledge of religious rites unknown to the vulgar. It only remained for them to master this new ceremonial in order to attain their age-long objective, power without responsibility. This done, they acquired an authority that they had never ventured to exercise under the Mauryas or the Rajputs. For in those days the Brahmin minister of the most pious Hindu monarch had to render some account of his actions to the ruler; while now, once the caste-bound Hindu had mastered the principles of the new legal system, the courts of justice were his instruments and the people his prey, his power continually growing as the judiciary waxed stronger and the executive became weaker and weaker.

The introduction of this system into the North-Western Provinces led to grave social evils. The remedy devised recalled the method by which the Roman prætors evaded the antiquated rules of the *Jus Civile* by the development of the progressive *Jus Gentium*. To reform the Civil Courts appeared hopeless, to leave land cases with them would ruin the country. The only solution was to create an entirely new system of Land Revenue Courts with a simplified procedure administered by executive officers, who alone were in a position properly to understand disputes as to rights in land.

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Laisser-faire It was a misfortune that the English conquest of India corresponded with that general paralysis of state activities in England which is known by the name of *laisser-faire*. The result was marked in England by congested slums and deserted villages, all-engrossing landlords and a decaying yeomanry, by bloated capitalists and a starving urban proletariat, by a legal system which declared one law for the rich and another for the poor. Transferred to India, this paralysis of the executive facilitated the growth of a powerful legal class, mainly composed of Hindu money-lenders and shopkeepers, who wielded through the law the tremendous powers of the State in their own interests, unhindered by any sense of responsibility.

Over-legislation When a province was first annexed, large powers were put in the hands of the District Officer, so that he was able to adjust the machinery of Government to the special circumstances of his district. But with the introduction of regular courts and trained lawyers, this delicate adjustment became impossible. Every administrative act was questioned that could not be shown to be necessitated by some Act of the Legislature, and Act after Act was passed to prevent the complete paralysis of the administration under such restrictions. In these Procrustean beds administrators were now compelled to lie, the interpretation of the Acts being left to Courts which had no practical experience of administrative difficulties, and were compelled by their very nature to ignore questions of expediency.

When an Act was found quite unworkable, recourse was had to further legislation, soon itself to be overlaid

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with a mass of judicial interpretations. The most successful District Officers were those who paid least regard to legal rules. But the bolder spirits were gradually restrained, till a dull soulless uniformity settled on the whole administration, earning for those who conducted it the nickname of "sun-dried bureaucrats". The epithet was a particularly inappropriate one, as the unsympathetic official was not the one who got sun-dried riding through his district; but rather the one who, peering at life from behind the dusty files and musty tomes of his office in the Secretariat, hardly ever saw the sun.

The "nice, sharp, quilllets of the law" The atmosphere of unreality, which was introduced into judicial relations by these exotic Acts, was exaggerated in the lower Courts. Conscious of his inability to understand them, the amateur Judge, whose work was still often mainly executive, endeavoured to elaborate something which bore a faint resemblance to a professional judgment, hoping thus to impress his superiors with a sense of legal capacity. The professional Bar, more versed in technicalities than the amateur Bench, was generally in a position to browbeat the titular Judge. Cases were generally regarded, not as enquiries into matters of fact or even of law, but as battles between renowned champions of the Bar. Such being the general impression, there was (and is) no limit to the sum which it was worth while paying one of these redoubtable mercenaries for any who wished to escape a hanging or to ruin an enemy. A really capable man would go further still, and would explain to his client how a murder might safely be committed, carefully planning out beforehand the *alibi* and the defence witnesses.

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The Executive and the Judicial The doctrinaire system which pervaded the Law Courts was not entirely without influence over the executive, being especially powerful in the Secretariat. Staffed mainly by brainy men, selected early in their service for a life of comparative ease in the cool of hill stations, despising the dust and heat of district life, the Secretariat became a fitting seed-bed for the doctrinaire exotic. Basing his arguments on the doctrines of *laissez-faire*, the economic man, the survival of the fittest, the sanctity of contract, and the inherent right of every free man to be free to alienate his land, the Secretary was clever enough to confute the illogical rejoinders of protesting District Officers every time. Men were, or should be (he argued), economic men, competing with each other for things that had a cash value. Religious faith, family honour, *esprit de corps*, and other similar relics of a barbaric past would no doubt gradually disappear through education and progress.

The nearest approach to this economic ideal was to be found in the Hindu money-lender, whose single-minded pursuit of money values led him far under the new system. The peasant was more conservative. But nevertheless there was to be found in each village a sufficient number of economic men to break the old prestige of the Committees of Elders, and to resolve the organic unity of the village community into that confused medley of warring atoms so beloved of the doctrinaire. Primitive custom had taught the peasant the wickedness of "bearing false witness against his neighbour", but enlightened self-interest now discovered that a truthful case had no chance of success in Court.

Judges of a later day who, compassed about with a cloud of false witnesses, complained bitterly of the lack

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of public spirit shown in the Law Courts, did not always realize that this was a direct result of the doctrinaire teachings of the nineteenth century. It was the system, not the individuals, that was to blame. The lawyer, who, having taken a large fee from his client, deliberately delayed the case in order to extract more fees, was merely an economic man aiming at the acquisition of wealth by methods of enlightened self-interest. The Judge, who overrode the law in the interest of justice by special pleading, was only trying to make the best of a barbaric legal system, preserved in England by Whig politicians for political ends, and then transplanted to entirely alien surroundings at the other end of the globe.

Judge-made laws When the Romans became an imperial people they discarded the primitive Jus Civile, and in the Jus Gentium devised a jurisprudence based on scientific principles. The same broad philosophy underlay the law of Islam and the *Code Napoléon*. England, alone of all great empires, failed to evolve a system of law adequate to her great responsibilities. The reason for this lay in the pre-eminently judge-made character of the English law. No other science could exist for a moment whose power of definition was limited to adjudication on specific instances. How could algebra progress if mathematicians could only define a perfect cube by isolated rulings on particular numbers? And the difficulties would be even greater in the less exact sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology. Yet in the science of juridical relations, whose aspects are as multifarious as those of sociology, English legal theory could only arrive at a classification by attempting to extract general principles from the

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decision reached on the small number of points that had arisen from differences of opinion among quarrelsome people.

The application of the finest brains in the country to the solution of these acrostics had nevertheless left litigation dilatory, futile, and expensive. The lawyers had made justice "of none effect through their tradition".

"The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath". Institutions are only justified in so far as they subserve the public welfare. But powerful organizations are exceedingly loth to reform themselves. It requires the explosive force of the moral reformer, or the strong hand of the firm ruler, Christ or Cæsar, to compel them to co-ordinate their activities to the common weal. Thus the Roman Emperors directed the Jurisprudents to draw up that legal system which proved a model for all Western nations except England. Thus, under the Caliphs, the skilled doctors of Muhammadan law provided scientific jurisprudence for the great world of Islam. In France the legal profession, as represented in the Parliament¹ of Paris, by refusing to register in its ridiculous "beds of justice" the reforms advocated by Louis XVI, drove that unhappy monarch to the guillotine whither many lawyers deservedly followed. It required the master mind of the great Napoleon to rescue France from legal chaos by that Code of which he was more proud than of all his victories. The similar attempt made by the Stuarts in England failed through the weakness of those unhappy kings, and the astute alliance of the lawyers with the contrivers of the Whig Revolution ensured the domination of the legal profession, not only in England but in all other countries which bor-

¹ Parliament = Talking-shop. In France it was the lawyers and not the politicians who talked.

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rowed the English legal system: not least in India, where the interests of the lawyer, the moneylender, the Brahmin and Hindu castes were generally all very much identical.

III. THE ECONOMIC DICTATORSHIP OF THE MONEY-LENDER

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay,
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

GOLDSMITH: *The Deserted Village*

Agriculture and indebtedness In past times agriculture was generally the industry of the small man; but in no other industry are the results so uncertain or is the period of waiting so long. The vagaries of climate do not interfere with the working of the potter's wheel, and a pot can be made one day and sold the next. But the husbandman has to feed himself and his family for six months before he obtains the reward of his labour; and drought, hail, or a foray might prevent his getting any reward at all. Sooner or later the time is bound to come when he requires assistance to tide over till the next harvest.

But necessity is not of itself sufficient to account for debt, still less for its volume. Before a loan can be taken, there must be someone to lend, and before a prudent man will lend, he must be satisfied that his loan will be repaid. In other words debt postulates not only a debtor, but also a creditor, and not only a need, but also a security. In a primitive society the security was small, and compensation had to be found

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in a high rate of interest and in harsh rules against the person and property of a debtor, rules which custom considerably modified in practice.

But, with the growth of highly organized states, such rules came to be enforced more literally and with less reference to practical considerations, and this at a time when increased security made more money available for investment in loans. The mischiefs arising from agricultural indebtedness were especially conspicuous when a community passed from a low state of organization to one of comparative complication and refinement. The reign of Jeroboam II in Israel, and the periods of Solon in Athens, the early Republic in Rome, England under the early Plantagenets, and India after the British annexation, sufficiently illustrate this general truth.

The rate of interest which is determined by the necessity of the borrower is aptly distinguished, under the term *usury*, from the ordinary banking interest which gives a reasonable return on money loaned, after making a due allowance for risk. The usurer, like the pirate, exacts not a reasonable salvage rate from his victims, but all their possessions and everything that makes life worth living. The distinction is too often overlooked by economic theorists who descant priggishly on the ignorance of economic laws displayed in Mosaic, mediæval and Muhammadan condemnations of usury.

Under the pre-British rulers of India, the relations between peasant debtors and moneylenders were regulated by the local Governors with a view to agricultural efficiency. Capital was required to finance agriculture, and it would only be forthcoming if properly recompensed. Hence the debtor must be compelled to repay principal with interest. But the peasant must not be over-exploited or he would not be able to pay his land

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revenue. Thus, in practice, just as the peasant was allowed to retain as much as, and no more than, would induce him to continue the practice of agriculture, so the money-lender was allowed to make as much profit, and no more, as would induce him to continue to finance the peasant.

Transferable Proprietary rights in land created by the British In those days land was plentiful, and cultivators were scarce. It was the British who, by limiting the State's demand for land revenue, really created a property in land in the English sense, subject to what was really a tax on rent. In Bengal and Oudh this property was mainly conferred on the old revenue farmers, and in the United Provinces and the Punjab mainly on the peasantry. Its value was enhanced by the development of communications, and it now had (as never before) a money value for those who could not cultivate it themselves. Gradually the British Courts came to recognize that a proprietor could transfer his rights in the land. Thus the peasant proprietor could now offer the money-lender a security for investments, which should have materially reduced the interest rate, but which did not in fact do so owing to the failure of the peasant to appreciate the economic situation clearly.

Causes of Agricultural debt under British rule For example, he hardly realized how easy it was for the money-lender to recover debt under the law as now administered, and still less that his land would be held liable, thus practically converting even unsecured debt into mortgage. No wonder he availed himself of the loans which seemed to be had for the

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asking, and rapidly got involved in the toils of the money-lender. Debt in fact tended to be proportioned not to the needs but to the credit of the borrower. The object of the money-lender was not to finance but to entrap his client. The peasant's very love for his land only added to his difficulties, for, once it had passed into the money-lender's hands, he would pay any rent, however exorbitant, rather than quit the field he had inherited from his ancestors.

Sooner or later a bad season would come when he would be unable to pay the land revenue, which (under the British) had to be paid punctually, famine or no famine. Borrowing was his only remedy, and once in the clutches of the money-lender, escape was almost impossible. Moreover the revenue had to be paid in cash by a cultivator, who had only agricultural produce. He was forced therefore to sell to the grain-dealer, who was generally also the inevitable money-lender again, and gave very poor prices to those in his clutches. In years of drought, plough cattle died—a serious inroad on the necessary working capital of the cultivator—which could only be replaced by fresh borrowing.

The money-lender's Even if the money-lender had been
superiority in the honest, his superior astuteness, busi-
Civil Courts ness training and command of capital
would have rendered the cultivator a
mere child in his hands. But his superiority was accen-
tuated by the mechanical nature of the English juridical
system, with its peculiar view on the subject of contract.
Contracts framed in a spirit of Oriental hyperbole,
which neither party ever intended or expected to be
carried out in full, were construed literally and carried
out *au pied de la lettre*. The ancient usury laws of the

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country had been set aside, and land had been declared liable for money debts. The justice of the ruler had been replaced by the machinery of a rigid and technical legal system, quite foreign to Oriental ideas, which even when honestly administered offered every advantage to the superior education, astuteness, and length of purse of the money-lender.

If (for example) a cultivator, whose whole crop was attacked, were to plead that this would leave his family without food for the next month, the Civil Court could reply (with Gallio) that it cared for none of these things, and that its duty was confined to administering the Civil Law. The wretched cultivator would be summoned at the caprice of his creditor just when his presence was most urgently required on the land, involving perhaps a journey of forty miles there and back, often fruitless if the cause-list was too full for the despatch of business. The cost of such a case still further ruined the already demoralized cultivator. It was heard by a Subordinate Judge, who was generally recruited from the money-lending class and whose sympathies were all with the creditor.

The English judicial system in the North-Western Provinces The disastrous effect of the application of the English judicial system to the conditions of Indian agriculture was felt all over India. In the North-Western Provinces it had enlisted public sympathy with the Mutineers, whose temporary ascendancy had given proprietors the chance of making away with the auction purchasers who had dispossessed them. District officials (complained Sir John Strachey) have "become mere machines for grinding revenue out of the people. No one who has not had the matter brought

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practically and directly to his notice can have the least conception of the knavery and rapacity of the money-lenders, to whom the land holders of these provinces are obliged to have recourse. Our Civil Courts have unhappily been the ready instruments for these dishonest operations and our system of juridical procedure, instead of checking, has stimulated and exaggerated them."

The English judicial system in Bombay In Bombay things were no better. In pre-British times there was no legal method of recovering debts.

Recourse had to be made to a kind of black magic. The money-lender's agent (often a Brahmin) would sit at the door of the defaulting debtor, insistently demanding payment, refusing to eat or drink till the debt was paid, sometimes even placing a stone on his head or tying his hair to a peg in the debtor's door. The responsibility for causing all these self-inflicted tortures lay on the debtor, whose sins thus accumulated till he repaid the debt. Apart from such primitive methods of dunning, the creditor trusted to the honesty and good faith of his debtor, and the relations between money-lenders and cultivators were those of mutual trust and confidence.

But with the introduction of the British judicial system this happy state of affairs came to an end. To confidence and goodwill succeeded distrust and dislike. The money-lender was no longer interested in the prosperity of the peasant. It paid him better to get him hopelessly indebted, so that he might take all the profits of the land and leave the cultivator a mere pittance. He need no longer trust in the cultivator's good faith and honesty. He had only to go to law to get what he wanted. It paid him to encourage extravagance in the

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peasant until the toils had closed round him and escape was impossible. From that day forward the peasant became the bondsman of his creditor, who took care that he should seldom do more than pay the interest on his debt. Do what he might, he could never get rid of the principal. He toiled that another might rest, and sowed that another might reap. The virtues of a freeman were supplanted by the vices of a slave.

These were the facts which Sir G. Wingate, Revenue Survey Commissioner, brought in 1852 to the notice of the Bombay Government, who replied that "the subject had received so large a share of their anxious consideration on former occasions that it was unnecessary to discuss it". But the point was again raised by District Officers in contact with the people, till in 1858 the Governor in Council "believed that our Civil Courts have become hateful to the masses of our Indian subjects from being made the instruments of the almost incredible rapacity of usurious capitalists". Yet for all this nothing was done!

The Dekkan Agriculturists' Relief Act, 1879 Meanwhile the manly Maharashtra peasantry of the Bombay uplands had been goaded into frenzy. The American Civil War had raised the price of cotton, and the resulting inflation of credit tempted the peasantry to improvident borrowing; but the extravagant habits engendered by this temporary prosperity served them ill, when collapsed prices and bad seasons combined to throw them into debt. As they became more and more entangled in the toils of the money-lender, despair begat a desperate resolve. For the last half-century their case had been engaging the "anxious consideration" of the Bombay Government; but the

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ungrateful peasantry would wait no longer. In the words of the Elizabethan poet:

Men find that action is another thing
Than what they in discoursing papers read:
The world's affairs require in managing
More arts than those wherein you clerks proceed.
Whilst timorous Knowledge stands considering
Audacious Ignorance hath done the deed;
For who knows most, the more he knows to doubt,
The least discourse is commonly most stout.

In this case the "audacious ignorance" of some desperate Dekkan villagers led them to band themselves together as a Mahratta Land League (it was the time of Land Leagues) and boycott their creditors. The contagion spread. The cultivators in a large village near Poona rose and gutted the shops of their oppressors. In village after village the cultivators rose and destroyed the bonds and decrees in the hands of the money-lenders. That the most docile and law-abiding agriculturists in India should almost within sight of Poona—the summer capital of the Bombay Government—ungratefully forget that for half a century their grievances had been subject to "anxious consideration", took that Government by surprise. Fearing a general uprising of the Mahrattas, they appointed a Commission of Enquiry, and pacified the now pugnacious peasantry with promises of redress.

IV. HELP FOR THE PEASANT

The Punjab peasantry and the Russian menace The Dekkan Agriculturists' Relief Act (1879) which resulted from this Commission of Enquiry created a special machinery for adjusting the disputes between moneylender and peasant—a machinery which

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proved effective. It did more—it marked a new attitude on the part of Government to peasant grievances. It was recalled that peasant grievances had been at the bottom of the Mutiny; and the Punjab peasantry were getting restive. Also, the growl of the Russian bear now sounded ominously from beyond the Hindu Kush, arousing the British—if not the Indian—Government to a sense of the seriousness of the situation. In England the doctrine of *laissez-faire* had already suffered severely from the onslaughts of Trade Unionism on the one side and Disraeli's Tory Democracy on the other. Even in Liberal circles it was no longer an article of faith, and the more enterprising political economists were hastening to abandon a ship which was manifestly sinking.

The Famine Commission of 1880 Anglo-Indian political thought, generally a quarter of a century behind that of England, had not yet reached this stage; and when the Deccan riots were followed by famine, and when in 1880 a Famine Commission followed the famine and recommended the extension of the Relief Act to the whole of India, the money-lending influence was sufficiently strong to prevent its being given effect, and to blast the career of Thorburn, a brilliant Punjab official, who devoted his whole life to the cause of peasant emancipation in the Punjab.

The Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900 But though Thorburn could not save himself, he saved others. As so often happens, his recommendations were adopted, while the recommender was shelved; and from his retirement Thorburn had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing his chief recommendation, the prohibition of land alienation to non-

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agriculturists, embodied in the Punjab Alienation of Land Act of 1900.

Co-operative Credit This and other similar measures were palliatives, rather than cures of a disease whose causes were first diagnosed in Madras. There in 1896 Sir Frederick Nicholson pointed to Co-operative Credit on German lines as the true panacea for the ills of agricultural indebtedness. Under the sympathetic leadership of the provincial Governments, village co-operative societies began, slowly but surely, to oust the money-lender from the less hopelessly indebted areas. Credit must always be necessary to the cultivator, both the short term credit which enables him to tide over bad harvests, and the long term credit which finances wells, drains, and other expensive land improvements. This credit the co-operative societies supplied at reasonable rates and with adequate safeguards for repayment.

The effective spread of the co-operative movement in India dates from 1916 when Mr. Calvert became Registrar of Co-operation in the Punjab. He not only breathed into the movement that spirit of devotion without which it must have degenerated into the routinism of a normal Government department, but he also inculcated those principles which were necessary to secure that it remained financially sound. While the moneylender discouraged repayments which would enable the peasant to escape from his clutches, the co-operative society insisted on prompt repayment each harvest. Meanwhile every year the movement became financially more stable with the growth of reserve funds both in the village societies and the Central financing institutions.

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Thrift Punjab methods were soon copied all over India. They did not stop at the provision of credit. Thrift and saving and forethought are economic virtues second only to industry itself. They are the primary necessities without which the peasant can do nothing, charm Economic Botanists and scientific Bug-hunters never so wisely.

Hoarding But thrift implies security—for who will save for the benefit of others?—and capital invested, especially in agriculture, takes a long time to repay itself. The disturbed condition of India prior to British rule offered little inducement to the investor. But both kings and subjects had early appreciated the advantage of having a sum of ready cash available against emergencies, and under the unstable conditions that prevailed, the only permanent form of wealth appeared to be gold, silver or jewels. To hang some of their ready cash in the noses, round the necks, or on the arms and ankles of their maidens and matrons seemed a convenient way of obtaining æsthetic satisfaction from an economic need; but the amount those fair cash-boxes could carry was limited, and the rest was buried in the ground in a napkin or treasure chest. For a ruler, this amassing of treasure was regarded as a glorious distinction, and it was considered disgraceful for him to spend what his predecessors had collected. As so often happens, a useful economic practice became an obsession and served ultimately to defeat the very objects for which it was originally intended. The life blood of the State, which might have nourished a vigorous and warlike population, was drained to supply these useless hoards which only acted as magnets to the cupidity of foreign invaders.

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British rule offered a relatively safe field of investment in Government securities. But the Indian—with some justice—is never quite certain what will happen to the Government and its securities. The habit of hoarding still goes on, and burglary still continues to be a popular and profitable profession.

To direct these hoards into useful channels as deposits in co-operative societies is one of the main aims of the movement. Unfortunately, however, a routine prescribed that these deposits must be for fixed periods, generally not less than a year. Now the peasant seldom wants to touch his savings; but when he does wish to do so, the need is urgent. A false case may suddenly be sprung upon him, his daughter may be abducted, or his son's examiner may require a heavy fee to let him pass. In such case money is useless unless it can be obtained at once. If therefore the hidden hoards of the peasant are to be really tapped, he must be allowed to open current accounts, bearing little or no interest but payable on demand. In this way, vast sums now locked up would be set free for the development of the country.

Co-operative finance The Central Co-operative financing institutions have been the battle-ground of a struggle, which is implicit in the very being of Indian Co-operation, and is of vital import to its future. The early stages of the movement are characterized by the almost hopless endeavour to uplift the peasant and free him from the control of the money-lender. For this end zeal is essential. War, red war, must be declared, hymns of hate must be sung, and the money-lender must be denounced as the inexorable, the everlasting enemy! But the propaganda so desirable

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in war is less advantageous in a period of peace.

A successful village society, gorged with deposits and shares and reserve funds, needs the anodyne of the Account-Auditor rather than the stimulus of the poet, who now rhapsodizes on the blood-sucking propensities of the village Shylock. The large funds accumulated by some of the successful societies have awakened an unregenerate propensity for plunder in a generation, which has not yet forgotten its forefathers' love of loot. And resentment at outside interference, though shouting democratic slogans and clad in co-operative clothing, has been really actuated by a desire to cover up a misappropriation of funds. Such misappropriations may go on for years before they are discovered, and the modern official finds it easier "to let sleeping dogs lie" than to ferret out a dishonesty which may involve men of position who have come forward as "benefactors of co-operation".

Deadly as is this disease when it attacks the village society, it will be still more fatal if its attacks on the Central Co-operative Banks are successful. Fortunately from the first they were put under the management of business men of the Hindu educated class. That members of this class have largely taken to money-lending is rather the fault of the English than of them; for the English legal system gave them power to oppress their clients, and English political economy taught them that they would be fools if they did not exercise it. Yet with all its defects this class contains many honourable and upright men, the best of whom gave much selfless service to building up the credit and capital of the Central Banks. Here again the elementary financial precautions taken in the interests of the Banks have prompted attacks by so-called peasant representatives, who, using the

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watchwords of co-operative idealism, are really inspired by a longing for loot.

Joint Stock Banking and Agriculture Experience seems to show that the co-operative movement is strong and successful in inverse proportion to its distance from the village. In this respect it is the converse of the ordinary Joint Stock Bank. The two are obviously made to meet each other's needs. Unfortunately, however, Joint Stock Banking in India is dead to such possibilities. In England, though mainly adapted to meeting commercial needs, Banks nevertheless do quite a large business in financing agriculture. But in India, where agriculture is far more important, Joint Stock Banks have abandoned that side of business, and confine themselves to a wooden imitation of English commercial banking. A large part of their funds consists of current deposits, and consequently such banks deal chiefly in short term loans for three months or less, fearing to lock up their funds in loans for the longer periods required by farmers.

Moreover, Joint Stock Banking is a new thing in Indian commercial life, and the standard of its practitioners is therefore below the average of Indian commercial morality. This has necessitated a close supervision by Banking headquarters over their branches, that has prevented the exercise of individual initiative or the exploitation of new forms of banking. Instead, the branches act as feeders, the funds they attract being mostly remitted to the Bank's offices at the chief commercial cities. This lowers the rate of interest which such banks can offer to depositors, who find it more profitable to do money-lending on their own account. Thus the Joint Stock Banks do little to bring down the

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high rate of interest which acts as such a check on agricultural progress. The system requires overhauling and co-ordinating with the co-operative system, a function best performed by a Central Bank of India on the lines of the Reserve Bank proposed by Sir Basil Blackett and rejected by the Legislative Assembly. Such a Bank, like the Bank of England, should pay due regard to financial experience, and should be free from exploitation by political adventurers or official axe-grinders.

Dangers of Indianization Co-operation holds out great possibilities, but it is menaced by serious dangers. The very freedom to develop implies the freedom to develop wrongly, with possibly disastrous results to an organization which controls an ever-increasing value of cash and credit. The multiplication of Inspectors in various grades all inspecting each other is useless, unless there is a controlling authority at the top to see that their work is thorough, honest, and free from religious or partisan bias. Dangerous as it is everywhere, too rapid Indianization is especially dangerous in co-operation, with its opportunities for favouritism, speculation and political propaganda.

The money-lender's opposition And there are still greater dangers from without. The money-lenders are naturally hostile, and co-operative methods have done nothing to assuage that hostility. The fatal error of Government policy in dealing with the money-lending classes has been its failure to hold out to them scope for their talents in financing rural development on wise lines, with the result that they have sought an economic outlet through the barren paths of political agitation. Barren, because the more

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power they get, the more they find they are no better
off; and the madder they get with the Government
which seems to feed them on windy words alone.

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.

CHAPTER V

The Wealth and Welfare of India

I. THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Agriculture India is a land of smallholders chiefly occupied in the raising of crops, generally in the most primitive manner. For agriculture is still mainly in the subsistence stage, where the production of food for the family is the first care of the individual peasant. In such areas oilseeds, sugar-cane, and cotton are grown to provide the lamp oil, sweetmeats, and clothes of the villagers rather than for sale. This primitive economy prevails most completely where communications are defective, and has almost disappeared in the large wheat and cotton tracts of the North or the rice fields of Bengal and the South, or in the varied intensive cultivation to be found in the neighbourhood of the large towns.

Ploughs For agricultural operations two bullock-drawn implements are almost universally used, the country plough and the wooden clod-crusher, supplemented by several hand tools. For fulfilling a large variety of functions these implements are unquestionably very efficient, especially when their small cost is considered. But naturally an implement which is used for a variety of purposes cannot perform each of them as efficiently as an implement designed for that special purpose. The most important new implement introduced has been the iron plough, which not only breaks up the soil (as the native plough does) but also turns it over, thus enriching it by burying the weeds. As,

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however, it makes the ground uneven it requires to be supplemented by a country plough or harrow. Iron ploughs are far more effective than native ones, but they are more expensive, are more difficult to handle and repair, and are also more specialized. Consequently their use is spreading only slowly, though surely.

As was stated at the beginning of this work, there are three Indias and agriculturally these may be described as the India of Rice, the India of Wheat, and the India of Jungle.

Rice One-third of cultivated India (80 million acres) is under rice. The cultivation of this plant is a difficult art, and the crop can only be grown under special conditions. Temperature must average at least 70 degrees F. during the six months of growth, and during most of that period the water supply must be under complete control so that the "paddy" field can be flooded or dried at will. The seed is sown in mud or under water. Every night the young plants are flooded to prevent damage by cold, and every day the water is drawn off to avoid burning by the sun. As the plants ripen, the ground is allowed to dry gradually and harden against the harvest.

Now great heat and excessive moisture with a drying period to follow are characteristic of Bengal and the lower part of the United Provinces and Bombay, which receive the full force of the monsoon.

Rice cultivation, in fact, is not so much agriculture as gardening, and requires continuous, if not hard, labour. It gives the largest yield per acre of any of the great food crops, and a cultivator can easily raise much more than is needed by himself and his family.

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Hence, from the outset the rice-growing tracts of India were able to maintain a population of rice gardeners, who were able to support both themselves and an additional population of craftsmen, priests and rulers and thinkers, the necessary background of an early civilization. But the cultivators themselves were (and are) absorbed in the business of gardening; they have no leisure for politics or fighting. They live in an enervating climate, compelled to remain fixed to the fields they cultivate. Bengal and the South of India have always therefore been conquered and bullied, first by Brahmins, then by Muhammadans, and now to-day by the Congress wala, with his cult of politics and the bomb.

These influences are observable to-day. The Indian fighting races, "the men that count" (as Sir Michael O'Dwyer calls them), come from the wheat-growing, not the rice-growing, provinces of India. The following figures illustrate the inability of the rice-growing provinces to produce recruits in the Great War.

	<i>Million Acres</i>		<i>Recruits</i> (Thousands)
	(1922-3)		
	<i>Rice</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	
Punjab	.9	9.6	350
United Provinces	7.0	7.1	142
Bombay	3.1	2.0	35
Frontier Province	.0	1.1	32
Bengal	21.8	0	6
Madras	11.2	0	46

These figures do not tell the whole story. The Bengal and Madras recruits had little value in the firing line.

Wheat Conditions are different in the North. There are two harvests. The winter crops, sown be-

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tween September and December and reaped in March and April, are those which, like wheat, barley and oil-seeds, are also grown in temperate climates. Wheat (25 million acres) is the crop next in importance to rice, not only for export but as the staple food of a large part of the population in the North. It can ripen in a comparatively low maximum temperature, but it survives in regions of great heat (provided the heat comes after and not with the rain) because it ripens quickly. But the limit to cultivation is imposed not by the limit of growth but by the limit of profitable growth, a limit which is as indefinite as the change in climate; and the importance of wheat as a crop varies inversely with its distance east of the Punjab, till in Lower Bengal its cultivation is practically discontinued.

Barley and Gram On soils which are light, lacking in humus or moisture, or which are ill-cultivated, barley (7 million acres) often takes the place of wheat; and, when these conditions are intensified, gram (16 million acres) often takes the place of barley, as the winter food grain.

Maize and the millets The summer crops (sown in July and reaped from September to December) corresponding to wheat, barley and gram, are maize (5 million acres), great millet (20 million acres), and spiked millet (13 million acres). These are staple summer food grains, maize being grown where there is most moisture and intensive cultivation, great millet where there is less, and spiked millet where there is least. All these three can be grown for grain or fodder, in the latter case being sown more thickly. In dry years, crops grown for food are often used as fodder.

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Cotton and Sugarcane Cotton (17 million acres), though grown elsewhere, is *the* crop of Central India; and sugarcane (2½ million acres) has great possibilities of expansion.

Property in land Prior to British rule, the English conception of property in land as a transferable marketable commodity—owned absolutely and passing from hand to hand like any chattel—did not exist. The right of cultivating particular portions of the earth was a privilege (often a doubtful privilege) rather than a property; a privilege first of the whole people, then of a particular tribe, then of particular individuals of the community. In this last stage, land was partitioned off to those individuals as a matter of convenience rather than of right. It still remained subject to the claims of the State or of individuals deriving their claims from the State, and also to reversionary interests of the community, which prevented its uncontrolled alienations and attached to it certain rights and burdens.

But the British not only introduced the conception of property in land but also, by their limitation of the Government revenue demand, gave to the conception a reality; though they attached to the right of proprietorship the duty of paying land revenue, a burden which had previously fallen in the first instance on the actual cultivator. It became necessary, therefore, to decide who were in possession of such permanent rights in the soil as might be denominated proprietary. For this purpose the procedure of the Civil Courts proved too cumbersome and dilatory, and the task was therefore entrusted to settlement officers engaged in the assessment of land revenue.

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Uneconomic effects of tenancy in the Punjab Generally speaking, in India the cultivator does not own the land he cultivates. In the Punjab alone nearly half the cultivated area is owned by peasant proprietors. The uneconomic effects of tenancy in that province are a sufficient justification for the legislation which has striven to protect the peasant proprietors from expropriations and tenants from ejection by their landlords.

As compared with peasant proprietors it is noticed that tenants take less care in preparing the land for crops, plough it less often, manure it less, and use fewer implements upon it. They grow less valuable crops, especially avoiding those requiring the sinking of capital in the land; they make little or no effort at improving their fields, they keep poorer livestock, and bestow no care on trees. They show less keenness in having their children educated, and, crushed under the superimposed weight of their landlords, they are not in a position to organize themselves for the more profitable conduct of their industry. Under the tenancy system a society of idle drones, supported by mechanical unimaginative labour, is substituted for thrifty, hard-working, provident peasant proprietors.

The effect of ownership is to secure to the cultivator the full return on his labour; though where, as in England, this result can be secured to the tenant by fixity of tenure, ownership is not essential to good cultivation. For agricultural progress, it is necessary that the farm should be a fixed and permanent unit so that it may admit of permanent and adequate development. In India the exact opposite is the case; for while the farm is subject to a continuous series of economic earthquakes,

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the farmer is nevertheless, for the most part, fixed and rooted to the soil.

Unsuitable system of cultivation The average area of a cultivated holding (whether owned or rented) varies considerably. In Bombay the average is twelve acres, in the United Provinces two and a half. Nearly everywhere it is less than the economic holding. But this is not all. A large number of smallholdings, which could be economically worked under a system of market-gardening in compact blocks, are rendered unremunerative by the growing of cereals under a system of quasi-extensive cultivation on an area scattered over a village in minute isolated fragments. Cultivation still generally follows the traditional lines, handed down from time immemorial when villages were self-supporting and each cultivator grew the food which he himself and his family consumed. Consequently each cultivator, however small his holding, still grows food crops, and the smaller holders tend to grow a larger proportion of food crops than the larger ones. The only hope for them lies in breaking with tradition, becoming market-gardeners, growing the most remunerative crops, and buying their food in the open market.

II. IRRIGATION

Famine Behind the normal happy life of the early village community lurked the ever-threatening spectre of famine. The word famine now connotes a work-famine, when it is difficult for the peasant to obtain the means to pay for food; but in the famines of pre-British times, food was so unobtainable that men and women were driven by hunger to eat human flesh.

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The sale of children into slavery marked the first stage of such a famine, cannibalism its climax; and the horrors of famine were followed by those of pestilences which carried off the weakened population in thousands.

These famines were the inevitable accompaniment of economic conditions which left the bulk of the people dependent on the soil for their means of livelihood. They were particularly severe in tracts like the Punjab, with a precarious rainfall, and where years of plentiful harvests were succeeded by periods of continued drought; a country of small peasant proprietors without capital, living for the most part from hand to mouth, amongst whom credit ceased to exist as soon as the rains failed. Moreover the bad condition and insecurity of the roads and the levy of vexatious transit and customs dues prevented the exportation of grain to any distance. Indeed, often the people of one tract starved while plenty reigned in neighbouring districts.

Under the British, road and rail removed the possibility of such localized famines. But the dread of more widespread disaster only disappeared with the construction of those great irrigation systems which provided a surplus of grain that was available for export in good years and as a food reserve in bad years.

Famine no longer finds the people at its mercy. Where there are no canals the railway brings relief, for food can be poured in from more prosperous areas. If there is no money to give in exchange, money can be earned on relief works, or work, at the cost of a modest ticket, can be sought in towns where labour is always in demand. Certainly man need no longer starve. His only problem now is to save his beast.

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Famine relief Famine to-day, therefore, though due primarily to local failure of crops and supplies, is due not to actual shortage of the essential food, but to the absence in the general population of the capacity to buy the food that is there. Famine relief is no longer afforded by the supply of grain. The ordinary trade channels are capable of supplying all that is required; relief takes the form of the provision of employment enabling those out of work to earn enough to purchase the grain which is there. Such relief is now as much a part of the ordinary business of the State as poor-law relief in England; and a sinking fund (called "the Famine Insurance Grant"), sufficient to meet the probable expenditure over a series of years, is provided in the budgets of such provinces as are liable to famine.

Irrigation Of the total area of 262 million acres sown in British India in 1928-9, 22 were irrigated by Government canals, 4 by private canals, 6 by tanks, 13 by wells, and 5 by other sources—in all, 50 million acres irrigated, half of which was irrigated by canals. On the average, too, the yield per acre on irrigated land is about double that on unirrigated land; so the importance of irrigation cannot be judged merely by its acreage.

Canal Irrigation in the Punjab Of the area irrigated by canals, nearly half (10 million acres) is in the Punjab, a province which has taken the lead in irrigation, by means of which it has been raised from poverty to comparative wealth.

On the arrival of the British in the Punjab the country showed little economic advance on the state in which Alexander found it some two thousand years earlier.

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He found there no great irrigation system such as impressed his imagination by the waters of Babylon. He saw no sacred bull, as in Egypt,

Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud.

The Moguls did indeed start the Western Jumna Canal, but it was for their own enjoyment rather than the public benefit. There were not the capital and labour necessary for great irrigation works; nor, in the absence of railways and roads, could the surplus produce have been transported to market, even had there been any.

To-day, as a result of the continuous and combined labours of British engineers and revenue officers, one after another of the great rivers from which the Punjab¹ takes its name has been harnessed to the service of agriculture; great dams have been thrown across them, and the fertilizing waters which used to flow uselessly into the Indian Ocean or the Bay of Bengal are now spread in an increasing flow over the arid uplands, transforming them into expanses of rich cultivation, that support millions of industrious peasants. The problem of the future is to conserve the surplus summer flow of the same rivers. Its solution will make the dry tracts in the south-east of the Punjab blossom as the rose.

Water-logging There are difficulties ahead, sufficient to act as a warning against the dangers of a too rapid Indianization. Water has been used too lavishly, and many irrigated lands are suffering from water-logging, with excessive development of alkalies and resultant soil poisoning. In India, as in Egypt and California, this is the result of irrigation practices, modern

¹ Punjab=Five Rivers.

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in their origin and modes, and instituted by people lacking in the traditions of the ancient irrigators, who had worked in Egypt and Babylonia thousands of years before. The alkali lands of to-day, in their intense form, are of modern origin, due to practices which are evidently inadmissible, and which in all probability were known to be so by the people whom our modern civilization has supplanted.

Remedies Ultimately all the evils of the present system of irrigation can be traced to the low water rates which prevent the Irrigation Department from considering any problems but those of immediate profit. The problem of water-logging would be greatly simplified by waterproof lining of the canals, a perfectly feasible proposition if water were sold as a commodity. Volumetric sale would also lend to economy of water, a still further check on water-logging. Cultivators would then divide their land up into small irrigation compartments and distribute water on to their fields through pipes, conserving moisture by the liberal use of manure. In fact they would in every way seek that economy of water which characterizes the cultivation of land irrigated by wells, and is so conspicuous by its absence in canal-irrigated land.

The same problem arises in connexion with another cure for water-logging, the installation of tube-wells. These can easily be made to pay if water is sold at its commodity value but not if the ordinary rates are charged.

The sale of water as a commodity would not only have prevented water-logging; it would have provided the Government with a fund from which it could have equipped the Punjab Canal Colonies with roads, rail-

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ways, hospitals, schools, electric light, in fact with all those modern conveniences now lacking and for which the growth of education is rapidly increasing the demand.

The substitution of low water rates for such a volumetric sale has given the Canal Colonies a plutocracy of *nouveaux riches*, who spend their unearned increment in bribing Government servants to grant them privileges to which they are not entitled. Here, as elsewhere, the best remedy for corruption lies in a sound system of administration rather than in encouraging Nosey Parkers and Peeping Toms.

III. CATTLE

The sacred cow From the earliest times the ox has furnished mechanical power to the cultivator, and the Hindu prohibition of kine-killing gave a religious sanction to the economic necessity of preserving cattle from the destructive instincts of early times. Till quite recently, livestock constituted by far the most important form of movable chattel. To this the kindred origin of the words "chattel", "capital" and "cattle" bears testimony, and in backward parts of India to-day the money-lender advances interest on their security, his lack of discrimination between good and bad stock encouraging the borrower to accumulate quantity rather than quality in his herds.

Quality rather than quantity Quantity rather than quality is, in fact, the distinguishing feature of the cattle population of India generally. The draining away of the best cows and cow-buffaloes to provide milk for the towns, while inferior animals are left to

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carry on the breed; the existence of large numbers of half-starved cattle, which compete successfully with the more useful animals for the ever-diminishing supply of available fodder; the fact that cattle breeding is not a commercial proposition, still less when compared with the large profits to be obtained from agriculture in the strict sense of the word—all these causes have combined to produce deterioration. Most of the cows in existence are neither good milkers nor good breeders, and few bullocks are good for the plough. Most exist simply because of the free grazing which is available. It would not pay to provide them with expensive fodder, so they remain half-starved. It would not pay to incur trouble or expense on the scientific breeding of such starvelings, so they are allowed to breed promiscuously.

There are too many head of cattle, in fact, for the fodder available; and as a result good milking and draught strains are eliminated, and a famine-resisting breed is developed. Famine is now to beasts what it used to be for human beings. They die in hundreds and the survivors are permanently weakened. Hence the difficulty of persuading the cattle owner to improve the quality of his stock. It just seems not worth while. The prevention of disease by improved veterinary methods is useless till adequate fodder is stored against seasons of drought. Fewer animals of better quality, draught power and milk output would cost no more to feed. The breed can only be improved if numbers are restricted and fodder is stored against seasons of drought.

Rural milk supply On the whole the villages are fairly well off for milk, though there is no doubt that cows and buffaloes in India give far less milk than is given by any whose existence would be tolerated in

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Europe. The average milk yield per annum of the best Indian cows is 2500 lbs., and of cow-buffaloes 4000 lbs., as against 7200 lbs. from English shorthorns. In Europe that cow is selected which will give the maximum amount of milk for a given amount of fodder. In India the cow is generally given the bare minimum of fodder which will preserve it from starvation; and it is then milked for all it is worth.

Urban milk supply Still, the villages are much better off than the towns, whose growing size throws an increasing strain on the primitive systems of milk supply in vogue. Their milk is mainly provided by cowherds, who stall their cows or cow-buffaloes inside the towns, buying fodder from outside, or driving them to the nearest grazing ground, to the great detriment of the land intervening. These cowherds are generally in debt to the local money-lender, and consequently cannot afford to feed their cattle properly; they are allowed to retain only just so much of the proceeds from the sale of milk as will suffice to keep themselves and the cattle alive, the money-lender appropriating the rest.

↓ In the large cities the system breaks down completely. Fodder has to be purchased at prices enhanced not only by the cost of transport and storage but often by the artificial addition of octroi. The underfed cattle are housed under the most insanitary conditions, and milked by cowherds without any conception of personal or instrumental cleanliness. An open-mouthed brass receptacle plugged with grass or straw serves the purpose of a milk-pail. Carried in an open cart or on a pack-saddle contaminated with dust and dirt, and adulterated and sophisticated according to the whim of the various ven-

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dors, the fluid which finally reaches the consumer resembles rather a bacteriological menagerie than milk fit for human consumption. The limited supply of even this unappetizing wash is, for the most part, commandeered by the richer inhabitants, leaving the children of the poor to pine away without a necessary article of diet.

Milk supply inadequate The wealthy members of the community are only slightly interested in the problem of milk supply. They either keep cows in their houses or have special arrangements with the peasantry of a village outside the city. But the poor need more milk. Neither multiplicity of laws nor armies of inspectors will, in the long run, produce a pure and sanitary supply of milk for a city if the quantity available is seriously inadequate. Before the question of sanitation can be tackled, it is necessary to secure an adequate supply.

Organization of transport will alone solve this problem, and the margin between the price in the villages within transportable distance and the price in the city would then amply cover the cost of carriage. There is no reason why milk from the fodder areas should not be pasteurized and sent into the big cities in refrigerating vans in a "milk train" or in refrigerating motor vans on the road. This would provide the peasant with a valuable side industry, supplementary to crop growing, while its organization would afford ample scope for the brains of Indian "business men".

Clarified butter (ghi) In rural districts there is little trade in pure cow or buffalo milk. What is not required for home consumption is converted into

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clarified butter, the housewife's cooking essential which occupies the place of lard in England. Its manufacture is the principal home industry in many parts of India; and pressure on the milk supply has raised the price, till clarified butter tends more and more to become adulterated with nauseous fats. But the profits go to the money-lending class, who control the wholesale trade from convenient railway centres. Thither it is brought by small village money-lenders, who buy it up in the villages from the peasant producers. These latter are rarely paid in cash. Generally they have to be content with credit in the money-lender's running account, which is balanced (if at all) at irregular intervals and rarely in favour of the peasant.

Dairying What an opportunity is here for those Indian politicians who so clamour for Indian industries! Here is an industry asking to be organized, and one that would be invaluable to the health of the country, and would compete with no vested interests of any kind. Milk means so much more to the Indian than it does to the Englishman; it is for many Indians the staple article of diet.

If transport facilities were provided, there would be a ready market for milk produced in villages where fodder crops can be readily grown; and thus an opportunity would be given to convert fodder crops into a saleable and marketable commodity. The area of fodder crops would then rapidly extend to meet the demand, and the mixed farming thereby resulting would do much to give stability to an agriculture which is now too dependent on the changes and chances of crop production. Also, the development of village dairying would stop the drain of the best bullock-bearing and milk-giving cows

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to the towns, where they are brought up by wealthy city merchants to provide milk for their private consumption, leaving to the villages only the worst to carry on the race.

Why cannot politicians, who wish to benefit the country, turn their attention to problems like these?

IV. FORESTS

Deforestation The early forest history of India is one of bounteous natural resources wasted by man. The evidence of early civilization in the now barren Frontier hills and the sandy wastes of the Great Indian Desert and elsewhere indicates a vegetation which has now disappeared. Deforestation of this type is typical of man in all ages and in all countries, and it is only quite recently that its essential wastefulness and its ruinous effect on the climate have been properly appreciated. Thus was the happy land of Arabia Felix reduced to a desert, thus have large fertile parts of Italy and Spain been reduced to a barren rock, thus in Palestine has the far-famed Forest of Sharon disappeared.

The advent of British rule in India coincided with the deforestation of the Siwaliks and other low hills, the sub-tropical verdure of the low hills disappearing to leave only barren rocks, whence flowed forth not fertilizing streams, but destructive torrents, laden with sand and washing away fields and roads. Since then the erosion has gone steadily on, and it is only recently that steps have been taken to check it.

The all-destroying goat The chief agency in this work of destruction is the goat. Once the pioneer woodman has felled the big trees of the forest,

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an army of goats comes in to render the devastation complete. For goats love new saplings, and no ordinary tree has therefore a chance of survival. Only shrubs with some disagreeable quality, such as hairs, spines, resin, or a strong aromatic flavour, can hope to survive against the catholic tastes of the all-destroyer.

It is often claimed as a virtue of the goat that he can "eat a class of fodder which cows or even sheep will not touch". Doubtless he will, but not till he has cleared the country of everything better.

*It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on.*

Having rendered the country impossible for every other living thing, he finally renders it impossible for himself. The goat army, like its Bolshevik counterpart, must then look for fresh worlds to devastate or must perish.

Actually, the merits of the goat are not so much economic as political. It is the poor man's cow (giving milk, meat, ropes, sacks and mats), and the poor man's instrument of revenge against all-engrossing landlords and money-lenders. Its elimination would no doubt restore prosperity to thousands of barren acres, but the fruits of that prosperity would be reaped not by the owners of the goats but by self-seeking rent-receivers. Marching under the Bolshevik banner, the army of goats has, therefore, been invincible. The statesman who will oppose its progress must compensate the dispossessed proletariat of goat owners, or he will incur certain present obloquy for the doubtful blessings of posterity.

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The camel The work of devastation begun by the goat is completed by the camel, which can survive where even the goat must perish. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the goat and the camel between them are responsible for the Sahara and for the deserts of Arabia, Mongolia, and Rajputana—deserts which have steadily encroached on the cultivation around them during historic times. Like the goat, the camel has the doubtful merit of being able to survive in deserts where life is impossible for other animals, while in more fertile lands its owner can keep it at little cost by allowing it to browse on wayside trees. If the goat is the poor man's cow, the camel is the poor man's car, and it is still the only means of transport in the desert.

Attempts at re-afforestation The protection of the hill forests from the devastation of goat and camel is vital, therefore, to the interests of the timber supply (with its immense possibilities of industrial development), and to the agriculture of India; and the bare enforcement of forest rules, which sufficed when the population was small and the people more simple, is now no longer adequate. Pastoral pursuits need to be restricted until the people have learnt to breed better stock, to grow better crops, to cut hay instead of grass, and to stall-feed where pasture is insufficient. Even in England the landowner is no longer inclined to plant trees for the benefit of posterity; and the less far-sighted Indian is even more bounded by the horizon of the immediate present. In the Punjab, an Act has been passed to prevent the erosion by hill torrents of certain submontane areas, and spasmodic efforts at re-afforestation have been made by a few energetic District

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Officers in their own districts. But a Government that is more and more involved in the arts of political chicanery is hardly likely to devote to the problem that serious attention which it deserves if the future welfare of India is to be considered.

V. INDUSTRY

Mr. Gandhi's Spinning Wheel The spectacle of Mr. Gandhi accompanied by a goat, Miss Slade and a spinning wheel was at one time so familiar that their symbolic meaning may have been overlooked. The goat typified Hindu orthodoxy, which could not drink milk that had been defiled, Miss Slade was a sign that all this publicity was intended to impress the West rather than the East; while in the spinning wheel Mr. Gandhi made his appeal to those whose handicrafts were in danger of being ousted by machine-made goods.

The Cottage Industries of India India to-day is just entering on the crisis of the industrial revolution which so disorganized England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The cottage industries, which meant so much to the life of the Merrie England of our forefathers, can only survive nowadays when they are supplementary occupations—the hobbies—of people engaged in other pursuits. But in India they are still the monopoly of particular castes, and their adoption by others is largely prevented by caste prejudice. Could they but occupy the spare time of the farmer and his family, then the village potter, the weaver, and the carpenter could be set free for employment in centralized industries without adding to the

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existing demands on the produce of the land. Yet Mr. Gandhi, impracticable and inconsistent as ever, has not pressed for this or any other solution. He is merely content to voice the innate conservatism of the Hindu masses, regardless of the fact that he is the mouthpiece of the Congress Party whose funds come largely from the Bombay mill-owners, under whom factory conditions are seen at their worst.

Cotton spinning and pottery Nevertheless, cotton spinning will die hard in India. It is still the great domestic industry of the country, coarse cotton cloth being woven by hand in nearly every village. But it suffers severely from the financial slavery of the weaver to the money-lender, who advances yarn to the weaver and receives from him the finished product, allowing him to retain only the minimum wage that will suffice for his subsistence. And the efforts towards his emancipation made by the Co-operative Department seem foredoomed to failure because of the increasing competition of factory products. A longer survival may be predicted for the village potter, for water-pots will always be needed, and their weight and brittle nature hinder easy transport.

Industries utilizing agricultural products Cottage industrial products are mainly sold in the producing village; it is only when they have some special artistic value that they can command a wider market. Of a greater future importance are those industries by which agricultural produce is worked up for consumption, or at least advanced a stage on the way. Such industries might have great industrial value, transforming a large part of the raw products of the

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land, whether grain, oilseeds, sugar, fibres, drugs, or dye stuffs.

Sugar and oil India, though a sugar-producing country, is nevertheless a large importer of sugar. It cannot compete on equal terms with countries such as Java, whose factories receive the produce of large contiguous areas and convert it into sugar with the minimum of waste; yet here is a potential industry of infinite possibilities, only requiring an organization of supply sufficient to render factories commercially profitable. Oil pressing also offers great possibilities. Oilseeds are mainly exported in their natural state, the oil required for local use being extracted in the most primitive manner.

Cotton While sugar and oil offer opportunities to industrial enterprise, cotton has suffered from over-exploitation. The success of a few factories brought about so many imitators that ruin stared the factory owners in the face, till an easy escape was found in a protective tariff. It was thus that the Bombay mill owners have become the financial backbone of the Congress party, and that India has artificially stimulated a particular industry—one which cuts at the root of Lancashire prosperity—while neglecting those industries to which it is naturally suited.

Conditions of industrial progress in India The Indian capitalist is, in fact, only a money-lender writ large, and suffers from all the financier's timid conservatism in industrial ventures. Instead of examining those branches of industry which are suited to Indian conditions, he has confined himself to a

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slavish imitation of the industries of a country whose conditions are so utterly different as those of England. Should any venture be successful it is immediately imitated, and a pioneer ginning factory, which could profitably absorb the cotton output of a neighbourhood, will generally be ruined by the competition of half a dozen mushroom imitators. Consequently, where not artificially protected by tariffs, industrial progress is limited to the production of local requirements whose bulk prevents outside competition. Flour mills, ice factories, tanneries, woollen mills, glass works, saw mills and cement works are all of this class. The lack of any industry for the manufacture of agricultural implements illustrates only too well the ignorance of agricultural conditions characteristic of the capitalist class in India.

Except in places near the sea, like Bombay, manufactures for export are conditioned by the high cost of railway freight and must therefore be of high value in proportion to bulk, such as carpets or silk; or must work up materials now exported in their raw state, as in the case of cotton-ginning factories or oil presses. Wheat is scarcely more bulky than flour and far less perishable. Consequently flour mills are confined to those which produce for local requirements. The mass production of machinery is rendered impossible by its bulk in relation to value; but there is a great opening for repair shops, if only there were trained mechanics to work them.

Agricultural development necessary for industrial progress With a past buried deep in the mists of antiquity, India is industrially a new country. Her free capital is seldom equal to the urgent demands for it made by the industries of agriculture and transport. So she has little opportunity

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for pioneering the more complex methods of industry in advance of older countries, which have abundant capital and energy free for such work. Moreover, full use of an invention cannot be made by limited numbers of people. It bursts these local barriers; the greatest of modern inventions in machinery and industrial government can have their full scope only when the market is the world.

The demand for industrialism in India is not due to far-sighted business acumen. Money-lenders, desiring a usurer's return for their money, and the clerkly middle-classes seeking employment outside the crowded literary professions—powerful politically but incapable industrially—have hounded on the Government to its futile attempts to stimulate industry.

Both capital and labour could find full employment in improved agriculture with all its immense possibilities. An increased food supply to feed the extra mouths employed in industry is a necessary condition of industrial progress. This means (1) the employment of the spare time of agriculturists in by-industries, or by the introduction of crops requiring labour in the off-seasons, and (2) an efficient marketing system which would eliminate the army of middlemen who underpay the producer and charge high prices to the public.

The intensive cultivation of fruit and vegetables might raise many parts of India to the level of California, Denmark or the Channel Islands. This, however, would demand improved communications and transport facilities, and some system of refrigeration which would allow milk, clarified butter, fruit and vegetables to be stored and transported without serious deterioration. Yet, ignoring these obvious possibilities, Indian political opinion demands industrial expansion on English lines

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—even a Mercantile Marine! And the Government (with tongue in cheek) complies with the clamour.

VI. ECONOMICS AND THE STATE

The State and industry in India The prevalence of *laissez-faire* doctrines during the nineteenth century deterred the State from any attempt to assist industry. In the twentieth century, however, increasing disbelief in these doctrines came to a head with the State control of industry during the War, and the new attitude gave the politicians of the Reforms epoch an excuse for demanding protection and other artificial State stimuli. Unfortunately they proceeded on wrong lines. The economic history of eighteenth century Europe supports the conclusions of economic theory that such a State policy tends to be diverted to serve private interests. The power which the forms of democracy give to politicians inevitably directs such State activities along the paths of dishonesty. And even if honest, they are inefficient. All the vices of bureaucracy are magnified a hundredfold, when it attempts to direct a business. The strangling red tape, the conflicting departments, and the multifarious authorities whose sanction is required before anything can be done, render it impossible to act effectively till it is too late. The model tanneries, weaveries and engineering colleges so expensively provided by Provincial Governments will provide ample material to future economists, who wish to point the moral of the unwisdom of such State aid to industry.

Ideal and actual State activities The ideal State may still be regarded as one which conforms to Aristotle's dictum, and, while regarding the per-

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petuation of its own existence as its primary function, has the promotion of good living as its ultimate objective. The attainment of this objective connotes a definite economic policy on the part of the State, aiming at Bentham's ideal, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Such a policy must be well-informed, and should be preceded by a thorough *inquiry* into the economic conditions of the people. The methods of scientific *research* should be applied to the information thus collected, and definite *conclusions* reached. These conclusions may be presented in the form of *statistics* for the elect, and of dogmatic catchwords for the uninitiated, the latter being promulgated by means of well-organized *propaganda*—matters beyond the scope of private initiative being reserved for *State action*.

Unfortunately the modern State, just aroused from the lethargy of *laissez-faire*, has displayed a zeal that has not always been according to knowledge. The detailed inquiry, which should be the basis of all economic activity, has been limited to that required for specific objects, and has been carried out (if at all) by Departments created for those specific objects. Thus, in the Punjab a large quantity of *data* on the subject of rural economics has been collected by the Land Revenue Department in connection with the assessment of land revenue, but no attempt has been made to test its utility for other purposes. The only attempt to collect economic data as a basis of an economic policy has been made by the Board of Economic Enquiry in the Punjab. Its inquiries into the economic conditions of isolated villages have availed to show the ultimate potentialities of this method, though as yet the *data* accumulated have not been sufficient to allow definite economic conclusions to be drawn from them.

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The lack of preliminary inquiry into the actual agricultural conditions of that province has to a large extent rendered futile the research work of the Agricultural Department, which concerns itself with the agriculture of the Elysian Fields rather than with that of the Punjab; and only attains useful results when (as in the case of the breeding of new varieties of wheat and cotton) "theoretical" and "practical" agriculture coincide. The practical agriculture of the peasant is concerned mainly with the question of cost, admittedly advantageous machinery being frequently rejected on the ground of expense; whereas the Elysian Fields cultivated by the Agricultural Department as "demonstration farms" are selected because of the excellence of their soil qualities; questions of expense in the matter of irrigation, labour and machinery are ignored.

"Power may be localized," said John Stuart Mill, "but knowledge, to be useful, must be centralized." In India the exact opposite is the case. Power remains with the centralized Government Departments, expressing themselves through mutually hostile hierarchies of subordinate officials. On the other hand the knowledge of actual conditions still remains with the local officials, from District Officer to village accountant.

Industry and communications To its sins of commission the Government has added sins of omission. Much might be done that has been left undone.

Industrial progress cannot be made without adequate means of transport; and when facilities for the conveyance of goods and men are supplied, industrial development will follow. Neither England nor Germany rose to industrial leadership till they had perfected their communications so that they could act as industrial

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entities. Even such ordinary facilities as the provision of railway sidings to large mills and factories and the big grain markets are denied by a railway ruled by red tape.

Railway over-centralization Over-centralization is the curse of all administration in India, and it is shown at its worst in the management of the Indian State Railways. Centralized in Simla, out of touch even with Provincial Governments, the Railway Department is utterly lacking in that knowledge of the economic realities and possibilities of the vast sub-continent it serves, which is requisite if it is to play its proper part in economic development. The North Western State Railway, for example, which serves an area larger than France, is controlled from a vast jungle of offices in Lahore, which, like its cousin the Civil Secretariat, hinders rather than helps economic development. The local railway officials are, moreover, torn with the internecine feud which rages between the Station-Masters and a mysterious influence which is known to the initiated under the mystic term "LOCO". Loco (it has been said) can be distinguished as wiping its nose on a piece of cotton waste instead of on its shirt sleeve. To obtain the assistance of a Station-Master is to incur the enmity of this unseen power, which, like some West African devil, strikes down its enemies unawares.

I found this to my cost in 1919, when I was District Officer of Gurgaon during the Gandhi disturbances of that year. I was ordered to Rewari, a place in my district, to take measures in consultation with the Railway authorities for its protection. To my inexperience the latter meant the Station-Master. But I found that the railway authorities at Delhi opposed the scheme, an

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opposition which was ultimately traced to the influence of "LOCO", which apparently opposed the scheme because the Station-Master had supported it.

The Station-Master—Powerless for good, powerless to make necessary sidings, powerless to improve his station and its surroundings, or to grant any facilities to the travelling and commercial public, the Station-Master is nevertheless all-powerful for evil. He stands like a mediæval robber baron on the highway of trade. His charges are adjusted to "what the traffic will bear"; he takes as much from the consignors as he can get, without driving them to the next station, or to the making of complaints to the higher authorities. Often he shares his gains with the police; sometimes he refuses to share, at the risk of being implicated as a co-accused in any crime which takes place in the neighbourhood. Woe to the daring merchant who refuses to pay the Station-Master's levy! At best, the despatch of his goods will be indefinitely delayed: at the worst, they will be mysteriously burgled. So heavy is the blackmail thus levied on traffic that the railway is avoided for all short journeys, consignors preferring to despatch goods in bullock carts over bad roads for distances less than fifty miles or so.

The Market determines production—Yet good communications are as necessary for agriculture as for industry. One of the most important problems confronting the agriculturist in every country is that of the successful marketing of his produce. In many villages, now as in days of yore, there is an approach to self-sufficiency, and there the marketing problem is less acute.

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The transition from the self-sufficing to the commercial stage has followed on the improvement of communications. The wealth accumulated by those who were the first to realize this is illustrated by the prosperity of ancient Tyre and Carthage, mediæval Genoa, Venice and Holland, and modern London. The tendency has been for such cities to absorb all surplus wealth, leaving the producer still on the margin of subsistence. Even now it is a weakness in our economic machinery that dealers and brokers seem on the whole to be more prosperous than the actual producers of the goods they handle, and that trading towns like London are wealthier than purely industrial or producing places like (say) Birmingham.

It is the market that determines (or should determine) production. The demand for fodder from a big town like Lahore results in several villages almost confining themselves to the growing of fodder crops. In India, as elsewhere, all big towns exert a dominating influence on the use to which the surrounding land is devoted.

Communications and marketing But railways have done far more than turn the suburbs of cities into market-gardens. The Lahore-Karachi railway threw open the markets of the world to Punjab agriculture. This alone made irrigation commercially profitable and extended the area of the commercial crops, wheat and cotton, putting the Punjab farmer in touch with the markets of the world, and so enabling him to get a far better price for his produce than when he had to depend on the local market.

Unfortunately roads are regarded as the foes and not the feeders of the railway, which does all it can to thwart their construction. With the exception of the

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Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar and one or two similar roads, through communication by road is almost non-existent, and the disconnected roads leading to railway stations are generally in very bad repair. Carriage of grain to the railway renders traffic on these roads particularly heavy, and the considerable expenditure necessary to keep them in good order is seldom forthcoming in these days when every penny is required to pay for new political schemes.

The development of motor traffic, with its vast possibilities for the development of backwoods areas, is also handicapped by the import duties now levied by the Government of India; and the Provincial Governments and Local Bodies also have not hesitated to add additional burdens. It might be pleaded as justification for these latter that they are payment for services rendered, but not so the import duties. A far more equitable tax, one which would less discourage the incipient motorist, would be a flat rate on petrol levied by the Provincial Government alone.

Such being the state of the roads, rural transport must often be effected by means of donkey or camel or bullock cart. Much expenditure is saved when the villager with his own cart can get to the market and back in a day. For him the motor has no terrors; a collision that smashes a car will hardly shake his cart. But woe to the belated peasant who, his turban stuffed with Treasury notes, has to return from the markets of Lahore or Amritsar on a dark night! Lucky he if he lose only his notes, and escape with a whole skin from the armed robbers, who began to infest the Central Punjab after the removal of the stern hand of Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

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Sale to the village money-lender But the cost of transport is only a small part of the extra price, which must be paid for food before it reaches the consumer. Generally speaking, the farmer gets the least he will take, and the consumer pays the most he is prepared to pay, and all the difference goes to the middleman—whose share is far greater than a reasonable return for the services rendered by him.

In India the ancient and traditional method for the disposal of crops is to sell them to the village money-lender, who can usually be depended on not merely to apply remorselessly the economic laws of supply and demand, but also to exploit to the utmost the advantage which his comparative wealth gives him over the poverty of his customers. The money-lender lends to the cultivator, at usurious interest, the money necessary to finance him at every stage, from seed time to harvest, and he buys the crops on terms highly advantageous to himself, generally leaving the cultivator little more than a bare subsistence. Thus the unfortunate cultivator finds himself involved in a vicious circle: long before harvest he is heavily in debt to the money-lender, and he can only liquidate his debt by delivering his crops to the money-lender on the latter's terms.

Weights and measures The money-lender also has the advantage of being able to sell on short weight and buy on over-weight. For though the Indian Government has approved of certain standards, it makes no attempt to enforce them. Everywhere is found what the prophet Micah called "the scant measure that is abominable, and the bag of deceitful weights".

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Currency and banking One boon, however, that of a stabilized currency, India does owe to her rulers. It is a boon too little appreciated by the politicians, despite the paralysis of Indian commerce under the post-war fluctuations of the rupee. But the attempt by Sir Basil Blackett in 1928 to stabilize Indian banking by a Reserve Bank, modelled on the Bank of England, with Government backing yet free from political interference, would have done more for Indian commerce and industry than all the present protective tariffs and Departments of Industry put together. A proper banking system is the necessary preliminary to any industrial or commercial expansion.

India is perpetually suffering from the periodical collapse of rickety or ephemeral banks. The failure of the Alliance Bank of Simla in 1922, for example, ruined many prosperous enterprises. Provision of a banking system which commands public confidence will alone unearth the hoards now hidden in the soil, and thus free vast wealth for the promotion of industrial and commercial enterprise. The petty jealousy, which rejected the scheme for a sound bank, is a sufficient proof of that lack of true public spirit so characteristic of Indian politicians.

VII. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

Economics and religion Pessimism and fatalism are the tendencies of the two great religions of India. To the Englishman the followers of both Hinduism and Islam appear to under-estimate the capacity of human energy, intelligence and enterprise to mould their destiny. Hindu philosophy tends to belittle the importance of material wealth, while the caste system

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fixes a man's position by his birth and generally predestines even his occupation. The Moslem is ruled by Kismet—Fate—strong to endure but slow to act; while the prohibition against taking interest has largely kept him out of business, discouraging thrift and saving and any kind of investment except investment in land.

Effect of the moonson This passive outlook on life of both the Moslem and Hindu is accentuated by the dependence of the country on the monsoon.

Over 60 per cent of the people are engaged in agriculture, and agriculture in India is for the most part an effort to utilize the rain that falls between June and October. The monsoon divides the year into two seasons yielding respectively a summer and a winter crop, and both harvests may be ruined by a failure of the rains. Thus while the Hindu philosophy and caste system dissuades men from that restless search after material wealth which is supposed to be characteristic of the West, and while the fatalism of the Muhammadan tends to make him belittle the importance of human effort in the scheme of life, the beliefs of both apparently receive continuous corroboration from the vagaries of the monsoon; for a crop depends less on the skill of the cultivator than on the amount of the rainfall.

The country sacrificed to the towns This passive attitude towards life accentuates the natural conservatism of the peasant. It keeps him tied to his native soil long after over-population has made work on it unremunerative. It keeps him to the extensive cultivation of wheat instead of to the intensive cultivation of the potato, a food far more suited to cultivation in congested areas. It accentuates his weakness politi-

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cally owing to the difficulty of finding either time or transport for the purpose of political organization. The exploitation of the country by the towns has in India received a great impetus from English influence. With its vast expenditure on a centralized legal, political and educational machinery at exotic headquarters, the British administration has provided no substitute for the feeble rural tradition which still survives in England under the patronage of the squire, the parson, and the village schoolmaster. Consequently all wealth goes to the towns, and the resultant accumulation acts as a magnet to draw the more enterprising and adventurous of the rural population townwards to the still further depression of rural life.

Effect on politics Political life suffers accordingly. The peasant sees Nature as she is, and the town dweller only what man has made of her. Nature cannot be tricked or humbugged; she can only be overcome by hard work. That disregard of inconvenient facts, and that impatience of restraint which characterizes popular government, are due to the town dweller's limited point of view. The orderly and safe progress of democracy demands a strong agricultural population.

Need for rural leadership This means capable rural leaders. The new science of agriculture demands high intelligence and a high standard of education, and no industry can continue to prosper unless it is continually reinforced by fresh brains from outside. This is what India needs to-day—first-class brains directed to the economic improvement of the countryside. Certainly it is somewhat unexciting, lacking the

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passionate element, which gives a bite to politics and fire to a religious controversy. It takes years before it is properly appreciated.

The money-lender's Here—had they known it—was the *lost opportunity* opportunity of the money-lending classes, and here was the mistake of the British Government. When the Government introduced legislation restricting the exploitation of the peasant, it should certainly have seen to it that some other occupation was found for the money-lending class. Here was an obvious occupation. In pioneering agricultural improvement instead of sucking the blood out of the peasant, and in applying the brains of the town to the realities of the countryside, lay a solution of the difficulties both of town and country; and it offered an honourable calling for the money-lender. Instead, he was left curbed and discontented. His imitations of English industry failed, and finally he sought in political agitation a remedy for grievances which were economic in their origin.

Since then he has kept the Government on the run, and has extorted piecemeal such superficial remedies as seemed, to his inexperience, best calculated to alleviate his lot. As a result, vast fortunes have been made by a few such industrialists as the Bombay mill-owners, but the vast mass of the money-lending classes are as unsatisfied as ever. Had the Government only pointed the way to economic rural leadership, those brains which are now wasted in futile political agitation might have been employed in building up an India, not unworthy to take a place amongst the Dominions of the British Empire.

CHAPTER VI

A Great Empire and Little Minds

A great Empire and little minds go ill together—BURKE

I. INTELLECT WITHOUT CHARACTER

• *English education and the money-lending classes* At the beginning of the twentieth century the money-lending classes found themselves with an economic grievance and a useless education—an education that could only fit them for Government jobs; and there were no longer enough jobs to go round. They were that most dangerous of all classes—an intellectual proletariat. They were soon to acquire that political power which would enable them to be more dangerous still. Moreover their education supplied them with all the political catchwords likely to appeal to British Liberal politicians. Steeped in the literature of the Whig philosophers of the eighteenth century, with the ideal held up to them of “nations rightly struggling to be free”, and the “liberty of the subject”, they would have been more than human had they not yearned to apply these principles to the very different circumstances of their own country. It was an education supremely calculated to turn loyal citizens into political agitators.

And yet they wanted something very different. These higher castes of Hindus—the money-lending classes—had for generations done the secretarial work of administration in India, whatever the nationality of the rulers; and the introduction and development of British rule inspired them to qualify themselves for a continu-

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ance of their hereditary careers under the new conditions.

The Classical education To the ruling classes in England of that time only one form of education was conceivable. The Classical education of Public School and University—Latin and Greek—the keys to culture in the Renaissance—still monopolized the timetable of scholars in the very different conditions of the nineteenth century. Actually, of course, the best part of this education consisted in acquiring, almost instinctively, those principles of “give and take”, “fair play”, and “playing the game”, which are the distinguishing mark of an English gentleman. Yet it was supposed—and Classical masters were not slow to emphasize the point—that some occult influence connected these admirable qualities—the qualities that are the pride of Englishmen—with a Classical education.

Native Classics or English? A Classical education was the best thing for Englishmen, and therefore that—or the nearest approach to it—would be best for Indians. Yet for Indians Latin and Greek were too far away—even Macaulay never suggested them—and the two alternatives that presented themselves were either the native Classics—Sanskrit for Hindus and Arabic and Persian for Moslems—or English.

Macaulay decides for English It was left for Macaulay to decide; and in 1835 he decided. With that cocksure confidence that is characteristic of a very clever man without a spark of genius, he disposed of all the literature of the East in a few sarcastic sentences. English and the English classics—Milton,

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Addison, Locke, Hallam, and above all Macaulay—must compensate the mild Hindu for the lack of Latin and Greek.

It was like placing a powder barrel in front of a blazing fire. The inflammable Hindu was astounded as he read the new doctrines of Western democracy. They were absurd of course, but if the English were such fools as to teach them, why not “hoist them with their own petard”, and rivet the yoke of caste still more firmly under the forms of a democratic constitution?

An unemployed intelligentsia This education was spread broadcast amongst myriads who could never hope to get the clerkly jobs for which they had acquired it. And it was useless for anything else. Government had produced a vast intelligentsia; which searched in vain for employment and could find a vent for its grievances only in political agitation.

Technical education It is only recently, as part of the awakening of national self-consciousness, that the complaint has been heard that the system failed to train Indians for practical work in manufactures, commerce, and the application of science to industrial life. The changing economic conditions of the country have brought this lesson home; but it should be remembered that many of the particular classes which eagerly sought higher education demanded that it should be of a literary character, and were averse from, if not disdainful of, anything that savoured of manual toil. Moreover, when the universities of India were founded, scientific and technical instruction was still a subject of ridicule at Oxford and Cambridge.

Such belated attempts as have been made to supply

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technical instruction have suffered from the fatal attempt to try to pacify clamour rather than do the best thing. The so-called technical education given under the ægis of Industries or Education Departments may best be defined as instruction as to how *not* to do it, its only value being to demonstrate the inefficiency of State enterprise as compared with private enterprise. The so-called industrial schools turn out inferior articles at high cost, similar work being done both better and more cheaply by illiterate mechanics in the bazaar.

A higher kind of technical education is required by those whom the cry for Indianization has encouraged to qualify for engineering and other posts requiring technical knowledge. Admittedly the best way of learning such work is by an apprenticeship in an English factory. English factory owners, however, show more and more reluctance to train gentlemen who are too fine for manual labour, and whose only ambition is to order other people about. For gentlemen of this kind, Colleges of Engineering are now being started in India, which will enable them to qualify as Mechanical and Electrical Engineers without any unnecessary sweat or grime.

Lack of moral training For the fatal defect of English education in India is the entire absence of any moral training, using that word in its broadest sense to include not only uprightness of conduct but also that purpose and energy which constitute strength of character. The kicks and stripes that are the lot of the English public schoolboy probably do him far more good than does his Classical training, and they have no parallel in the Indian school, where the master fears his pupils more than they fear him. Often he seduces

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them; often they unjustly accuse him of trying to do so. In any case, there is an atmosphere of intrigue and accusation fatal to any exercise of moral discipline.

The Indian of the English-educated section seeks instruction, not with a desire to develop his mind, but with the object of getting a job. In learning everything through the medium of a foreign tongue he exhausts himself. His family has often made sacrifices to give him this education. The whole of his life is one conflict between the doctrines of the West, which he learns at school, and the customs of the East, which he observes at home. This Western culture, from which all religious and moral principle has been carefully extracted, filtering down through an Indian educational staff, which neither understands nor appreciates it, appears to him as a gross materialism; useful no doubt, but morally inferior to all that he has been taught to hold sacred. His women folk and priests enforce the lesson: that the West is governed by a sordid materialism and that the East alone appreciates the spiritual side of man.

In its desire not to force the mind of India into an alien mould, or to interfere with religious convictions, the Government has undoubtedly made education too purely a matter of the intellect. It failed to foresee how substantially the purely intellectual training of the schools must come eventually to modify the pupil's conceptions of life and duty.

Under the pre-British rulers of the country, education had been left to the various religious authorities, and it had been mainly on religious lines; but under the British any attempts towards direct moral training were always hindered by the fear of invading the difficult and delicate domain of religious belief.

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Too rapid expansion Any hope of their learning by experience has been prevented by the almost fanatical desire of the educational authorities to extend their dominion. Schools, Colleges, Universities—good, bad, or indifferent, but anyhow “Education” of some sort or other—must be spread over the length and breadth of the land. The very opposition to female education has proved a blessing in disguise. Its slow growth has saved it from the stereotyped unimaginativeness which has made many doubt whether a B.A. is any better than a “plucked” B.A. and whether a “plucked” B.A. is superior in anything but vanity to an ordinary human being.

Methods of inspection The sort of education that is imparted may best be gathered from the actual report of an Indian Educational Inspector on one of his tours:

“A primary school by the roadside is easy fruit. As you drive past you may see masterji¹ asleep on a bed under a tree while the boys do what they will. Or you may pop in and count the boys present, while an assistant considers the registered attendance and the alleged enrolment. A glance at the slate helps in estimating a master’s work. The cleanliness of master and boys is a further guide. Just now and then you get a real *coup*. Far from the railway is a large high school. It was very good two years ago; but last winter’s inspection made us suspect that it was beginning to live on its reputation. As a result of strategy applied, I had reason to suppose that the school felt secure, and would be

¹ Ji (jee) is an almost untranslatable suffix. Masterji may perhaps best be rendered as Mr. Master.

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settling down to its annual æstivation. One Saturday morning a colleague and I glided slowly towards the school under cover of an avenue of trees. A number of boys and several masters were lolling about under trees. Out came the head master, ill at ease and far from being the well-groomed and well-dressed dignitary that he was at our winter visit. It was obvious that little work had been done since the school opened two months before. The laboratory was being used for master's quarters. It was filthy, the science lecture room was filthy, and all the apparatus was filthy. The drawing-room was filthy and the great wall blackboards had not been cleaned for weeks, perhaps not since the school closed in March."

A more excellent way "It is easy to criticize, but what is your alternative?" say the defenders of the White Paper. In this case, I venture a few suggestions.

1. Make the religious teachers your friends rather than your enemies. Hand over to them, as school chaplains, the duty of a moral training, which should emphasize the importance of duty in the scheme of things.

2. In the vast populations dependent on agriculture, substitute a definitely rural training for the present curriculum.

In the case of the Punjab, my suggestions were that, in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, the following subjects should be taken in such classes as were sufficiently advanced to assimilate them:

(a) *Agriculture*. Pamphlets by the Agricultural Department giving its views on (a) traditional, (b) new methods they approve of.

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(b) *Rural Economics*. Pamphlets by the Co-operative Department giving its views on indebtedness, marketing, co-operation etc.

(c) *Veterinary Science*. Pamphlets by the Veterinary Department on breeding, dairying, etc.

(d) *The Land Revenue system*. Pamphlets by the Director of Land Records.

(e) *Punjab History*. Written with special reference to the growth of the village community, the tribal system, and land tenures.

Such a curriculum would be a definite asset to all those connected with the land, from peasant to Ruling Chief, and might well supersede the present one for all save distinctly urban schools.

3. Let the Education Department publish a standard village library in the vernacular, consisting of translations of standard classics, educational works, and books on India. Nothing of this kind has been even attempted.

English education leads to a blind alley, but vernacular education leads nowhere at all. English, however, is the key to a vast literature on every kind of subject. Though few of the English-educated Indians avail themselves of their privileges, their advanced studies being mainly confined to the dreary mustiness of law books, the key is there for those who will take it. For many years the number, who can master English sufficiently well to be able really to benefit from English literature, must be limited; but vast numbers of villagers could (and would) learn to read the vernacular, if they saw any good in it.

II. THE ROAD TO RUIN

Alliance between the Congress Party and English Liberalism The early years of the twentieth century saw two diverse tendencies at work in India. On the one hand the Provincial Governments were endeavouring more and more by legislation and executive action to free the peasantry from legal and economic bondage to the money-lender—a tendency especially emphasized in provinces like the Punjab, where their martial qualities made the peasantry especially prominent. As against this the money-lending classes had called into existence a new world to redress the balance of the old.

The Liberals were once more in office in England, and it was a new kind of Liberalism, of mixed ingredients, which included doctrinaires of the nineteenth century no doubt, but also paid members and Marconi scandals and international finance, people out to make money for self and friends. To them the money-lending classes spoke a language they could understand, veiled under the convenient camouflage of democratic symbolism. To them the virtues of the Indian Civil Service were as exasperating as their vices, and they were easily persuaded that the time had come to end a Service which refused to accommodate itself to anything or anybody; which was dominated by what Mr. Montagu called “that relic of mediævalism, *esprit de corps*”, and which received hints of doing a deal for self and friends with a cold and haughty stare.

It was not difficult for the money-lending classes, now organized under a political mouthpiece, the Congress Party, to persuade Liberal politicians that they could really get far more out of an India run by themselves

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(the Congress Party) than by the hidebound prigs of the I.C.S. Every opportunity was therefore seized to democratize Indian institutions and to curtail the power of the I.C.S.

The Bolshevik method Once confident of English support, the course of the Congress Party was plain.

It was the course of Socialism, Communism, Bolshevism, and all revolutionary and destructive forces throughout the ages—to foment disorder, and to use that disorder as a pretext for weakening the Government. Under the weakened Government it is still easier to disorganize the administration, and this disorganization can be made a pretext for still further democratization (i.e. weakening). And so matters proceed in a vicious circle till chaos supervenes. It is the history of India—one may almost say it is the history of the world during the last thirty years—a history which can only end in one of two extremes, Fascism or Bolshevism.

Revocation of the Partition of Bengal (1911) The first object of the Congress Party was to secure the control of the Government of India. From thence it would be easy to deal with the Provinces. So far the Moslems had shown no sympathy with Congress agitation. They were mainly peasants; none of them were money-lenders; their leaders still retained the administrative traditions of the Mogul Empire, and had transferred their feelings of loyalty to the British Government. These feelings had been cemented by Lord Curzon's statesmanlike act, which in 1905 separated Moslem Eastern Bengal from the rule of the Hindu Bengali Babu at Calcutta. But this Partition of Bengal

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provoked a storm of agitation, which was eminently calculated to appeal to Liberal sentimentalism. By 1911, when six years' actual working had triumphantly justified its wisdom as an administrative measure, the Partition was revoked. The effect was electric. For the first time (but not the last) it was made clear that agitation might be more profitable than loyalty; and from this time onwards, while the voice of agitation grew ever more confident, the loyal elements were all the time half tempted to do a little agitation themselves. Never again would the Government get quite the same confident devoted loyalty as before.

It was a time, too, when the loyalty of Moslems was subjected to a special strain. In 1912 Turkey was being attacked by Italy and the Balkan allies, and every Moslem's sympathy went out to the Caliph of Islam in his troubles.

Outbreak of the Great War It was such an India—the Congress Party openly hostile, the Hindu literary class secretly opposing, the Moslems half-alienated—that faced the outbreak of the Great War. But with war the attitude of the Liberals in England changed. They could no longer afford to tamper with treason. It was to Germany that the seditious elements, fortified also by Moslem sympathy, now turned for help. Among Moslems, the advent of Turkey into the War on the side of Germany gave opposition to England the character of a Holy War.

The Punjab The Punjab was the critical province. With its hardy and martial rural population of peasant proprietors it was rightly regarded as the Shield, the Spear and the Sword of India—proud

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titles won by its association with the flower of the British army in every Eastern campaign since the Mutiny. At the outbreak of war, one half of the Indian Army was drawn from the Punjab, over one-sixth from the Frontier and trans-border Pathans and the gallant Gurkhas of our Nepal ally, and less than one-sixth from all the rest of India.

The Lieutenant Governor of the Province, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, was energetic and capable. But energy and foresight would not alone have sufficed to keep the Province quiet had the rural population been permanently disaffected. That was the danger. The legislation on their behalf had antagonized the money-lending classes without earning the gratitude of the peasantry, who were slow to appreciate this change of heart in a Government that had neglected them for so long. It had thus left them open to the seditious propaganda of the urban Hindus. But the increased prosperity of the peasantry, resulting not only from the new policy, but also from the great irrigation schemes which were now beginning to cover the central uplands of the Punjab, had created in them a spirit of healthy independence, and they now began to think for themselves.

Loyalty of the rural classes It was at this critical moment that the War broke out, and it was the genius of Sir Michael O'Dwyer that appreciated the importance of the crisis. He proclaimed himself the peasant's friend, and he was known to be a man who was never worse than his word. Desperate diseases demand desperate remedies; and if his frankness made the urban Hindus his personal enemies, and rendered him liable to the unjust impertinences of Mr. Montagu, it nevertheless turned a potentially rebel province into

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a bulwark of the Empire. Had the half million men recruited from the Punjab been rebellious instead of loyal, they would have required at least a million British troops to watch them and hold them down: representing a loss of a million and a half men to the British armies, a material factor in a war of attrition.

For the first (and perhaps the last) time in India there was a Government which frankly put the interests of agriculture and the peasantry to the fore. It was wise, but it was also natural; for the peasant had himself risen to a sense of his own importance. Previously he had looked up to the money-lender as one who had travelled farther and knew more than himself. Now thousands of peasant soldiers returned to their homes with tales of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine, the Dardanelles, France, and an England where the girls were singing:

On Saturday I'm willing
If you'll only take the shilling
To make a man of any one of you.

Judged by such standards the money-lender was not a man at all, and in village after village he was ignominiously kicked from the top to the bottom of the village meeting place.

With the peasantry at his back, and the support of the Government above him, Sir Michael O'Dwyer was unassailable. Moreover the extremists had compromised their position by intrigues with Germany, finding to their amazement that this was a way of showing their discontent, which even Liberal politicians would not tolerate.

The Government of India But a safer sphere of intrigue soon offered itself in the Government of

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India itself. The facile optimism which had driven General Townshend, against his better judgment, to a futile attempt on Baghdad was succeeded by a no less facile war-weariness, when once the red-tabbed and gaitered warriors of Simla had realized the death of all their ambitions in the disaster of Kut. In the British Government too, International Finance had once more a footing in the person of Mr. Montagu, the new Secretary of State for India; and it was not long before he found fitting instruments for his purpose in the disillusioned Government of India and the disgruntled money-lending classes.

The Punjab Disturbances of 1919 With such a backing in England and Simla the agitators had now a fair field for their endeavours, especially when peace came, and when with it apparently ceased the necessity for war time measures. A pretext for agitation offered itself in the Rowlatt Act of 1919 directed against anarchical crime. Delhi, a small enclave under the immediate authority of the Government of India, was the headquarters of agitation. The war had only distantly affected India; but it had raised prices, and thus accentuated a severe economic depression due to influenza and a series of bad harvests. This had rendered the town mobs inflammable and ready for trouble. Undoubtedly the immediate objective was to organize mob violence as a lever wherewith to extort concessions: but beyond this probably neither Mr. Gandhi nor the Congress Party had any clear plans.

A well-known Indian proverb emphasizes the advantages of fomenting discord, and then watching for an opportunity to take tactical advantage of the situation. The Indian agitator seeks rather to use events than

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to control them. But it may be surmised that the disturbances which now broke out in the Punjab went further than their organizers intended; for the murders of Europeans at Amritsar and elsewhere, the cutting of railway communications and telegraph wires, all at a time when the new Amir of Afghanistan was preparing to invade India, goaded even the Government of India into action. Circulars from Simla emphasized the necessity of preventing the spread of disorders by all means, however drastic, and gave the officers responsible "the fullest assurance of countenance and support". It is in the light of these circulars that General Dyer's action at Amritsar must be judged.

General Dyer at Amritsar The effect of that action was electric. The agitators' bluff had been called. It had been clearly shown that, in the last resort, the British could and would suppress disturbance; and the Indian mobs were not slow to learn the lesson. So unless something could be done to erase the effects of this lesson, the agitators would lose their most valuable weapon. The next move lay with them. When the danger was over, the sympathies of the Government of India again veered round in their favour. No sooner had Sir Michael O'Dwyer left India than a violent agitation was set on foot in England and India to vilify all who had helped to crush the rebellion—in particular General Dyer—and to prevent further resort to the speedy and effective method of martial law.

General Dyer censured The Hunter Committee of Enquiry was appointed to investigate the conduct of all those concerned with the disturbances; but General Dyer's was the test case. It was clear that

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he had saved the situation, and he was promoted as a reward for his action at Amritsar. But could his action be justified on technical grounds? It was urged that he had no right to consider the rebellion in the Punjab as a whole, that his concern was merely with the situation in Amritsar.

Actually the facts were these. When he arrived at Amritsar the city was in open rebellion, two Europeans had been murdered, and a lady missionary had been bludgeoned and left for dead. The District Officer did not merely call in the aid of the military authorities, he resigned all his authority and control to General Dyer. The latter was therefore entitled to assume that he was dealing with a hostile population. He issued a notice warning the inhabitants that meetings, if held, would be fired on, but in defiance of this order a crowd of about 10,000 assembled in the Jallianwala Bagh in the centre of Amritsar. General Dyer, with a minute force of only 50 Indian sepoy with rifles and 40 Gurkhas with their curved swords set out to disperse the mob; and it was really "touch and go". Had the mob attacked him, his small force must have been overwhelmed. Actually, the mob fled.

It is possible that rather less firing might have dispersed the mob, but General Dyer was the best judge of the situation, and he was wise to take no chances. So it is difficult to see on what grounds he was condemned. Yet, assuming that he had overstepped the mark, that he had (as Mr. Montagu stated) made "an error of judgment", such errors are the ordinary incidents in the career of any responsible officer. No one can face a critical situation calmly unless he is confident that he will be supported in any action done in good faith, and not deliberately malicious or perverse.

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We may go further still. Assume that General Dyer had acted maliciously and perversely and not in good faith: even then a public reprimand was contrary to all principles of policy. Such cases are well known. The officer goes on leave. It is understood that his health is bad. He disappears from the public eye. Perhaps he is transferred to another sphere. And if he is censured, it is in a document marked "secret"; for his eye alone.

General breakdown of Law and Order The public censure of General Dyer was the primary cause of all subsequent disorder in India. It was an "error of judgment" of the grossest kind. Henceforth anyone called on to deal with a disturbance was compelled to think far less of the situation he was dealing with than of possible (or rather probable) misrepresentations that would follow afterwards. If steps were taken to prevent a massacre, he would be told that they were perfectly unnecessary. If he took no steps and disorder resulted, he would be blamed. Massacres are now so common that they are hardly recorded in the papers. They are taken for granted. At Nankana Sahib in 1921, over 150 Sikhs were slaughtered while worshipping in the most sacred shrine of the Sikh religion. Their bodies were then piled up, dead and dying together, kerosine oil poured over them, and the ghastly funeral pyre was set alight. Lord Irwin's pact with Mr. Gandhi was celebrated (1931) by a massacre of Moslems in Cawnpore. The Congress Party hired villagers to come into the city, and massacre, outrage, and every unspeakable abomination were committed on the Moslems—men, women, and children—because they refused to mourn for the execution of the murderer of an Englishman. In Malabar, on the other hand, the

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Moplah Moslems rose against the Hindu money-lenders, massacred them by hundreds, and forcibly converted thousands to Islam by circumcision. Thousands of women were outraged. And for once the Congress Party was on the side of repression, complaining of a Government which failed in its primary duty of enforcing law and order.

These are but outstanding instances of the general administrative breakdown which has characterized recent years in India. It was in an atmosphere charged with hatred and bloodshed that the new democratic system started to work.

III. REFORMS SCHEME TO WHITE PAPER

Lord Morley's hopes Some tentative attempts to democratize Indian Institutions were made at the end of the nineteenth century, and these were rapidly accelerated by the advent of the Liberals to power in England in 1905. Lord Morley, the new Secretary of State for India, did not under-estimate the difficulty of his task. He hoped to blend the principle of autocracy derived from Mogul Emperors and Hindu Kings with the principle of constitutionalism derived from the British Crown and Parliament; to create a constitutional autocracy which, discarding the methods of Asiatic despotism, should bind itself to govern by rule, and call to its counsels representatives of all interests capable of being represented, but yet reserve to itself, in the form of a narrow majority, predominant and absolute power. He hoped to create a constitution, about which conservative opinion would crystallize, and offer substantial opposition to further change. He anticipated that the aristocratic element in society and

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the "moderate" men, for whom there was then no place in Indian politics, would range themselves on the side of the Government, and oppose any further shifting of the balance of power and any attempt to "democratize" Indian institutions.

Congress methods Such were Lord Morley's professed hopes. They were futile because they failed to take account of the men with whom he was dealing. The Congress Party advances in échelon: on the extreme left are the bombers and assassins, to their right the Extremists, then the official Congress Party, demanding complete Home Rule, and then all the "Liberals" and "Moderate" constitutionalists. However much they may differ in what they *say*, they are all united in what they *want*—the domination of the Hindu money-lending classes in India. Some may think this object best obtained by an Indian Republic, others by retaining a British army and officials as a bodyguard of Janissaries to maintain their power. But at heart they are all one. The idea which has underlain each concession, that "the Moderates will now be satisfied", is based on an illusion. With each step of "progress" towards "democratic" institutions, the whole line edges away to the left—till the "Moderates" of to-day have reached the position of the Extremists of yesterday. All are still united in clamouring for more concessions, the only difference being the amount of what those concessions should be.

The Congress Party are confident that democratic institutions mean Congress rule. And rightly so. For the average peasant is far too much occupied in ploughing the fields and scattering the seed, in marrying and giving in marriage, in borrowing and litigating, to have

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any spare time for political organization. Politics are only for those who make them a life study; they are eminently suited for the unemployed intelligentsia—into which category the Hindu money-lending classes have now so largely drifted. The loyalists never troubled to organize politically. They relied on the Government. The Congress Party organized, and it is now the only political party worthy of the name. More and more it is becoming evident that so-called democratic institutions can only be worked by trained political organizations. Even in a politically advanced country such as England, we see Conservatives helpless in the face of a Conservative Party Machine that may be acting contrary to their wishes. How much more must such a position apply to India, where there is only one Party Machine—that of the Congress Party.

The Provinces The few exceptions only go to prove the rule. In one or two provinces—the Punjab for example, where Moslems are in the majority; or for some other special reason—the Congress political machine failed to dominate. It was not a serious check, but it served as a warning: if the Congress Party failed to get the control and keep it, there appeared a faint chance that other interests might also organize Party Machines and so be in a position to combat the Congress Party Machine. This explains why the Congress Party is not content to wait, why it demands complete Home Rule *now*, at once.

Congress demand for Responsibility at the Centre explained It also explains the demand for Responsibility at the Centre. The Legislative Assembly at Simla is elected from constituencies too large

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to be in any way popular, and under a polling system which gives every advantage to urban as against rural voters. All the difficulties that attend provincial elections are magnified a hundredfold. Rural voters have to go longer distances to the poll, and they understand little about the various issues. Consequently even areas which return non-Congress members in the provincial Assemblies are yet represented by Congress members in the Central Legislative Assembly.

Home Rule means The Viceroy, or the Government of
Congress Rule India Bureaucracy, has in recent years always tended to favour Congress. If one adds to this the facts that the Indian Legislative Assembly is dominated by Congress, and that all but one or two Provincial Assemblies are in Congress hands, one can see that if Responsible Government is given now, it must mean Congress Rule. Once Congress get the power, nothing but military force or a successful rebellion can make them quit it.

This is not quite what those amiable disinterested politicians imagine who favour the White Paper. They picture a Party dog-fight developing on British lines, with the Viceroy and his henchmen to see fair play. But this is an illusion; for in India the elections are conducted by the Land Revenue staff, and the Land Revenue staff is under the orders of the Government. Hitherto the British officials have been sufficient to ensure fairness, or at any rate superficial fairness, at election times (though naturally they cannot supervise everybody); but Congress Governments in power would see that official appointments were given to their supporters. Anyone in the least conversant with Indian

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conditions realizes that this would indubitably mean the "return" of the Congress.

In England the arena for the Party dog-fight is kept clear by the Press, which vigilantly watches any breaches of the rules, and appeals to an independent Judiciary, which acts as ultimate Referee. In India the native Press is predominantly Congress, as is also the Judiciary, with the exception of the rapidly diminishing British element.

for which the British will be held responsible But that is not the worst. The Hindu elements, whose vocal organ the Congress is, though experts in legal chicanery and political gerrymandering, are incapable of ruling India. Were they left to themselves they would not last an hour. The martial races of the north would soon take control, perhaps in the wake of an Afghan invasion. To prevent this, a large British army will be necessary, for Indian sepoys will be very doubtfully loyal to a Congress Government. The British will be in the invidious position of having to take all the responsibility, with none of the power, to bolster up a government which contravenes every principle of British justice and is based on hostility to every British interest, commercial or otherwise.

Working of the Reforms Scheme of 1919 Read in the light of these considerations, the recent political history of India becomes more intelligible. There have always been two main wings of the Congress Party, each helping the other: those who come into the political system in order to wreck it, and those who remain outside in order to attack it. Each successive form of political constitution has been

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rendered impossible, and each failure has been used as a reason for demanding further concessions. In the Morley Councils the Congress members devoted themselves to purely destructive criticism, and this was attributed to a lack of that sense of responsibility which Mr. Montagu's Reform Scheme of 1919 was intended to supply. That Scheme endeavoured to give Responsible Government in such subjects as could safely be devolved, while reserving control of those which were essential to law and order.

On the face of it, such a scheme was unworkable. Government must be one and indivisible. The Siamese Twins could not rule a great Empire. Actually, the thing was made to work after a fashion in most provinces by the simple process of buying the Ministers off; there were still sufficient power and patronage left in the hands of the Governor to render it worth the Ministers' while to keep in with him. And the same methods (once employed by George III) were applied in a less degree to members of the provincial Legislative Councils. They had sons or nephews in Government service, who wanted a leg-up: if that was given they were willing to support the Government. It was contrary to all the ideas of justice and fair play which had hitherto prevailed, disorganizing the administration in a thousand minor ways, but it might prove itself worth while by preventing a complete collapse. There was a lot of grit in the machinery; but it did just work.

Difficulties One might take every single branch of the (1) *Finance* administration and show how it was adversely affected. A few examples have been given, and a few more must suffice. For example, the Reforms were expensive, for all the new Ministers had

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not only salaries, but also Secretaries, and these again had under-Secretaries, and so on. The Bureaucracy at headquarters was doubled in numbers and halved in efficiency, for all the new Secretaries merely checked and "marginally noted" on each other. It became more difficult than ever to get anything done; and really as a result little, except talk, was actually done.

Government was once more preoccupied with the question of Ways and Means. It should be remembered that India is a poor country—poor, not in natural resources, which are unlimited, but in the means of utilizing those resources. Threatened continually with unlimited expenditure to repair the havoc wrought by famine and flood and disaster of every kind, dreading the discontent which might follow on any increase of taxation, the pre-Reform Governments were terrified that any increase of expenditure might unbalance their Budget.

At the time of the Reforms, improvement was in sight, for the years of penurious thrift were beginning to reap their reward. The country was better off, and there was a balance available for urgently-needed development. Forestry, canals, communications were crying for money. But now, instead of getting money, these found themselves starved, as available funds were squandered on the expensive business of starting democratic institutions. The people were over-taxed, the country was under-developed, and still the Budgets were not balanced.

(2) *Land Administration* No branch of the administration was more adversely affected by the Reforms than that which dealt with land administration. It had worked so well that it seemed to need no

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supervision; indeed it went on quite well without any supervision. Compared with the excitements of the war, the Disturbances, the Hunter Commission, the Reforms Scheme, Non-Co-operation, Mr. Gandhi, and the Simon Commission, what interest could be found in checking a village accountant's crop statistics? In an era of politicians, the stodgy dullness of a routine, which to them appeared meaningless, was found inexpressibly boring; and a new generation of officials did not hesitate to ridicule what it could not understand. Under these conditions the wonder is, not that the administration sometimes broke down, but that it was ever carried on; that the overworked and bullied land revenue staff continued to perform its tedious and highly technical functions with some diligence, though without that enthusiasm which had hitherto rendered it the chief mainstay of the general administration.

(3) *Local Self-Government* It was the land revenue staff that had previously been the main agency in the work of the local bodies, when the District Officer acted as chairman. With the loss of his knowledge and experience came the loss of the expert staff under his control. Elected chairmen feared possible unpopularity, and under their guidance local bodies were not only reluctant to impose the necessary local taxation but also to collect the rates when once they had been imposed.

Here I may quote from my own personal experience. In 1927 I received a letter from the Chief Secretary of the Punjab Government that in "view of the present paucity of British Officers" (the phraseology is worth noting) I was to be sent back from leave as District Officer. In the district to which I was sent, the District

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Officer still remained Chairman of the headquarter municipality—a very exceptional case—but for five years the District Officers had been Indians. As a result, though taxes had been levied by the Municipality, no taxes had been paid. Municipal expenditure had been met from a Government loan towards a drainage scheme which had been shelved; and to me was allotted the thankless task of recovering the unpaid taxes. My experience was not particularly unfortunate.

Embezzlement by employees is overlooked in India if the employees help members to get votes. Members bribe voters, and in return recoup themselves out of the public funds, and sometimes there is no secrecy about it. But bribery comes expensive; it is cheaper to hire gangs of roughs to overawe voters. Electioneering agents arrange for this, and any voter who votes wrong may expect to have his house burgled and receive a sound drubbing into the bargain. In the Municipality of Sangla in the Punjab there was a feud between the President and Vice-President. Each hired a gang of bullies against the partisans of the other, and these with their scurvy swashbuckling nightly awakened the honest citizens of the town. If such is the case in Local Self-Government, what hope is there that the far more difficult Provincial and Imperial Self-Government can be successfully conducted?

(4) *The British Services* But worst of all is the fate which has overtaken the British services in India, and in particular what Mr. Lloyd George called the “steel framework” of the administration—the Indian Civil Service. The members of that Service have lost in numbers, in prestige, in ambition, in quality and in hope. Their pensions are no longer

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considered secure; and they have once more become inevitably, as before Clive went out to reform the administration of Bengal, a crowd of desperate individuals without any security in the future. While prices have risen, their pay has diminished; and the Indian Civil Service now remains a ghost of its former self, weeping over the ruins of an Empire for which its members were ready to give their lives.

(5) *Law and order* These are but a few examples of deterioration due to the Reforms. And to these may be added the panic of officials generally, lest they should share the fate of General Dyer. The marvel is not that Law and Order has frequently collapsed, but that it has been possible to enforce it at all.

British prestige Yet mighty still are the name and prestige of Britain! "She has given away nearly everything; her teeth are false, her hands are palsied with age, but she may wake up"—thinks the Indian—"you never know." Because of its past prestige the Mogul Empire lived on as an organic body long after the Emperors had become debauched and vice-sodden imbeciles. The British Indian Empire goes on by the force of its own momentum, though in fact the power is no longer there. Here too may lie the answer to the question: "What will happen in India?"

Simon Commission to White Paper Could the Reforms Scheme have been left alone to work out its own salvation, things might have settled down. Indeed, things were adjusting themselves to the altered conditions when, with the advent of the Simon Com-

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mission, pandemonium was once more let loose. "Simon, go back!" was the cry, the necessary grievance having been found in the fact that no Indian had been appointed to the Commission. Concessions followed, almost inevitably—howls and yells of protest. More concessions—more howls and yells. And so the White Paper.

Is a Safeguard a safe guard? We may leave to those legal luminaries who enjoy dialectic the task of analysing the effectiveness or the futility of the Safeguards which are inserted in the White Paper to save Self-Government from itself. In India they are represented as meaning nothing, in England as meaning everything. While the Congress Party is to imagine that it will rule India, the British people are to imagine that such a thing is impossible.

Let us avoid such technicalities and get down to realities. Either the safeguards can be enforced or they cannot. But let there be no mistake about this—that on the first attempt to enforce them effectively, there will be such an uproar as never before. There will be the same agitation, the same riots, the same assassinations, the same bomb throwing, the same non-co-operation, the same outraged and insulted patriotism; till finally, having conceded everything, the British will be faced with the alternative of evacuating or reconquering India.

Russia or Japan Evacuation must certainly mean Civil war, for the Moslems will never submit to Congress rule. Already they talk of the Moslem North as a separate State of Pakistan, a State which, allied with Persia and Afghanistan, should once more

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raise the green flag of Islam and proclaim a Holy War on the hated Hindu. In such a case Congress would call in Japan, whose religions offer a plausible likeness to certain aspects of esoteric Hinduism; while the Moslem counter would be Soviet Russia. The battlefield of Panipat might again decide the fate of India, and of Asia, also, in the contest between the sub-human tyranny of the Soviet and the Island Empire of Japan.

or England? Of course, that is, if England really does grant Home Rule to India.

IV. WHAT IS YOUR ALTERNATIVE?

India's difficulties Those rash people who venture to
mainly the result criticize the White Paper are gener-
of present policy ally met with the apparently un-
answerable reply "Well, what is your
alternative?" Let us consider whether a serious alterna-
tive can be found.

Here however a *caveat* must be entered. Consider the case of a healthy man who consults his doctor regarding a bad corn on his toe. The doctor advises amputation of the offending toe, and the operation is pronounced a success. But the patient now complains of a pain in his foot. The doctor removes the foot. As there is now pain in the leg, the doctor advises that the leg be amputated. The patient's friend objects that it is unnecessary. "Once you have begun amputating you must go on doing so," the doctor replies, but as a special safeguard he says he will arrange that the patient shall never again go out without a hospital nurse in attendance. The friend fears that this will be expensive, and the doctor replies, "Well, what is your alternative?"

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The analogy is not perfect, but it may serve to illustrate the difficulties of those who are now asked to prescribe for India. Before attempting to solve the real problem of India, which is economic, it is necessary to undo all the harm that has been done in the last fifteen years—a much more difficult task.

The India we knew When the British first arrived in India, they found the country in despair, suffering from every possible oppression and torment from nature and man, where any organized government was only organized robbery, to which nevertheless men clung as a refuge from even worse disorder. Into this chaos the British came, bringing peace. Wars there were, it is true, but there was an ever expanding area of peace, till the outburst of 1857, after which peace reigned unbroken. And this in a country where even religion provoked only hate—a hate which nevertheless tended slowly to die down under the calm, impartial administration of British justice.

Mistakes there were, but they were the mistakes of inexperience. If the peasantry were wronged, every effort was made to right the wrong. Never indeed was a country's fortune in the hands of rulers more selfless or more concerned with seeking not their own good but that of the country to which Fate had called them.

From 1914 to 1918, while every other country was torn by war, India alone remained one vast area of perfect peace, guarded by a devoted band of British, soldiers and civilians, who in an age of materialism seemed still to recall the Paladins of old romance, who swore:

To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,

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To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God's.

A barrister from England who went out to India as a High Court Judge, no prejudiced observer, said that he was amazed when he saw the British officials in that killing climate of India, overworked, bullied and derided, yet continuing to do their duty because it was their duty, and contrasted them with the smug politicians at home who criticized them.

Order must be restored The first duty to India is to restore the *Pax Britannica*—to let the honest man go about his business in peace, to secure the official who is doing his duty from the haunting fear of the assassin. First and foremost the Terrorist movement in Bengal must be dealt with, and full powers to this end should be given to the men on the spot. If necessary, a special military police should be recruited from the Punjab, martial law should be enforced, the carrying of arms made a capital offence, and powers given to Magistrates to deal summarily with such offences. Whatever the means, and before anything else can be accomplished, order must once more be restored.

The Indian problem economic not political This done, it will be possible to deal with the real problem of India, which is economic: for the real defect of the Reforms Scheme and the White Paper is this—that *they attempt to apply a political remedy to an economic grievance*. The over-educated, half-starved urban proletariat of the money-lending intelligentsia are being fed on windy words. They want bread. They ask for milk, and they are given a poisonous unappetizing scum.

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Begin with the village It would be easy to double or treble the food supply. And to do this one must begin with the village. Not with theoretical or abstract villages, but with actual existing villages. Each in turn must be taken in hand, and life be breathed into the moribund body. The glory of a Governor is but glitter, and High Court Judges only a gallery of pictures; the talk of politicians is but a tinkling cymbal, if misery, strife and squalor prevail in the towns and villages. Under these conditions, Provincial and Imperial constitutions are but houses built on sand. We must get down to the bedrock of the village. Restore the life of the Village Community functioning through the Committee of Elders; give to that body ever-increasing magisterial, police and judicial powers so as to free the peasantry from the litigation which now rots the life and ruins the purses of the countryside. Help the Elders to mend roads, to plant trees for shade and timber, to start village libraries, to foster vernacular education.

New life to the countryside This would call forth the crying want of India—rural leadership, which would call back the urban intelligentsia to help to revivify the countryside. The next step is by an insolvency procedure to free the peasant from a debt he cannot possibly pay. All debts should be inquired into, and only that amount be admitted which can be repaid by definite fixed instalments within the capacity of the debtor. Freed from debt, the peasant holdings should be consolidated. Tenants should be given an opportunity of buying the holdings they cultivate. The idea should be that of a peasant owner cultivating his own holding.

All this means change, and the oriental hates change.

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So we should proceed slowly, but how slowly does not matter so long as it is in the right direction. Hitherto the "progress" has been down the rapid descent to Hell.

The healthy financing of an improved agriculture (as opposed to the blood-sucking of half-starved peasants) should give a legitimate outlet to the business abilities of the money-lending classes.

Self-Government in the District The basis of Self-Government being the Village Community, the next step upwards would be a District Assembly, to which representatives of the towns and village communities would be called under the paternal guidance of the District Officer. To such an assembly might be delegated many of the powers now exercised by the Provincial Bureaucracy. It would be a real training in self-government. The District Officer should be appointed for at least five years, with an assistant who would take his place when on leave. This would ensure the continuity in District administration which is nowadays so often lost by repeated transfers.

The British services Above all, the prestige and confidence of the British official must be restored. The problem of the European official is one that has been entirely ignored under the Reforms Scheme and the Joint Select Committee's Report. If (as seems generally assumed) an Indian is *for every purpose* just as good as a European, there is no reason why any European should be retained. If such are retained, then their purpose should be clearly visualized; and they should be retained in the appointments in which they will function better than do Indians. These appointments should be determined not in terms of percentages, but by a careful

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analysis of the needs of each particular post. Districts where religious riots are chronic, or where the great mass of the inhabitants prefer it, should obviously have European District Officers. Equally obviously, other districts should have Indians. In doubtful cases Indians should be appointed experimentally, the district reverting to European rule when and if the experiment is definitely proved a failure. The continual putting in of Europeans to "clear up the mess" made (or alleged to have been made) by Indians is fair neither to the Indians, nor to the Europeans, nor to the districts concerned.

Litigation Such a restoration of village and district life would do much to alleviate the evils of bureaucracy, departmentalism and litigation. The last curse could be further checked by the provision that in no case should more than one appeal be allowed. This would prevent such cases as one which came to my personal knowledge. A large estate, belonging to a family dating from Mogul times, possessing many old historic buildings, went to rack and ruin, because it took the Punjab Chief Court and its subordinate courts nearly fifty years to decide whether its owners followed Muhammadan Law or agricultural custom as their law of inheritance. It was not worth anyone's while to keep the buildings in repair while the question of ownership was undecided.

Justice delayed is justice refused. All land cases should be transferred to the much speedier procedure of the Land Revenue Courts.

Governors and Viceroy's These hindrances removed, the Provincial Governments would be free to devote

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themselves to the wider aspects of agricultural and industrial development. A few, but only a few, have been indicated in this book. Communications, marketing, fruit, fish, poultry, forest conservancy, timber supply, fuel to take the place of the cow-dung that is sorely needed as manure, indicate definite possibilities of expansion. But these need Governors and Viceroys capable of taking a long view. Five years gives them hardly time to learn their job; they sow the wind and leave their successors to reap the whirlwind. The Great Viceroys of the Golden Age of the early nineteenth century reigned for ten years, and Governors and Viceroys of to-day should be appointed for no shorter period. Only then will they learn to act with some sense of responsibility.

The India Such is a brief answer to the question "What *we need* is your alternative?" An India, happy, contented and prosperous; producing not only enough to feed its own population to the full, but also enough to allow it to be a purchaser of British goods. An India commercially and politically the bulwark, instead of the bane, of the British Empire. An India not unworthy of the blood and treasure which England has poured out like water on her behalf, and of the selfless devotion of countless thousands of British officials who have devoted their lives to her service.

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