

Servant of India

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Topics of the Week.

The South African Spirit Abroad.

AMONG the causes which, according to the Governor of Trinidad, contributed to the serious riots in the oil-fields in Trinidad in the early part of the year was the spread to Trinidad of racialism as it prevails in South Africa. Said the Governor in his speech to the legislature on the 9th July last :

On the racial side there are various factors. The employing class is largely white and the employees almost wholly coloured and mostly West Indians ...

There is one point made that the employing class contains a large number of men from South Africa. We all know that the South African coloured question is closely studied in Trinidad.

Another point is that a considerable number of white men have been taken on in the lower posts to the exclusion of senior men of their own ranks.

The Governor quoted, apparently with approval, a passage from the report of a Naval officer on the attitude of the white employers towards coloured employees. It runs as follows :

I gather the impression that the attitude of the white staff towards coloured employees is not as satisfactory as it might have been. Unfortunately expressions are used in the hearing of coloured servants and I consider that this does a great deal towards cultivating racial hatred. It appears that fear of the white man was being encouraged instead of respect for the white man.

On this passage the Governor himself comments as follows :

That, to my mind, goes to the heart of the matter and I am certain that the white employer class in Trinidad will find a shield far surer in showing sympathy than in a forest of bayonets to be planted here.

THE admission of the Governor of Trinidad of the extension to that country of the South African race prejudice lends weight to the opinion of some West Indian publicists that even in the official world the posting to the West Indies of officers who had long served in the British African territories was undesirable. The contempt of the white race for the coloured race is perhaps at its worst in Africa.

And few officials who grew up in that atmosphere can long resist succumbing to it. And when they are transferred to other colonies where the prejudice has fortunately been less, the local coloured leaders entertain grave misgivings. They advocate that officials trained in the West Indies may with advantage be transferred to the African colonies, but not *vice versa*. There are others who advocate that the African service should be a closed one, a separate service, with no interchange with other colonies.

Whatever be the means chosen, it is eminently desirable that race prejudice, if it cannot be eliminated altogether, should be localised as much as possible. And the Governor of Trinidad has done well to sound a note of warning.

* * *

"Federation Must Go."

"THE Imperial Government's aim is and has always been," declared Lord Stanley, Under-Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons, "to carry into effect Parliament's clear intention that federation should follow provincial autonomy in India as an integral part of a single constitutional scheme with the least possible delay." Commenting on this declaration, the *Tribune* remarks :

The Congress Governments number seven and they are by themselves strong enough to upset the apple cart of British Imperialism. But they will not have to rely solely on their own strength; they will have the full support of the other provincial Governments. There is not a single Provincial Government in India which is enamoured of the federation as it is envisaged in the Government of India Act. Only the other day the Parliamentary Secretary, Mir Maqbool Mahmood, declared at a public meeting that the Punjab Government heartily disliked it and would stoutly oppose its inauguration. How can the federal plan be enforced in the teeth of the opposition of all popular provincial Governments? If an attempt is made to impose on India the present federal scheme with all its disgusting undemocratic features, there may not only be a constitutional deadlock, but a political upheaval. Not only the Governments but the people of British India and the States' subjects may also be up in arms against it. The present federal scheme must go. It must make room for a federal scheme through which the sovereign will of the people can express itself in an unrestricted manner.

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The Moneylenders Bill of Bihar.

THE Bihar Ministry has sponsored a Moneylenders Bill, which is fairly comprehensive. The

Bill provides for the registration of moneylenders. This registration is compulsory inasmuch as it provides that no suit for the recovery of a loan will be maintainable except by a registered moneylender. It is made obligatory on every registered moneylender to keep proper accounts, to give the debtor a copy of the recorded account within seven days of advancing the loan, to give a receipt for every sum paid by the debtor, and also to furnish a statement of account to the debtor at least once in every year. Registration will distinguish genuine from spurious moneylenders, maintain a proper check over the former and drive out the latter.

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THE Bill also places an upper limit on the rate of interest which a moneylender can charge, the limit being 9 per cent. on secured loans and 12 per cent. on unsecured loans. The court will not pass a decree for interest at a higher rate than this. It will however allow interest at a maximum rate of 12 per cent. on secured loans and 15 per cent. on unsecured loans contracted before the Bill passes into law. In respect of old loans the court can re-open the transactions and determine the real amount of principal and interest in order to ensure that no higher rate of interest than what is allowed under the Bill will be passed. It is further provided that no court shall pass a decree on account of arrears of interest for any period exceeding three years.

* * *

SOME provisions relating to the repayment of loans are noteworthy and admirable. The court in passing a decree may order payment of the amount due on mortgage in instalments, and may take similar action, on the application of a judgment-debtor, in respect of decrees that may already have been passed. Similarly the court, in executing a decree, is to estimate the value of the judgment-debtor's property, and only such portion of the property will be allowed to be sold as, in the court's opinion, will be sufficient to satisfy the decree, and the property will not be sold at a price lower than that specified in a proclamation, to be issued, of the intended sale. It will be noticed that the Bihar Tenancy Act Amendment Bill contains a similar provision, and we are glad to see that it is reproduced in this Moneylenders Bill.

* * *

THE Bill has one more exceedingly important provision, viz. that, in the case of an agricultural debtor, the court executing a decree "may exempt from sale not more than one-third of the holding of the judgment-debtor, provided that if the area of such holding does not exceed three acres, at least one acre shall be exempt from sale." This provision was rendered particularly necessary by the change which the Select Committee has made in the Tenancy Act Amending Bill. Under the original proposals in the Bill, the judgment-debtor could apply for the landlord being placed in possession of his land, and after a period of seven years at the most he could recover his land and be free from debt. The Select Committee has proposed a change which may extend this period further, but even this altered provision is not to apply to a holding which is subject to any incumbrance. It was therefore necessary that debt legislation should provide that an agriculturist debtor can at least hold on to an acre of land. Our readers will remember that the Bengal Agriculturist Debtors Act contains such a provision. On the whole the Bihar Moneylenders Bill is a mild but a very useful measure.

* * *

Bihar Tenancy Bill.

THE Report of the Select Committee on the Bihar Tenancy Act Amendment Bill, which was considered

by the Legislative Assembly of the Province last session, has been published. The Select Committee has not recommended major changes in the provisions of the Bill, all the changes recommended being however, in favour of the landlords.

Produce Rents.—The Bill provided for abolition of both systems of payment of rent in kind, viz. danabandi and batai, even if both landlord and tenant desired their retention. Of these two kinds of produce rents, the Select Committee agrees to abolish danabandi, in which the value of the crop is estimated, but is willing to retain batai, in which the produce is divided between landlord and tenant. It provides, however, that commutation should be made effective at the desire of the raiyat who is "the person primarily affected." Where batai remains in force, the share of the landlord will be nine-twentieths, as originally proposed by the Bill. The Government, however, reserves to itself the liberty of commuting produce rents even against the wishes of the raiyat, in cases where it deems expedient. The change proposed by the Select Committee is reasonable.

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Illegal Exactions.—The Bill proposed to substitute the method of prosecution of a landlord who was suspected of having received from his tenant a sum in excess of the due rent for the method of a civil suit by the tenant. The Select Committee approves of this, but does not agree to make the offence cognisable, as was originally proposed in the Bill, nor to impose upon the offender the penalty of rigorous imprisonment, the provision for which is scored out. Simple imprisonment for six months and/or fine of Rs. 200 is the maximum punishment that will now be allowed.

* * *

Revision of Rent.—The Bill gave power to the Collector to cancel all enhancements of the rents of occupancy holdings made between 1911 and 1936, but, in deference to the objections of the landlords, the Select Committee excepts from cancellation enhancements made under section 30 (c) of the Bengal Tenancy Act, i. e., enhancements made on the ground "that the productive powers of the land held by the raiyat have been increased by an improvement effected by, or at the expense of, the landlord during the currency of the present rent." The exception made is reasonable.

The Bill further gave power to the Collector to reduce the rent of a holding of which a produce rent was commuted between 1911 and 1936. The Select Committee retains this provision in the case of rents commuted by mutual agreement between landlord and tenant, but in the case of rents commuted on the application of either of them provides that "any reduction made in such rents should be proportionate to the fall in prices."

It was also proposed in the Bill to give power to the Collector to order remission of rent in cases where the land had become unfit for cultivation on account of a deposit of sand, etc. The Select Committee suggests that if the land has become only temporarily deteriorated the Collector should have the power of revising his order of remission when in his opinion the land has again become fit for cultivation. This change is in the interest of the landlords, but is just.

* * *

Arrears of Rent.—A real whittling away of the original proposals of the Bill is to be seen in those proposals concerning the realisation of arrears of rent which sought to save the raiyat from the loss of his holding. The Bill provided that "the entire holding may be made over to the landlord for a period not exceeding seven years in lieu of the decretal amount, and at the end of the period the holding shall revert to the raiyat." The maximum period of seven years

for which the landlord can be placed in possession of the holding in satisfaction of the arrears of rent the Select Committee now cuts out from the Bill, and provides instead that the court should fix the period in such a way that the profits of the said holding will be sufficient to satisfy—

- (a) the amount due under the decree and any interest due thereon and the cost of the execution of the decree;
- (b) any arrears of rent accruing after the period for the arrears of which the suit was instituted and up to the date on which the landlord is placed in possession; and
- (c) rent accruing during the period for which the landlord is placed in possession.

In enforcing this provision the equities of the case are apt to be sacrificed to the requirements of law. This provision again is not to apply to a holding which is subject to any incumbrance; as, we are told, its application to encumbered holdings "would be of very little advantage to the landlord, as the satisfaction of the amount due in respect of the incumbrances would leave very little to the landlord for the realisation of his rent."

* * *

Homestead.—Similar weakening is to be seen in respect of the provision about the homestead land of the raiyat. The Bill proposed: "A raiyat shall not be ejected in execution of decree for arrears of rent from his homestead land whether he holds such homestead land as a part of his holding or otherwise." Instead of this specific provision the Select Committee now substitutes the following:

A decree for arrears of rent obtained against a raiyat or an under-raiyat shall not be executed by the sale of houses and other buildings with the materials and the sites thereof and the lands immediately appurtenant thereto and necessary for their enjoyment, belonging to the raiyat or under-raiyat and occupied by him:

Provided that any such house or building and the materials and the sites thereof and the lands immediately appurtenant thereto and necessary for their enjoyment may be sold in execution of a decree for arrears of rent due in respect of the site of such houses or buildings.

The proviso evacuates the concession of much of its value.

* * *

His Exalted Highness.

THERE was recently an announcement in the press about a change in the administration of the private estates of His Exalted Highness the Nizam. We must confess that we do not quite understand the significance of the change announced: perhaps it means that the estates, which are being managed partly by the State's revenue officials, will hereafter be managed entirely by separate officials under the direction and control of His Exalted Highness.

* * *

BUT this puts us in mind of the vast territories which the Nizam is entitled to treat as royal demesnes. They cover an area of 8,110 sq. miles, which is about one-tenth of the total area of the State (82,698 sq. miles). As many as eighteen talukas in the State form the Nizam's private estates; the inhabitants of these talukas number 12½ lakhs. The income from this territory, according to one estimate, is Rs. 1,35 lakhs, and the announcement in the press puts it at one crore. Even the smaller figure is nearly one-third of the whole land revenue of the State derived from nine-tenths of the whole area, which is, normally, Rs. 3,22 lakhs.

* * *

THE reason, why one-tenth of the lands yield to the Nizam as much as one-third of what nine-tenths yield to the State, is obvious. The Nizam gets not only the State's share, but also the private landlords' share from these eight thousand odd square miles, and all this goes to his privy purse. The official explanation of how this extensive tract of the country came into the Nizam's private possession is as follows:

In this State, the personal expenses of the Nizam used to be met from cash contributions made by the Diwani Treasury, but as these payments became very irregular, certain territories were detached from the Diwani during the reign of the Nizam Nasir-ud-Daula Bahadur, and taken under his personal management. These lands formed the nucleus of the Sarf-i-Khas lands (royal demesnes). They have been augmented from time to time by the addition of:

- (1) maktas and lands purchased by the Ruler;
- (2) maktas, jagirs and other lands belonging to the relatives of the Ruler, who have died leaving no heirs;
- (3) Shorapur ceded to the Nizam by the British Government in 1268 Fasli (1858);
- (4) certain taluks in the Osmanabad and Bidar districts assigned to the Sarf-i-Khas in lieu of those situated in the Assigned Districts re-transferred by the British Government in 1270 Fasli (1860).

* * *

IT is not merely the income from land in this huge block of country that goes to the privy purse of His Exalted Highness, but income from all other sources also, the most important after land being abkari. The Sarf-i-Khas abkari is now managed by the Diwani, but the net income from this fertile source, like the income from land, is made over to the Nizam. As these items do not enter into the State accounts, it is not possible to know accurately how much money they contribute to the maintenance of the Nizam and his family. But there is no reason to suppose that from one-tenth area of the State the Nizam derives less excise revenue than one-tenth of the total excise revenue of the State, which was in 1935 Rs. 1,86 lakhs. Thus from excise the Nizam receives, one may say, a little less than Rs. 20 lakhs. Excluding other sources of income, we are told, that the Nizam's private income amounts annually to a crore and a half of rupees.

* * *

THIS he gets as a private landlord, without drawing upon the State treasury in his capacity of the Ruler of the State. But he does make demand upon the State treasury too, to the tune of a half a crore of rupees. Thus he has about two crores of rupees to spend on himself and his family. (We exclude here the nazars which he exacts from his subjects, though the receipts from this source are not a negligible item.) The annual revenue of the State is eight crores. For one man two crores of rupees, and for a crore and a half of men eight crores! Everyone will agree that the dignity of a Ruler must be maintained, but everyone will also agree that the dignity must not be so costly to maintain as to require one-fourth of the resources of the whole State.

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JUST reflect for an instant on the figures quoted here; their significance will not appear unless one pauses to give a thought to them. His Exalted Highness the Nizam rules over a State which is as large in extent as Bengal and which has a population that is as numerous as of the Central Provinces, but which has a little less than twice the latter's revenue. But here we are more concerned with his Sarf-i-Khas or private estates. This point will perhaps be best appreciated if we put it as follows. The ruler of a State which commands as much area as England and Ireland put together, the Nizam holds as his private property a stretch of country which is more than half the area of

Switzerland. As income from this property and as a contribution from the State treasury, he commands at least as much money as the Province of Orissa including the grant it receives from the Central Government. Can one not put it this way then: the ruler of one big State equals the whole population of a small Province?

* * *

To be fair to the Nizam, we must say that this is nothing peculiar to Hyderabad. It in fact prevails to a greater or less degree in all the States. Every Prince has his private lands, and the only connexion they have with the State is that they are managed by an official whose salary is often borne by the State exchequer. No one ever knows how much these lands yield to the State; but it always bears a handsome proportion to public revenue. Besides the Prince takes quite a good bit from the State's fisc, for which he never renders an account to his people. The Nizam's privy purse leaps to one's eyes only because its size is so gigantic.

* * *

IN this connexion it would be instructive to compare the practice of the Royalty of England, to whom they swear fealty, with the practice of our Princes. The British Kings hand over to their Government all the income derived from Crown lands and ask the nation for money for the maintenance of the Royal Household. Parliament considers this request and votes a Civil List, which is only a small proportion of the income from Crown lands which they have given up. The amount is fixed at the beginning of the reign and is not altered later, but Parliament has full control over the amount so fixed. The account of the Civil List is audited by an independent auditor and is published at the close of the reign to serve as a guide for determining the size of the Civil List to be allowed to the next King.

* * *

IN our country, the Princes possess private lands, the income from which is large compared to the resources of the State, but the people can never know what the income is. Besides retaining this income, they make a raid upon the State treasury, and there is no limit to their depredations beyond what their own sweet will may put. Altogether they take about 20 to 25 per cent. of what comes into the treasury. No account is ever published and there is of course no question of the accounts being audited by an independent auditor. The contrast is glaring but not surprising. The practices differ from each other no more radically than democracy differs from autocracy.

Articles.

CEYLON AND INDIA.

THE Council of State of Ceylon took a step on the 10th inst. which is bound to affect the relations between India and Ceylon very much to the worse and lead to consequences which for the moment cannot be wholly calculated. On that day the Council passed the third reading of the Village Communities Ordinance which discriminates against the Indian estate labourers in Ceylon. Against this provision not only the Indian leaders in Ceylon, but also the representatives of the British planters in Ceylon and the Government of India had protested. The Government of India, having exhausted persuasion, resorted to pressure and took the almost unprecedented

and most serious step of what amounts to retaliation: they have cut off further supply of Indian labour to Ceylon.

With the commendable intention of democratising and vitalising local self-government in the villages in Ceylon, the Minister of Local administration introduced an ordinance to amend the existing law on the subject. Among other things the draft Ordinance proposed to confer adult franchise for village elections and to give powers to the village council to levy certain taxes. In extending the franchise to all adults, male and female, the draft Ordinance excepted the "Indian labourer" as such. The clause ran as follows:

Every person of either sex, other than an Indian labourer, shall be entitled to vote at the election of a member of a ward.

It may be recalled that the existing law excluded not only the Indian labourer but also the European and the burgher communities. The new draft Ordinance included the Europeans and the burghers, but maintained the exclusion of Indian labourers.

With the right to the franchise was linked the obligation to pay village taxes. Under the old law, the Europeans and the burghers as well as Indian labourers were excluded both from the right to vote and the obligation to pay taxes. The new proposal extended to the Europeans and the burghers both the right to vote and the obligation to pay taxes, but excluded the Indian labourers from both the right and the obligation.

The Indian protest was against this discrimination. From the telegraphic press reports so far to hand, it is not clear if and to what extent the original exclusion of Indian labourers was modified. It is reported that the recommendation of the Standing Committee, that those Indians who owned land in the village areas should be granted the franchise, was finally accepted by the State Council and that the Minister had claimed that, in doing so, the discriminatory character of the legislation was eliminated.

While a fuller understanding of the situation must await the arrival of further details, this much seems to be clear that, while every other community, Ceylonese and non-Ceylonese, will enjoy adult franchise, the Indian labourer alone will be denied it. The discrimination against which India protested so vigorously, remains substantially the same.

CONTROL OF SUGAR PRODUCTION.

AS a result of the Joint Sugar Conference held in September at Lucknow and in October at Patna between the representatives of the Governments of the United Provinces and Bihar, which provinces account for 85 per cent. of the total production of Indian sugar, these two Governments have decided on a drastic scheme of planned production. The Bihar Government's Bill on the subject has already passed the Legislative Assembly. The control that it envisages is all-pervading: as the Minister in charge, Dr. Syed Mahmud said, it "provides for Government control from the preparation and planting of the seed to the distribution of sugar to the consumer." Such

legislation regulating every stage of production in an important industry is novel in India. The Government of Bihar did not come to adopt it on any *a priori* principle, but the chaos and confusion which reigned supreme in the industry left no alternative to the Government but to take both the agricultural and industrial processes from the beginning to the end in hand. Sugar industry is a sheltered industry in this country. With State aid it has made phenomenal progress, so that its extent exceeds that in all other countries at present. The industry has earned handsome profits too, but for want of proper co-ordination over-production has alternated with under-production, and the uncertainty that prevails in consequence has proved ruinous to all ordered progress. The uncertainty is fatal particularly to the interests of the sugarcane growers, to benefit whom in an especial degree State protection was devised. Last year the price that cane growers could obtain for their cane was insufficient even to cover the cost of cultivation, and it is with a view to the safeguarding of the cane growers' interests that this Bill has been framed, and we believe that, if properly worked, it will attain its purpose.

The main object of the Bill may be said to be to ensure a fair minimum price for cane. Annas 6 per maund is perhaps aimed at; however, the Bill does not mention any particular price, but Government take under it power to prescribe rules to determine how the minimum price shall be calculated. First, it is Government's intention to improve the quality of cane and to increase the yield per acre. In Bombay and Madras the sucrose content and the average output per acre are much higher than in Bihar and the United Provinces, and this handicap must be removed. For this purpose the Bihar Government propose in this Bill to levy a tax up to half an anna per maund of cane supplied to the factories. They do not intend to impose the maximum amount of tax at once, but want to do with as low a tax as possible. Improvement of cane is at the basis of the whole structure of sugar industry, and though no tax can at any time be palatable to any one, we hope Government will not hesitate to obtain adequate funds for the purpose of carrying on necessary research. Side by side with improvement of cultivation, the growers of cane must be assured that they will get an economic return for their labours. To this end the supply of cane to factories is regulated. The ideal system is that of zoning, i. e., reserving a certain area for the supply of cane to a certain factory. For this the Bill provides. The requirements of sugar factories will be estimated, and the areas from which they will draw their supply will be demarcated. In these areas they will be required to enter into agreements with cane growers for the purchase of a minimum quantity of cane, the minimum quantity being determined by the average yield and by the area capable of producing cane which is in the occupation of the growers. In order to encourage a proper system of rotation only one-third of the cane-producing area will be taken into consideration. Such a system of rotation is essential to improvement of the quality of cane, and this restriction is not from

this point of view unjustified. Anyhow the purchase at a reasonable price of cane produced in one-third of the lands in possession of a cultivator is guaranteed; if more is sown under cane, the cultivator will do so at his own risk.

It may not be possible to set aside a zone for every factory, nor will it be possible for every factory to obtain its full supply of cane from its zone. The Bill, therefore, provides for certain assigned areas, from which the requirements of the factories can be met. In a zone or a reserved area a factory enters into agreements with individual cane growers or cane-growers' co-operative societies; but in an assigned area a factory only agrees to buy a specified quantity of cane. From the reserved areas all middlemen are rigorously excluded, the object being, in addition to that of enabling the growers to increase their earnings, to bring the cultivators and the factories into direct relations and persuade the latter to take some interest in the improvement of cane. In the assigned areas middlemen will be allowed, but these purchasing agents will have to take out licences. Many corrupt practices were found to prevail in the purchase of cane by factories, and it is therefore of the utmost importance to insist upon licensing where middlemen cannot be done away with altogether. The ultimate object of course is to abolish assigned areas and to have only reserved areas, but that will take a pretty long time. In seasons of overproduction the factories will be required to buy from the areas allotted to them all the surplus cane that the areas can offer and they can go outside these areas only for such quantity as may not be available therein. Another defect which is sought to be cured is the want of organisation among growers such as is to be found among the factory owners. Government will try to foster growers' co-operative societies, and in order to help forward this movement, factories are forbidden to deal with individual members of co-operative societies but are required to have dealings with societies collectively.

In order that the cultivators may be ensured that the quantity of cane that they will produce will be sold and sold at a fair price, it is of course necessary to exercise a detailed control over the production of sugar. The Bill therefore provides for the licensing of new factories and of old factories when they wish to increase their existing plant. It has been found that with the increase of profits the establishment of factories has been haphazard and unhealthy competition has sprung up, with the result that sugar prices slumped with an inevitable reaction upon the price of cane. Government will therefore watch all the conditions and satisfy itself that a new factory can well be established in a particular locality before it issues a licence. In addition to these licences for the setting up of a new factory or extension of the plant of an old factory, Government will require all factories to take out licences every year for the crushing of cane. Such licences will be granted under certain conditions. One of the conditions will be that the factory is a member of a recognised organisation of the sugar industry; the Sugar Syndicate which has come into existence for the

purpose already includes 90 per cent. of the sugar factories in the United Provinces and Bihar, but Government desire that every factory will be a unit of a bigger organisation. Another condition that will be imposed will be about the price of sugar. The Sugar Syndicate will see to it that the price of sugar will be at a remunerative level, but it will be the task of Government that the consumers are not mulcted in too high a price. Again, on account of sugar not being properly graded, the industry suffers.

Grading will therefore be made obligatory. Besides, as we have said above, the factories will be required to buy a minimum quantity of cane during the crushing season. The Bill is regarded by Government as of an experimental character, and its life is therefore limited for the present to three years. But the measure, so far as one can see, is well adapted to meet the requirements of the situation and reflects credit on the Government.

Independence is Sedition !

PREACHING of independence in a State amounts to sedition: this is the purport of a judgment delivered by the Chief Justice of Mysore. The charge against the Joint Secretary of the Bangalore City Congress Committee in this case was that he broke the order of a magistrate prohibiting the holding of a meeting or the making of speeches in connexion with the "Independence Day." The occasion of the prohibitory order gave an opportunity to the Chief Justice to pronounce an opinion on the "Congress Independence Pledge." In his judgment he observed that "Any one taking that pledge committed an act of disloyalty to His Highness. As they all knew, His Highness the Maharaja was bound by treaties with the British Sovereign and in these treaties he had acknowledged the supremacy of His Majesty the King-Emperor. Any one who took the Congress Independence Pledge or incited others to take it was committing an act of disloyalty to His Highness." This is probably very good law, and we do not pretend to question it. But as laymen we experience a certain amount of difficulty in understanding it. A State subject certainly owes no more allegiance to the British Crown than a British Indian, and if British Indians can, without being disloyal to their obligation, take the independence pledge, so, one would think, should State subjects be able to do. And if a State subject, in taking the pledge, is not disloyal to the British Crown, how can he be disloyal to the ruler of a State who is bound by treaty to be loyal to the British Crown? The States by their treaties cannot have assumed an obligation to take more vigorous measures for the prevention of sedition against the British Government within their borders than what the British Government deems it necessary to take in British India. Such would be the reasoning of a person unversed in legal lore, but there must be something in law, which is proverbially an ass, that justifies the opinion delivered by the Chief Justice of Mysore State.

But we do not wish to discuss here the legal aspect of the question, for which indeed we are not qualified. We are more concerned to examine, from a political point of view, the reaction the judgment will have upon Congress organisation in the States. The States' people cannot become members of the Congress unless they have subscribed to the independence pledge; it is an essential condition of enrolment, but by subscribing to the pledge they commit the crime of sedition. That is to say, they cannot

join the Congress without making themselves liable to severe punishment. Independence to the States' people is a remote issue. Even to Congressmen in British India it has lost much of its significance. Mahatma Gandhi has poured so much water into the Congress creed of independence by interpreting it to mean nothing more than dominion status that their pledge has become really unmeaning. But to the States' people it can have even less meaning. The task that they have before them of constitutionalising their own States is so stupendous and all-absorbing that they can have very little use for a controversy, which even in British India is largely barren, viz. whether their ultimate destiny is within the British Empire or without. If they were to consult their own interests, they would aim at the establishment of popular government in their States under the aegis of their rulers and steer clear of all British Indian controversies, welcoming help from every section of opinion. But from this obvious path dictated by expediency they swerved and thought that by affiliating themselves to the Congress they would be able to enlist the active help of the strongest and best organised party in British India. Thus they joined the Congress.

But after they joined it, they were brusquely told that they must not expect any help from the Congress, and the reason given for this refusal was not merely its inability and preoccupation with more urgent affairs of British India, but the impropriety of a British Indian institution meddling with the domestic concerns of the States which to it are foreign territories. The Congress could give to the people of the States only what it could give to foreign countries which are victims of aggression—moral sympathy. It would not refuse help from the States' people in British Indian agitation; to them British India is not foreign territory if it is a question of their giving help. But the States are foreign territory to British Indians if it is a question of the latter giving help to the former. Even after the enunciation of such a one-sided doctrine, the States' people remained in the Congress, hoping that the practice of the Congress would be better than its professions. Actually they found that it was worse. Mahatma Gandhi's recent remonstrance with the A.I.C.C. and the latter's sitting down under the humiliation has proved that there are severe limitations even to the moral sympathy which the Congress can show. As if this disillusionment was not enough, their membership of

the Congress exposes them to dangers on the other side. The States now declare that the independence pledge, without which they cannot become Congress members, makes them disloyal not to the British Government but to themselves, and thus they come under the clutches of their own sedition law. This blow could well have been anticipated and was in fact anticipated by the Congress leaders in British India. They were therefore exhorting their party men in the States to restrict themselves for a while to constructive work in the States—khaddar, harijan uplift, &c.—so as to give no excuse to the Princes to take action against them on the mere ground of the membership of the Congress.

The blow was averted for a time, but it has now fallen. What are the Congress leaders in British India going to do about it? They can take either of the two courses open to them. They may say to the people of Mysore: "You should have let the sleeping dogs lie. You should have gone slow in political agitation, but by your indiscretion and excessive zeal you have precipitated matters. Even now if you are wise, you will be able, in spite of the legal ban against you, to retain your membership of the Congress if you are quiescent in political affairs. That would be your best line of action. The Princes can still be persuaded to leave you alone if you do not challenge them by obtruding yourselves too much upon their attention. It would have been best for you not to have drawn this thunderbolt upon your heads, but you can nevertheless, by walking warily, seek safety. The Princes would refrain from invoking the law

against you." Or the Congress leaders may say "We cannot give you any help in return for the help we have received. On the contrary, membership of the Congress only adds to your already heavy burdens. You have nothing on the credit side and everything on the debit side. We think it best that you should now sever your formal connexion with the Congress. Yours is indeed an anomalous position in the Congress. British India and Indian India are for the purposes of law two distinct entities, and though we are not sticklers for law in general, we wish to adhere most rigidly to this legal distinction. If we treat the Indian States like Ceylon, Afganistan and other foreign countries adjoining us, you are equally entitled to treat British India as foreign territory. We had thought that the anomaly would not attract much notice, but now that it has been pushed into the foreground there is nothing for it but that you should give up formal association with the Congress."

It is certain that the Congress leaders will not give this latter kind of advice to the Congress workers in the States. But if they do not do so, it is their bounden duty now to spring forward to protect their followers in the States from the persecution which threatens them for no other reason than that they have adopted a certain doctrine only that they may qualify themselves to become Congress members. They must look upon the States' people as one with themselves and carry on an agitation in both British India and Indian India without making any distinction between them.

HOME TRUTHS OR HALF-TRUTHS? THE PHILOSOPHY OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES.

"POLITICAL partisans, I say, are accustomed to decide" wrote Prof. Figou, "what they want to do first and seek arguments in favour of it afterwards. Economic reasoning is for them not a means of arriving at truth but a kind of brickbat useful on occasions for inflicting injury on their opponents." We do not know how far this particular description is applicable to the exchange of argumentative brickbats in the Bombay Legislative Assembly on 30th and 31st August, 1937, when, on cut motions introduced by some members, the industrial policy of the Government in general and the philosophy of village industries in particular had been debated. But the brickbats hurled by Prime Minister Kher and his Parliamentary Secretary at Mr. Parulekar and company made such an effective impression on the *Harijan* that, transported into rapturous glee, it reproduced in its issue of 25th September whole passages from their speeches as evidence of the sound drubbing which the sinful advocates of mechanisation had received at the hands of these doughty doctors of dying industries under the significant caption of "A Few Home Truths." It is difficult to say how far any of these truths reached any other home except the homes from where they started but those who are addicted to mechanisation cannot help seeing in them only so many half-truths.

Although the discussion itself had arisen in connection with the cut motion of the representative of the Bombay Millowners Association, who was not very

decisive about his attitude towards cottage industries, a significant turn was given to it by the provocative speech of Mr. Parulekar who painted a lurid picture of an India returning to barbarism and starvation, were it to adopt the philosophy of village industries. We might continue to keep our starvation to ourselves, but it is difficult to acquiesce in his view that India will return to barbarism if it adopts this philosophy, because the world around us is too selfish to permit us to lapse like that, and there are plenty of people who would only be too glad to "civilise" us at the point of the bayonet if we do not know how to do it ourselves. But the provocation has justified itself by the exposition of policy that it extracted; and the resultant declarations conform in detail as well as in broad outline to the philosophy of village industries with all its simplified solutions to the problems of machinery, of distribution, of unemployment, of standards of life, of international peace, etc. This philosophy embodying so many things is something different from the smaller and comparatively non-controversial issue of providing a subsidiary income to the agriculturist through the encouragement of cottage industries.

Of course, Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda denied the influence of any philosophy behind the policy and disavowed his intention to assess the merits of rival systems. But immediately after that, he went on to expatiate on the Government's picture of an India reconstructed mainly on the basis of handicrafts, with a human existence contemplated within a frame-

work of curtailed wants, with a productive system based on the "charkha-machinery" to provide larger employment and so on. If the Government refuse to admit for reasons best known to themselves that their policy is a reckless experiment with the philosophy manufactured at their economic Parnassus at Wardha, let them by all means do so. But why need they misconstrue an opposition to the *philosophy* of village industries as an opposition to village industries themselves? Let village industries grow and prosper if they are such as can with some assistance grow and prosper. The opposition is not to that but to the obstinacy, called a philosophy, which refuses to recognise that there are certain village industries, e. g., hand-spinning, which can no more be revived than some of our dead *maharshis* can be called back to life. And yet that is how Mr. Nanda gives us to understand when on the authority of his predecessor in debate, Rao Bahadur Chitale, he tells us that Japan and several other countries have cottage industries. That is but a half-truth that does not touch the issue. England, the pioneer in industrial revolution, is still in certain lines the home of small-scale production. The real question is not whether there should or should not be any cottage industries that can with profit be revived or assisted. Has not the same Rao Bahadur also told us a tale of disaster that attended his attempts to revive hand-spinning—a tale which is not a figment of his imagination nor the product of his philosophy, but a fragment of his experience? And we are told that this is going to be the industry that will receive the Government's special attention! It is this futile policy of trying to revive impossible industries in an attempt to bring about a reconstructed India which will "depend mainly on handicrafts" that is opposed; and it is an unfair misrepresentation of the view of the advocates of large-scale production to imply, as Mr. Nanda did, that they are proposing a system of mechanised production "where every function of life is mechanised, every detail of life is dominated by machinery down to the wiping of your lips after you have finished your soup."

Nor is it fair to the advocates of mechanisation to draw pictures from one's own overwrought imagination and to suggest that they demand "an indefinite increase of goods and luxuries and a multiplication of artificial wants." The question again is whether the material wants "necessary and indispensable for decent human existence," to borrow Mr. Nanda's language, can be better provided with the help of the machine or without. A categorical answer to such a question is not desirable as it depends on our notions of happiness, our ideas about "material wants necessary and indispensable for decent human existence," and also because a newspaper is no place for that philosophy any more than a legislature. It is, however, possible to say that a scale of material wants necessary and indispensable to a chimpanzee is smaller than that necessary to the caveman; that a scale of wants that would be appropriate to a caveman is much smaller than that necessary to a rustic confined to his toilsome craft; and that the scale of wants of the rustic is much smaller than the scale of wants necessary and indispensable to Mr. Gandhi with his multifarious activities—an illustration which brings out the need for recognising the amplification of material wants with every advancement in the activities of civilised life.* And if we are inspired by the democratic and humanitarian ideal of providing to the largest possible section of population material comforts needed not merely for an animal existence but also in respect of the civilised amenities of life that science has made possible in respect of housing, sanitation, medical relief, and in respect of aesthetic and intellectual activities as in

the case of cheap travel, cheap reading, entertainment, music and all the hundred and one democratic necessities that were once aristocratic privileges and which are indispensable even to the ardent advocates of a handicrafts economy, then, it would be difficult to prophesy their attainment under a system of economy based mainly on handicrafts. It is no doubt true that the blind but powerful servant of mankind machinery, has been abused. But have not men abused religion, non-violence, satyagraha and khadi? And if their abuse is no argument against their use, why should it be so in the case of machinery? Is it because it suits our faith?

In fact, the dogma that it will be possible to maintain a system of mediaeval industrial arts is based on an inadequate appreciation of the realities of population and environment and the glorification of the distant past brought about by the blurring of the outlines of the toils and tribulations that surrounded the lot of the common man in those times. That, in short, is the case as the apologist for the machine sees it. Yet when Mr. Parulekar suggested that the lot of the common man has been made considerably happier, the Prime Minister in his reply found the idea so crude that, making concessions to levity, he declared that if there is any machine that could bring happiness he would place big orders for it. Not content with it, he recommended for the study of Mr. Parulekar an "excellent book" by a "learned author." The author is Mr. Hobson and the book is "Work and Wealth: A Human Valuation." And then proceeding, he said: "My conception is that handiwork has definite advantages over the machine and in that excellent book to which I referred there is a whole chapter on 'The Reign of the Machine.'" We do not know if the Prime Minister has himself read it, having prescribed it for the edification of others. Probably not, for had he done it, he would not have missed to stumble across the following passage in that very chapter, which could as well be a protest against the misuse of Mr. Hobson's authority. Writes Mr. Hobson:

To those who brood upon the visions of the past our modern industrial development has often seemed a crude substitution of quantity of goods for quality, the character of labour deteriorating in the process. With the element of truth in such judgment is mingled much falsehood. There has never been an age or a country where the great bulk of labour was not toilsome, painful, monotonous and uninteresting, often degrading in its conditions. Bad as things are from the standpoint of human ideal, they are better for the majority of workers in this and the other industrial countries than ever in the past. *Machinery has rendered a great human service* by taking over large masses of heavy, dull and, degrading work. When fully developed, it should prove to be the great liberator of his productive tastes and faculties, performing for him the routine processes of industry so that he may have time and energy to devote himself to activities more interesting and varied.

The Prime Minister could certainly do no better than to carry Mr. Hobson's coal to Mr. Parulekar's Newcastle. Then again here is something from Hobson on spinning and weaving, the industry so dear to the Government's heart:

The spinning and weaving work before the industrial revolution had certain slight elements of freedom and variety, now absent. Many of the hygienic conditions were far worse, the hours of labour were usually longer, and the large employment of old folk and tender children, in work nearly as unvaried as that enjoined by modern machinery, enslaved the entire life of the home and family to the narrow and precarious conditions of a dull local trade.

And yet it is this kind of enslavement that is going to be purchased through a system of state help for us.

The Prime Minister's pearls collected from Mr. Hobson's work are, however, not confined to his attitude towards machinery alone. He rambled on a much wider field and served it for Mr. Parulekar's consumption; and the *Harijan* snatched these pearls and wrote:

Prime Minister Kher thought that one who had entirely depended on books for his arguments should be treated to a little book learning which might carry better conviction.

We have witnessed already the adroit dexterity with which constructive statesmen are capable of serving the book-worms with book learning. No wonder these practical men despise books. Another quotation is given by the Prime Minister in his choice of the goal of economic endeavour:

If we can get an industrial order in which every person is induced to discover to the service of society his best abilities of body and mind, while he receives from society what is required to sustain and develop those abilities and so to live the best and fullest life of which he is capable, we have evidently reached a formally sound solution of the social problem on its economic side.

The vague quotation is, indeed, a very useful arrow in the quiver of a politician; but it hardly does justice to the cause of honest truth. It is difficult to say whether either Prime Minister Kher who held this gospel aloft or the editor of the *Harijan* who acclaimed it have scented in it the substance of the familiar but equally pointless socialist cry "from each according to his ability and to each according to his need," an ideal, attractive in theory, with the merits of vagueness. That they would have done, had they remembered that Mr. Hobson was preaching the gospel of socialism for well-nigh forty years. For instance, even in a work published nearly twenty years before the book referred to above was published, Hobson wrote:

This growing socialisation of industry must be regarded as the natural adjustment of society to the new conditions of machine production.

And in later works he refined and reaffirmed this attitude. If the village industries men wanted the stamp of an inevitable western authority for their impossible economic humanism, they would have done better to choose some other companion than drift recklessly into hobnobbing with Hobson. He never decried machinery; he never preached a gospel of artificial simplicity; he never advocated a return to mediaeval production; he never produced anything so shockingly original as the philosophy of decentralised production, nor was he simple-minded enough to believe in village-tariffs to secure village self-sufficiency. But these are not things that matter. The real question, an answer to which it would interest the country to know, is, having accepted his particular economic goal as theirs, would the Prime Minister and Mr. Mahadeo Desai accept also the means he suggested, if they regard him as an authority? Or would they part company with him on the question of means, having had the intellectual dare-devilry to use his socialist ideal as the big stick to beat the socialist Parulekar? Of course, they would part, but for that we must return to Mr. Nanda's "Home Truths" once again with all his ready-made solutions for the economic ills.

The philosophy of village industries offers a solution for the problem of distribution that is extremely simple. And that solution is to beat down machinery and to adopt the simpler implements so as to divide work. Perhaps Mr. Nanda would object to calling them implements. Has he not told us that the charkha itself is a machine? We do not know what Mr. Nanda would say if some one claims that the men in the stone age had a civilisation based on machinery, because they were using machines made of

stone for killing animals, for preparing food, for breaking heads, etc. instead of using their naked hands. Probably he will accept it. He also told us that, in choosing his criterion for preferring a certain type of instrument of production, he would prefer its capacity for giving employment to its productivity. And hence the choice of the charkha. Look at your mills, he said, every one person throws nine persons out of jobs. Then look at the charkha, it employs all. Yes. And we suppose if population still increases and if conditions of employment become harder, then probably the charkha will be replaced by the takli, and so on backwards like a crab. Or do they mean that this charkha-machinery is a necessary guarantee against any multiplication of numbers, thanks to the low standards of life it creates? Anyway it is a solution. So convinced are they of its efficacy as an agent of distribution that Mr. Gandhi wrote:

No amount of human ingenuity can manage to distribute water over the whole land as a shower of rain can. . . . The spinning wheel too has got the same power of distributing work and wealth in millions of homes. (*Young India*, 6th July, 1921.)

The analogy is good. But rain to be rain must be spontaneous. If no human ingenuity can distribute water like rain, no human ingenuity can create that rain either. If, believing rain to be the best means of distribution, we advise the country to dry up the tanks, to demolish wells, cover the canals and go on boiling water in pots and pans so that vapours may go up and come down like rain we will only be taking preposterous liberties with commonsense. And yet when we are advised to pull down machinery, to destroy division of labour, to kill commerce, to create village self-sufficiency and to decentralise production, we somehow believe that we are not taking preposterous liberties with economic laws and creating an ingenious system of wealth distribution.

On the side of production an equally big solution awaits us, the solution of decentralised production propounded by Mr. Kumarappa in a book "equally important" as Hobson's—only diametrically opposed to it. And there it is said:

Centralised production under capitalism with profit motive as its propelling force directs labour from the supply of primary needs to luxuries, from food to face powder. Hence it is that we find a world facing starvation and over-population.

—and so goes the argument. So, centralize the production of public utilities and leave the rest to handicrafts on a decentralised basis. And decentralisation kills profit by distributing it in many hands and therefore kills the evils of concentrated wealth—an argument that can easily allure the layman. But a twaddling tyro in economics will tell us that it is impossible. Any one who has not forgotten the facts of economic history can recollect how even under the domestic system of production that prevailed before the industrial revolution, the producers had suffered all the evils of to-day and more. That is because decentralised production does not, as advocated, bring about profit distribution. It would be possible still to organise a centralised business with decentralised production and to reduce the worker to abject helplessness—much more helpless than under centralised production where he can enjoy the privilege of collective bargaining. To consider an example, the Benares silk industry is one of the most flourishing decentralised industries even to-day. But where do the profits accumulate? Are they in the hands of the weavers, who, producing clothes for the richest classes in India, live on the verge of starvation? Or in the hands of the merchants who know not how to handle a silk thread? Joint stock being the order of the day, it becomes possible to decentralise production

and centralise business and thus maintain in fact the influences tending towards concentrated wealth. Even the story of khadi is illustrative of this. Hand-spun hand-woven khadi is the supreme example of decentralised business. Where Congress created a demand for khadi, private organisers entered the field to share the spoils and organised khadi production paying low wages. Mr. Gandhi found the low wage inhuman and fixed a minimum wage. The price of khadi rose and sales declined. So the private producers parted company with the A.I.S.A., refused to accept the minimum wage imposition, continued paying the same wages as ever before and reaped for themselves the benefit of low wages plus the profit of high prices. That is the achievement of decentralised production. Mr. Gandhi told them that it was sin, but the merchants preferred profits even if they brought sin along. The A.I.S.A. had to go about issuing appeals to persuade people to buy only A.I.S.A. khadi. We cannot know what people do; but now that Congress is in power and many will like to cover themselves in khadi, there is a strong presumption in favour of believing that private organisers of khadi production must be making marvellous profits. That is a sample of centralised profit under decentralised production. For that there is only one solution if decentralisation were to become a reality. The A.I.S.A. or a similar body should not only fix a minimum wage, and organise production, fix prices and sell goods, but also should prohibit, with the help of the state, private production except on its own conditions. And there must be similar boards for all such industries, all of which should again be supervised and controlled. But where then do we come to with all this? We come to socialism, minus machinery plus high prices and low wages. That would end in an imbecile socialism from the back-door, and not so honest either.

But that is not the solution that the philosophy of village industries envisages. They are not concerned with prices and profits because producers do not produce for sale at all but for consumption. (See Mr. Kumarappa's book: "Village Industries and Reconstruction," p. 25). The villager will be self-sufficient and division of labour necessitating exchange will be done away with. We do not know how many things the simple villager can make for himself. At least he cannot be his own spinner and weaver, dyer and bleacher, carpenter, smith, washerman, cartman, cooly and least of all, priest. And besides he may now and then, being a human being with passions and interests, crave for a little luxury or a cheap entertainment. If he cannot produce all these he must buy and sell. If he were to buy and sell there will be exchange. If there will be exchange prices will count and cheapness will decide, and cheaper products may pour in from elsewhere and dislocate the village production. For this again there is a solution. In course of time, under the auspices of the Village Industries Association, machinery will be invented to enable individualist production, so they tell us, and yet produce cheap things. In that hope we are to draw our bills to-day. That experience may heavily discount this bill drawn on hope does not worry them. In the meanwhile "village panchayats should by means of legislation or protective tariffs prevent dumping of outside goods" (*ibid.*, p. 14), so that if a carpenter comes from another village to sell a plough at half the local price the village panchayat will impose a hundred per cent. tax on him and tax him out of existence. Each village for itself and devil take the hindmost. That is the culmination of this philosophy with its magnificent simplicity. It tells us: if machinery creates unemployment, substitute lesser forms of machinery; if capital helps greater production, do away with capital; centralised production creates centralised wealth, so decentralise; division

of labour cheapens things; so have no division of labour except of the most primitive types; commerce brings cheap things, so kill commerce with village tariffs. Then we will have self-sufficient villages flowing with milk and honey.

With the provinces wedded to this philosophy and a centre that is in love with laissez-faire, the vision of a future India is far from glorious. It will not be a place flowing with milk and honey but a country of half-fed, ill-clothed, nincompoops worse than those of to-day. "Look at Abyssinia and China," said Mr. Nanda. "It is all due to an effort simply to be able to maintain the standard of living in the stronger countries at the expense of other countries;" and, getting into a mood for philosophising, declared, "If we want international peace, that standard of living is not open to us." We do not feel competent to deliver judgments on international peace. But it looks as if the lessons of Abyssinia and China are wasted on Mr. Nanda. If Abyssinia were a country not "mainly dependent on handicrafts" but had a fourth of the industrialism that Italy had, we do not know if Mussolini could have ravished it with such exultant ease. And if the giant of China is to-day thrown over by the pigmy of Japan in the international jiu-jitsu, it is because China had taken opium and gone to sleep and continued to remain a country "depending mainly on handicrafts." And yet the picture of a reconstructed India that the Bombay Government and men of their persuasion elsewhere have in mind is an India that will be "dependent mainly on handicrafts." But the good people that we happen to be, we may choose to refuse a high standard of living. And the stronger races that are addicted to a higher standard will not let us have our philosophy but in their own interests would feed us fat even as the butcher, in his own interest, would feed his pigs, if necessary by kicking us into it as they are doing in Abyssinia and China.

The basic fact is that we have grown into an environment, national as well as international, with its problems of a unified organic growth for which we seek to prescribe the remedies of smug individualist philosophy with its isolation and self-sufficiency. Wordsworth was indeed wise when, looking back from his adult life, he brooded:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now—the glory and the dream?

But beyond that, inspired by that dream of childhood, if he began to make experiments with himself, to become a child once more, he would have been in the same position in which the advocates of the philosophy of village industries are to-day.

P. S. NARAYANA PRASAD.

Reviews.

G. B. S.

SHAW. GEORGE VERSUS BERNARD. By J. P. HACKETT. (Sheed and Ward.) 1937. 20cm. 216p. 6/-

THE writer points out that Shavian literature (whether novels, plays, letters or prefaces) represents a perpetual and fascinating conflict between a religious spirit of high seriousness on the one hand and an irrepressible and ever-young spirit of impishness on the other—between George and Bernard in the heart of Shaw! From St. Joan to the Devil's Disciple anybody can draw on Shaw for a quotation in his or her favour. On page 141, in a significant extract from

Shaw's letter to Ellen Terry, we read: "In this world, you must know all points of view, and take one and stick to it. In taking your side, don't trouble about its being right; north is no righter or wronger than south, but be sure that it is really yours, and then back it for all you are worth. And never stagnate. Life is a constant becoming, all stages leading to the beginning of others..."

"George versus Bernard" shows how wide-spread is the feeling that G. B. S. stands for at least two different persons. In fact when G. B. S. was asked about it, pat came the reply: "Why only two?"

As an economist and as a champion of the Life-Force religion, Shaw has been held up to ridicule by materialists who happen to be in a formidable majority. But those who know the measure of intensity and success with which he has lived his creed and religion as reflected in his works may not join them.

The apparent contradictions with which Shavian literature is scattered have been most damagingly explained by the George vs. Bernard story. But this story cannot account for the manifest greatness of Shaw.

The only explanation of the greatness which has survived the conflict of contradictions is to be found in the fact that Shaw is not two, three or four different characters or tendencies rolled into one, but that he can imagine himself in the place of each of a number of different persons at the same time and discuss any human problem from sex to God—in the most flashing and rousing, if not always decisive, manner for hours together. Capacity to follow many points of view with tremendous energy and brilliance without losing the power of swiftly choosing one for himself is the secret of Shavian charm and influence.

Mr. Hackett writes in the most entertaining manner, leaving extracts from Shaw to speak for themselves in the George vs. Bernard context. On page 25 he draws pointed attention to three epithets bestowed on G. B. S. by three gifted women—Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Mrs. Beatrice Webb and Ellen Terry respectively. It is an undeniable and unmixed pleasure to watch Mr. Hackett marshalling the numerous utterances of Shaw in support of those epithets and in proof of his thesis. For penetrating analysis and merciless criticism of the most incisive genius of our time, it will be difficult to beat this book which tells us so much about the redoubtable and magnetic G. B. S. within the limits of 216 pages.

A. H. PADHYE.

MEHER BABA.

THE PERFECT MASTER. THE LIFE OF SHRI MEHER BABA. By C. B. PURDOM. (Williams & Norgate.) 1937. 22cm. 330p. 12/6.

MR. C. B. PURDOM is already known to the literary world as the author of *The Building of Satellite Towns*, *Producing Plays*, *A Plan of Life*, etc. He has also edited *The Swan of Shakespeare* and *Everyman at War*. Those who are acquainted with the interest which Mr. Purdom takes in philosophical and spiritual matters and particularly in mysticism will not be surprised to find him deeply concerned in presenting to the world a study of the life and teaching of an Indian Master.

Parts I and II are devoted not only to the telling of the story but also to Baba's messages and extracts from the spiritual discourses which he gave, while part III discusses the significance of Baba's life and mission and describes his methods in detail. The two appendices give Meher Baba's views on (a) Medita-

tion, (b) The Journey of the Soul to the Over-soul and (c) The Process of Evolution.

The author gives a very fascinating description of Baba's tour to Persia in 1929 and the nine visits which he paid to the West between 1931 and 1936. Baba not only visited the different countries in Europe but also Egypt, America and China several times and saw many visitors and aspirants. The author has extensively quoted from the diaries of those who were with Baba at different places. The various messages issued by Baba as well as his answers to important questions are given in full with the result that the book also gives a general outline of Baba's philosophy and teaching.

The book discusses the phenomenon of the defection of disciples. With regard to the turn taken by the editor of the *Meher Message*, the author brings to light the significant fact that "controversy had been developing between the editor and other disciples of Baba at the activities of the editor in connection with Indian politics, which had been objected to as Baba and his disciples take no part in politics" (p. 154). With regard to the book, *A Search in Secret India* by "Paul Brunton" (Mr. Raphael Hurst), the author remarks in a foot-note (p. 155): "Mr. Hurst was in search of signs and wonders. He found none in Baba but many 'high and sublime sayings' and was disappointed." Later the author explains more fully: "Spiritual leaders are disappointing in practical achievement because they have no ends in the material world... Those who desert a master lose their discipleship in the wrong way. They cut themselves off when they should jump more fully in. They refuse equality" (p. 276).

The author has carefully analysed and explained the reasons why Baba means so much to his followers. The devoted following which Baba has is not, as is sometimes asserted, due to any form of hypnotic influence. The author says: "I have not observed in Baba any exercise of hypnotic powers upon individuals, nor have I observed at any time the results of hypnosis... The description usually given to the feeling which he arouses is that of a sense of love."

The author has carefully explained the spiritual significance of Baba's mission; but he has evidently tried to keep aside his subjective reaction to Baba and has made the presentation of the life objective. He has written the story "as soberly and plainly as if it were the record of ordinary everyday events." As a record of facts concerning the life and teaching of a great master the book deserves to receive attention from all aspirants and enlightened persons.

The ample illustrations in the book and the foreword of Dr. Fredrick Kettner, the founder of biosophy, have added to its value. In the foreword Dr. Kettner has expressed confidence that "Baba as spiritual engineer will attain preminence," that "he will step into his proper place as an integrator of ethical-social reason with intuition into world consciousness," that "his greatest gift to humanity will be his spiritual love and wisdom", and that "as a positive superman, he will show human beings how to make not a sub-human kind of living, but a super-human kind of life." It is a pity that the foreword had to be printed separately as a leaflet and could not be incorporated in the body of the book.

C. D. DESHMUKH.

SHORT NOTICES.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS COVENANT. A JURIDICAL STUDY. By K. R. R. SASTRY. (Devi Press, Mount Road, Madras.) 1935. 20cm. 133p. Rs. 2.

At a time when the League of Nations seems to be on its death-trial, Mr. Sastry's constructive study of

its covenant, the Magna Carta of world peace and world solidarity, is at once helpful and encouraging. Of the many misconceptions about the constitution and aims of the League, the most fallacious and injurious is the one that looks upon it as a super-state. The League has no personality independent of its member-states. Its power is the combined power of the states supporting it. Nor is it a mere humanitarian association of "good intentions and bad workmanship." It has effective sanctions to enforce its conventions. Its ability to grow to its full stature depends entirely on the sincere support given by its members to its ideals. That such support has not been witnessed so far is by no means a reproach upon its ideals or a blemish on its constitution. The ultimate responsibility for the League's failure rests on the enlightened public of the world; the immediate responsibility rests on its member-states—specially the big powers. Such is, in short, the true interpretation of the covenant that enunciates the principles of the League organisation and lays down its constitution. Mr. Sastry has brought out this fact in easy but convincing language in a handbook of 133 pages.

The book is full of short but useful extracts from the speeches and writings of the leading thinkers of the age on the problems of peace and war. A glimpse of the actual peace machinery in action during the first fifteen years of its existence, is also given. The antecedents of the League are carefully laid out and the growth of the idea of peace is indicated by reference to the thoughts of eminent Indian and European authorities. The bibliography given at the end is fairly formidable; and a digest of that vast lore, in a facile style and in a thought-provoking manner, is the very essence of Mr. Sastry's effort.

The foreword is written by the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri than whom there is no more diligent student of League affairs in India. The League is well-nigh an object of contempt in our country and catch-phrases like "a League of Notion" and "a League of Robbers" have already been coined by the lovers of peace in Hindustan. The gross ignorance of many enlightened Indians about "a great organization" does no credit either to our ancient culture

or to our future aspirations. Politically and socially our country is backward. We have not gone out of the darkness that characterised Europe in the Middle-Ages. Should we also be backward in the promulgation of ideals and in the appreciation of gigantic efforts to bring Paradise to Earth?

T. S. RAMANUJAN.

THE ROYAL CORONATION NUMBER AND WHO'S WHO IN INDIA, BURMA AND CEYLON (ILLUSTRATED). Ed. and Compiled by THOS. PETERS. (The Sun Publishing House, East Street, Poona.) 1937. 23 cm. 615 p.

THE Sun Publishing Company presents a handsome volume of reference to the public. The get-up and general printing is good, although the pictures in the Who's Who section could have been improved. No proportion seems to have been observed in the size of the photographs. A Who's Who for the huge territories of India, Burma and Ceylon is an ambitious project and can scarcely hope to be either exhaustive or discriminative. This volume is not an exception to that rule. The cost seems to be rather too high for the type of material provided.

M. D. S.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

- THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF POLITICS. By ILYAS AHMAD. (The Indian Press, Allahabad.) 1937. 23cm. 392p. Rs. 5.
- BRITISH EXPERIMENTS IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL. By TERENCE H. O'BRIEN. (Allen & Unwin.) 1937. 22cm. 304p. 10/6.
- THE GROUNDWORK OF ECONOMIC THEORY. By J. WATSON. (King.) 1937. 22cm. 196p. 9/-
- THE TWILIGHT OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM. By A. S. J. BASTER. (King.) 1937. 22cm. 218p. 9/-
- THE LAW OF PAKKI AND KATCHI ADAT AND TEJ-MANDI CONTRACTS. By RAMNIKLAL R. MODY. (N. M. Tripathi & Co., Bombay.) 1937. 22cm. 249p. Rs. 3.
- CHARACTERS OF THE REFORMATION. By HILAIRE BELLOC. (Sheed & Ward.) 1937. 22cm. 342p. 7/6.

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