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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE tremendous enthusiasm roused by His Majesty King Amanulla's presence was not merely conventional, due to the desire of the Indian people to show their accustomed hospitality to a neighbouring monarch but was heartfelt and spontaneous. In the short space of about ten years he has shown himself to be a wonderful organizer and master of statecraft in the adoption of the essentials of a modern State on progressive lines. He has freed himself from the tyranny of mediæval institutions which favoured a benevolent autocracy and has decided to play the rôle of a King dedicated to the welfare of his country by "being a servant of his people"—to quote the words he used in his reply to the address of the Anjuman-i-Islam in Bombay. His European tour is the outcome of his desire to acquaint himself with European institutions, the spirit of their working and the causes of their superiority with a view to the adoption of those that can be profitably transplanted to the East. The courage of conviction behind his straightforward utterances is transparently clear. His advice to the Muslims to respect the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus and to remember that they are disrespecting the teachings of their Prophet by their spirit of intolerance, coming as it does from a King whose orthodoxy is unquestioned, is clear proof of his freedom from bigotry and respect for the principle of toleration. It is to be hoped that this advice which is just addressed at the psychological moment will be pondered over seriously by his

own co-religionists and will be the means of cementing the two great communities in India. We do not think that His Majesty will come to recognise that there are inevitable limits to the doctrine of supporting home industries which he pressed on the attention of the Bombay Corporation after his foreign travels as a Bombay journal opines; his appeal to Indians in his reply to the address of the Corporation to use Indian goods was so clear and unmistakable, but it is not his views that endeared King Amanulla to the Indians in his short visit, but the charm of his personality and his intense patriotism clearly discernible in all his speeches and actions. We are sure His Majesty will learn sufficient in his European tour to enable him to make his country one of the most progressive and up-to-date in Asia and gain a rich and varied experience to guide him in administering his State in accordance with modern standards. But it would be difficult for His Majesty to meet with a more cordial welcome and a more heartfelt greeting than the one he has received in India. There is no gainsaying that this reception in India will further strengthen the bonds of friendship between India and Afghanistan and will lay to rest for decades to come the bogey of the Afghan invasion, thus securing the interests of Asiatic peace. We wish him a *bon voyage* and hope that the rest of the programme of his tour will be equally delightful and cheering as his stay in India.

* * *

THE official report of the Commons debate on the Statutory Commission, which is now to hand, brings to light one serious omission from the Reuter's cabled summary of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's speech. It is this: "In the examination of witnesses there are certain witnesses and certain evidence which our (Parliamentary) Commission must examine for themselves." The other witnesses, Mr. MacDonald says, might be examined in common, but this should be done, he adds, "in such a way as to secure to our Commissioners the absolute right, the previously announced right, so that there can be no dispute about it, of saying in respect to this, that, and the other witness or subject, We are going to take evidence upon these matters ourselves." So not only does Mr. MacDonald desire to exclude certain witnesses from the purview of the Indian Committees, but certain subjects as well, and obviously this will detract very considerably from the status

of equality which he hoped would be accorded to the Committees of the Indian Legislatures. If Mr. MacDonald himself thus insists, almost with vehemence, upon such a restriction of the scope of the Committees, which it goes without saying will very much depress their position, nothing need be said of the attitude of members of Government, to whom the very idea of "joint sessions" between the Commission and the Committees is strange. Add to this the two other points which, in spite of the freedom which is supposed to be given to the Simon Commission to determine its procedure, have been unalterably decided upon in advance, viz. that the Indian Committees are not to report to Parliament and that the Commission is to consult with the Committee of the Central Legislature only on matters affecting the Central Government and with the Committees of the Provincial Legislatures only on matters affecting the Provincial Governments concerned, it is easy to see that the Committees of the Indian Legislature will necessarily be in a very inferior and disadvantageous position as compared to the Commission, even assuming that all the privileges to which Mr. MacDonald has referred are conferred upon them. These two last points were well made by Col. Wedgwood, who drew the attention of the House to the fact that the Committee of the Central Legislature will deal at best with "only one section of the question" and therefore it can never have "anything like the same scope and powers as you are giving to the Statutory Commission from this side which has necessarily to deal with a dozen Committees dealing with further sections of the same problem." Col. Wedgwood further goes on, "Our Royal Commission, having heard all the views, having the sole voting power in deciding on their own Report, report to the Government." (By the way, Mr. Scurr too insists that "the Committees ought not to report to this Parliament." The imperious tone adopted by these Labour members looks most funny.) All which means, in the words of Col. Wedgwood, that Indians through these Committees will have an opportunity of giving "advice," but will have no voice in the "actual shaping of the future constitution of the country."

* * *

INDEED, it would appear that in the mind of Mr. MacDonald there was a curious mixture of two distinct ideas as to the functions of the Indian Committees. At one moment he conceives of them as virtually a part of the Statutory Commission and therefore refers to them as having joint sittings with the Commission and at another he thinks of them as a parallel Commission, the two Commissions being engaged on "two sections of the inquiry" (Mr. MacDonald's words), and "acting along parallel lines" (Mr. Lansbury's words). It is the predominance of this "parallel Commission" idea which alone could inspire the utterly futile and grossly fantastic suggestion made by him that the Committee of the Indian Legislature may report if it likes to its own Parliament which "can deal then with that report with exactly the same freedom as we ourselves will deal with our report. It was on account of the same confusion of ideas that Mr. Lansbury too said: "Under the scheme the Committee that is appointed in India can of itself take evidence wherever it pleases, can arrange its own course of action, without interference from this House or from the Commission, because it is an Indian Committee appointed by the Assembly; it will meet the Commission at Delhi; and they will discuss all the questions involved in the inquiry which they please; when the British Commission has done its work and returned to this country, the Committee in India

can, if it so pleases, report to the Assembly in India; the Assembly, in India can if it pleases, send that report to the Viceroy for transmission to the Secretary of State, and then it can come before this House." The possibility of the Indian Committee's report being presented to Parliament is definitively ruled out by Mr. Baldwin and Lord Birkenhead—and indeed by Mr. MacDonald—and all that remains of this grotesque scheme is that while the British Parliament's Commission is conducting an inquiry, the Indian Parliament's Commission may side by side conduct its own. This is proposed, we guess, in order to put the Indian Committee on a par with the Commission. An equality would indeed be established if only the Indian Parliament had equal powers with the British Parliament; but if it had, no inquiry would be needed, certainly none by the British Parliament. And if the Indian Parliament thought of making an inquiry, it would not ask for leave from the British Parliament even now, "limited and miserable" as its powers are (to use Mr. Lansbury's own words).

* * *

MR. LANSBURY was throughout this speech in a very chastened mood on this occasion. He never referred to India before without asserting her right to self-determination, even to the extent of going out of the British Empire if she chose.

Only recently at the Blackpool Conference of the Labour Party he reiterated this view in moving a resolution acknowledging India's right, here and now, to determine her future constitution. In his speech in the Commons, however, all he could bring himself to advocate was that Indian Committees should be allowed to plead and put forward before the British Parliament proposals for "the next step towards responsible government," and still he claims that Labour members "have not climbed down, and are not giving up or going back on the principle laid down at Blackpool or anywhere else" If the setting up of an All-White Commission to determine what "the next step" in reforms may be is consistent with self-determination, one cannot help wondering how the Conservative Government which never cease harping on the supremacy of Parliament can reconcile themselves to the establishment of the Commission. The expression "equality of status" also has depreciated very much in meaning, as used by Labour members, if the Indian Committees with no voting power and excluded from the examination of certain subjects are still to be assumed to have equal powers with the Commission. Mr. Pilcher, who is accustomed to deal with hard facts rather than indulge in vague generalities, put the matter with brutal frankness in the House of Commons. "It seems to me," he said, "that a body such as the Central Legislature, whose conduct and record are under examination, cannot occupy, as the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition seemed to suggest, a position *vis a vis* with the Royal Commission as if they were two Houses of a sovereign Parliament. They cannot expect, and I do not think they would ask, a position of something very like equality as compared with the Royal Commission." The only power that can be conferred upon them, he said, was the power "of stating their case to the Committee." by which he meant the Parliamentary Commission, and all the glozing by Labour members notwithstanding, they will have no other power. Indeed Mr. MacDonald himself does not hope for anything more. All that he wants to see is that Government should say that "we are sending forth our Commission of inquiry in the spirit of good-fellowship and co-operation, in order that it may get the facts and the opinions and the reflections of the best Indians, so that it may present

to us the very best and most useful report that it can produce."

* * *

THE speech of Mr. C. B. Chartres, President of the European Association, at their annual conference recently held at Calcutta

Europeans' Warning.

is nothing but a rehash of the speeches of Government spokesmen in the recent Parliamentary debate on the Commission. Like Lords Birkenhead and Winterton, he also tries his best to assure our countrymen that their exclusion from the personnel of the Commission does not mean any insult to them. The Association has always believed that the only practicable way of finding out the Indian point of view on the subject of further constitutional advance was by the appointment of a small Parliamentary Commission, for which, it will be remembered, it pressed last year. It is of course too much to expect him to understand why after all the care and trouble so magnanimously taken by the British Government for the association of Indian opinion with the Commission, Indian leaders should so unreasonable enough to decide upon its boycott and he does not lose the opportunity to warn them in a grandmotherly fashion against launching upon such a dangerous enterprise. According to Mr. Chartres, responsible government can be won only by two methods: one is by constitutional means and the other is by revolution. He apparently places the proposed boycott in the second category and is charitable enough to persuade himself that the movement is based on sentimental and personal considerations. It would be sheer waste of energy to try to convince Mr. Chartres and people like him that in initiating the boycott of the Commission, Indians are only trying to vindicate their national self-respect. It is all very well to say that the Commission, to be businesslike and expeditious in the despatch of business, should be a body of manageable dimensions; but we do not think it would have detracted very much from its businesslike character if its strength had been nine or ten instead of seven, or better still, if, without increasing the number, two or three Indians had been included in its personnel.

* * *

THE Indian community, following the European example, held recently the first non-

Communal Representation to be perpetuated? official conference under the presidency of Mr. Phadke, and this Conference too, like the European, was

opened by the Governor, Sir E. Grigg. The speech which he made on the occasion was unsatisfactory in many respects and has provoked strong protests from the Indian residents. We shall however confine ourselves here to one point where he advocated the maintenance of the principle of communal representation introduced into the Colony by the White Paper of 1923 and contended that the recently issued White Paper [Cmd. 2904] reiterates this principle. As a matter of fact this White Paper does not do anything of the kind and it was quite wrong of the Governor to trench on the province reserved for investigation to the Commission. The arguments advanced by him in support of the principle however only prove the necessity of introducing a common roll. The quality of representation and the extent of political power to be given to each community, he maintains, and quite rightly, must depend upon its character and the contribution it can make to the development of the country. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine what proportion of political privileges should be accorded to such widely differing communities as the Indians and the Europeans on the basis of any recognised criteria. Such proportions must necessarily be arbitrary. The only just way is to fix for all communities alike the same franchise qualifications

of education, &c. and have all the voters who fulfil these tests on one common roll, leaving it to the latter to cast votes for a candidate of whatever community they like. This automatically distributes political power among different communities in proportion to its standard of education, &c. If the Europeans are superior in this respect to the Indians, as Sir E. Grigg indicates they are throughout his speech, they will necessarily outnumber the Indians on the voters' register although in population they are less numerous. One can then test whether the present arrangement under which Indians, although they are thrice as many as Europeans, get a third of European representation, is just.

* * *

IF the treatment we give to our nationals abroad when they return to their mother country

Plight of Indian Repatriates. were to be the sole test of our interest in their well being, we would indeed

have to be written down as people devoid of any kindly feeling towards our fellow-countrymen. Not that professions of our interest in and solicitude for their welfare are at all lacking; but what is wanting is practical steps to translate them into action. Else it is impossible to account for the helpless condition in which our countrymen on their arrival here find themselves. So much is this the case that, having been stranded here, and having nobody to look after them, they have not infrequently desired to go back. Their position would be thoroughly impossible if the countries where they spent their lives had, once their backs were turned, shown equal indifference and shut their doors in their face. Luckily for them this does not always happen, at any rate so far as Fiji is concerned. A number of them seem to have come to this country some months back, and being utter strangers in their own land and with a Government which has not yet begun to consider it part of its duty to look after their welfare, they had no alternative but to wish to return to Fiji. The Government of the Colony, whether from considerations of sympathy for them or from a desire to obtain cheap labour, were for their part not unwilling to facilitate their return, with the result that in June 1926 the Fiji Legislative Council carried a non-official European's motion asking that they be brought back. This has been followed in October this year by the Council granting £10,000 for the purpose. The Fiji Government were apparently in some doubt as to whether under the Indian Emigration Act the return of Indian repatriates was allowed or not, and were assured that the Act in no way stood in the way of their wishes being carried out. The present idea seems to be to take back those who have been for at least two years in this country and are too poor to pay for their passage to Fiji. In their case free passage will be provided with free food and clothing on the voyage. And on arrival in Fiji, they will be conveyed free to places where they may desire to settle, small cash advances repayable in easy instalments being made to them. To supervise the transfer to Fiji of the eligible ones among those stranded in Calcutta, the Fiji Government is going to send out one of their own officers to India. All of which suggests the urgent necessity of some provision on the part of the Government of India to keep itself in touch with the returned emigrants and make them feel at home here. It is a pity the necessity should not have forced itself upon our attention earlier but this having been done now, no time should be lost in making arrangements which would ensure that Indian repatriates will not feel that they were a God-forsaken lot.

* * *

TAXATION IN MYSORE.

A MYOSRE Report just published reviews the system of taxation in the State especially with a view to any change of policy or improvement of the machinery of assessment, in the light of the recommendations of the Indian Taxation Inquiry Committee. Apart from other things this indicates the alertness of the Mysore Government not to be found behindhand, but rather to be in the forefront of economic progress. We wonder how many States can say as much.

One of the oldest taxes is the one levied on land and this supplies the State's Central Government as well as local authorities with large sums of revenue. The total realization in 1926-27 is Rs. 125.03 lakhs of which the Inam lands supplied Rs. 5.4 lakhs. The Mysore Land Revenue Code is modelled on the Bombay Code and practice. The Joint Parliamentary Committee has laid down that "the main principles by which the revenue is determined, the method of valuation, the pitch of assessment, the periods of revision" should be embodied in law instead of being left to the discretion of the Executive Government. This has been already achieved in many respects in Mysore and the Report says that further legislation is unnecessary. With regard to the canon of equity, the assessment is determined not by the actual yield in any year but by the average estimated yield. It is noteworthy that in Mysore land revenue has not increased in proportion to the rise in prices as it well might according to the doctrine of unearned increment. The Taxation Inquiry Committee recommend that annual value as defined by them should form the basis of levy; in Mysore this is already realised because resettlements approach closely the basis and methods recommended by the Committee and land assessment does not exceed 25 per cent. of the annual value and 25 per cent. for local bodies. As for water rate the recommendation of the Committee that the charge for water should be separated from the charge for land has not been followed in Mysore and the Report admits that separation of land revenue from water charges must be undertaken at least for new extensions of irrigation. In this connection the Report refers to the dilemma that there is obvious unfairness if commercial rates are charged for supplies of water from new works while others are let off with old rates and to make a separation for old works is well-nigh impossible owing to the creation of vested rights. The recommendation of the Committee that a reasonable share of the addition made to the annual value of the land by a guarantee of the supply of water should be taken by the State is already conformed to in Mysore although the fixing of the period has not been possible owing to the fact that new irrigation schemes have been a feature of recent times.

Coming to Excise we note that the total revenue realised in 1926-27 (budget figures) is Rs. 62.5 lakhs. Compared to 1911-12 this has risen by nearly 60 per cent. It is to be noted in the case of arrack and toddy that although the number of shops shows a decline the population served and the consumption show a large increase. As nearly one-fourth of the

gross revenue of the State is derived from Excise, the Report seems to be chary of losing such a large revenue and only promises that a progressive decline in revenue would be attempted. With regard to Income-tax the exemption limit of Rs. 2400 is higher than that in British India. The Report regards this as high and would bring it down to Rs. 1800. The Report is in favour of the recommendation of the Committee that losses sustained in any one year should be allowed to be set off against profits in the next year. In spite of the recommendation of the Committee not to allow abatements from all incomes and allowances for wife and children the Report is decidedly inclined to support such abatements following the English practice. According to the Committee there is no reason for continuing the exemption of agricultural incomes from the income-tax. The Report however is disinclined to disturb a well-established exemption for the sake of a small revenue. The rates at present ruling in Mysore are much lower than those in British India and the State would prefer adopting the same rates as those in British India, not for increasing the revenue but for the sake of administrative convenience.

The Report does not recommend the immediate adoption of the Committee's recommendations about stamps, as in its opinion those matters ought to be appraised by the legal advisers of the Mysore State on account of their technical nature. Similarly the Report is not in favour of adopting the further increases in the rates of Court-fees suggested by the Indian Taxation Inquiry Committee without consulting expert opinion. With regard to Registration the Committee point out that all attempts to increase revenue by raising fees or by extending the class of documents liable to compulsory registration should be proceeded with very cautiously. The moral of this for Mysore is to let things alone and not to attempt an increase of revenue as there is already a considerable surplus from this source.

After this the Report discusses new or alternative taxes proposed by the Committee. But new taxation presupposes an enquiry into the incidence of the existing taxation. The land revenue in Mysore is derived mainly from the agriculturists with an income below the income-tax level. Nearly half the excise revenue falls upon the village poor classes and nearly a third falls upon the industrial classes. The income-tax is paid by the middle class and the rich and being the only important contribution these classes make to the resources of the State is justifiable. The agricultural classes contribute a considerable amount in stamp duty and in respect of fees the incidence is heavier on the poorer classes. The urban labourers including artisans contribute only to the excise revenue. The large landowner escapes scot-free as he pays only in court-fees, the land assessment sitting lightly on him on account of its being a flat rate. The small trader in town pays nothing but municipal taxes; but the big merchants contribute to income-tax very considerably. The professional classes with an income below the exemption level of income-tax escape only with municipal taxes; those

of the higher grade however contribute largely to the income tax. In Mysore the method of taxing commodities is not available, the customs tariff being appropriated by the Government of India. The report emphasizes in this connection that large contributions are made to the British Indian revenue by the people of the State, the estimate made by it being Rs. 85 to Rs. 90 lakhs. The Report dismisses the import and export duties, duty on petroleum, capitation tax, tax on domestic servants and a betting tax as unsuitable or as not feasible in Mysore. It recommends the following for local finance for the consideration of local bodies:—Entertainment tax, the pilgrim tax, duty on advertisements and a tax on companies. The Report sees no objection to a ground-rent on building land, especially factory site, although it believes that it would not add considerably to the resources of the State; it favours a tax on motor vehicles provided that tolls are abolished; it also regards succession duties as equitable although it is unable to furnish even a rough estimate of the yield from these duties. As a levy on poor-classes the Report regards a tax on tobacco as the most suitable and following the recommendation of the Committee proposes an excise duty on places of manufacture and a system of licensing sales. It should be noted that of the above taxes only the tax on tobacco and the tax on motor vehicles and succession duties are suggested by the Taxation Inquiry Committee, the rest are already imposed in British India but are new to Mysore State.

The Report devotes ample space to the interesting but neglected topic of local finance. The total expenditure of all municipalities is nearly R. 11 lakhs. A large percentage of this is taken up by administrative charges and they are increasing every year; very little is spent on education and sanitation. There is no adequate provision for poor relief. With regard to the sources of income of the municipalities the Committee recommend that in view of the inefficiency of the machinery of collection of the house-tax the control should be transferred to the Provincial Governments. The Committee strongly disapproves of Octroi duties and would as alternatives recommend a rate on property or a tax on professions, and a tax on sales. The Mysore Report regards the last as incapable of application without inquisitorial inspection. The total receipts of all the district boards come to nearly Rs. 23.5 lakhs; while the expenditure is nearly Rs. 28.3 lakhs. As new sources of revenue for the boards the Report suggests licensing fees in respect of offensive and dangerous trades and a cess on income-tax on the ground that the payers of income-tax make no contribution to local revenues. In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee that "the development of the future should be in the direction of restoring the influence of the Village Panchayat," the Mysore Government decided in 1926 to discontinue old Panchayats and constitute new ones with enlarged functions and powers. In the opinion of the Committee the funds of local bodies must be supplemented by subsidies from the Central Government. Already the State is making a grant of Rs. 6.3 lakhs to local bodies. The Report however regards it as desirable that definite rules should regulate such grants.

ALL-INDIA STATES' PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE.

AFTER nearly two years' efforts, the first meeting of the All-India States' People's Conference was held successfully in Bombay with Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao as President. Nearly six hundred delegates from 67 States situated in Rajputana, Central India, Cutch, Kathiawar, Southern Mahratta States and Hyderabad attended the meeting. And nearly 2000 spectators gathered to witness this demonstration of the feelings and sentiments of people interested in Indian India. The Chairman of the Reception Committee Mr. Govindlal Shrivastava, himself a resident of an Indian State, described very minutely the misrule and the absence of any civilised form of government existing in almost all the States. The internal condition of Indian States may be summed up under two heads: absence of representative institutions and absence of the rule of law. No form of popular government of any kind, from the lowest step of the ladder, namely village panchayat up to the highest step of representative institutions, exists in States as a general rule. There are few honourable exceptions. The same is the case so far as the rule of law is concerned. The chairman of the Reception Committee vividly painted the insecurity of person and property, the absence of freedom of speech, freedom of discussion and meeting, liberty of the Press, liberty of conscience. "Jabarjustism" is the order of the day. The subjects have no voice in the administration or in the collection of taxes or in their distribution. The government is irresponsible and the ruler believes that 'he is the State' just like Louis XIV, who thought that he had the Divine Right to misrule his subjects. Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, coming as he does from British India, dealt with the external position of the Indian States. His address was confined generally to the relations which subsist between British India and Indian States. He deprecated the policy of mutual isolation adopted by some British Indian statesmen towards this question. He correctly pointed out that there were many problems which were common to both, viz. Indian India and British India which require mutual co-operation. He happily stated, "it is obvious, however, that in our struggle for national emancipation and for the development of India as a whole into a self-governing world state, the people of British India and the Indian States have to act in concert till the goal is reached. He appreciates the strenuous efforts made by the subjects of Indian States to come into line with the national movement in British India for the attainment of Swaraj. The President very exhaustively stated the problem which bears on the relations of the States with British India. In the problem of defence there is an identity of interests and a common obligation for the defence of the motherland. The Indian State Forces ought to be trained in the same manner as the British Indian Army. The officers also require to be brought up in the same educational institutions like Sandhurst, and it is necessary that they should possess the same status and qualification in order that the State forces should be co-ordinated with the British Indian Army under a single General Command. The fiscal policy of the Government of India as also the taxation in British India are prejudicially affecting the Indian States. International obligations undertaken by the Government of India as in the case of the abolition of the export of opium from India, are causing serious detriment to the revenues of some Indian States. In all these matters of common concern policies pursued by the British Indian Government may cause injury to the Indian States. With a view to safeguard the interests of the Indian States relating to matters of joint concern it has become imperative to establish constitutional relations.

of an organic connection with the Indian States. The Indian States are sure to suffer by the very position of their subordinate alliance with the Government of India. But when the forces of self-determination and democracy are in full swing, it lies heavily upon those who are responsible for the administration in British India to find out a way by which they can protect the interests of 70 millions of people living in the States. The future constitution of India is bound to be shaped on the federal model. What place is to be assigned to the Indian States in this sisterhood of nations is an important question which deserves to be considered seriously, as pointed out by Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, both by the leaders of public opinion in British India and in Indian India. Mr. Ramachandra Rao exhorted the Indian Princes to make any sacrifices of their present power and position that may be necessary with a view to create a new federal constitution for the whole of India. The President exposed the hollowness of the new doctrine of direct relations which is being propounded by the Indian Princes with a view to sever their connection from the future Government responsible to the people. The remarks of Mr. Ramachandra Rao in this connection deserve to be carefully studied by the Indian Princes. "I do not see any reason why the Princes should hesitate to be constitutionally connected with a government responsible only to the Indian Legislature. The States will have a suitable representation in the federal legislature and federal executive which may come into existence. A federal executive and a federal legislature in the making of which the princes and the people of Indian States will have a voice would undoubtedly protect their rights very much better than a Government which is not responsible to them and than a Parliament in which they have no representation." Mr. Ramachandra Rao strongly emphasised the necessity of evolving a constitution containing provisions bearing on the vital aspects of this problem. He criticised the present personal rule existing in Indian States and advocated a form of government which may ensure the happiness and contentment of the people in the States. Self-governing institutions in British India and the continuance of unmitigated autocratic rule in the States are not reconcilable. He drew attention to the deplorable conditions in which even the elementary rights of citizenship are denied to the people in the States. He further on stated that the paramount power is responsible to safeguard the people from intolerable misrule and oppression and for giving them "voice in their administrations." He requested the Indian people to agitate for the appointment of a Royal Commission which will consider this larger problem of responsible government in the States and their relations towards British India and their place in the future constitution. The present expert Committee, the Dewan Bahadur holds, is quite unsatisfactory and defective in its scope. Finally, he appealed both to the Princes and the people in the States and to the leaders of public opinion in British India to endeavour to bring about a free, strong, united, self-governing and self-supporting India.

The resolutions which were passed at this Conference related to the creation of a permanent organisation for the Indian States' people, and an executive committee to give effect to the resolutions passed by the Conference and to keep up a sustained agitation with a view to bring about the objects of this conference by their own efforts and by co-operating with political organisations in the country. Responsible government under the aegis of the rulers through representative institutions is the declared aim and

object of this Conference. The Conference further urges that constitutional relations should be established with British India with a view to assign a definite place and an effective voice to the people of Indian States in all matters of common concern in the new constitution. The Conference has declared that it is the inherent right of the people of the Indian States to determine the form and character of their government and to bring about such changes therein as they may deem proper. The resolution pertaining to the expert Committee is of a negative character. We sincerely wish that it had been more constructive in its details. It is necessary to bear in mind one salient fact in considering the problems relating to Indian States. Mere sentimental objections or a mood of mind permeated by the spirit of non-cooperation would hardly be productive of tangible good. We have to take hard facts as they exist. There is the paramount power with all its superior strength and its domination. The Indian States, under the constitution, occupy the position of subordinate alliance. The people of Indian States own allegiance to the paramount power and to their rulers. Allegiance carries with it the corresponding obligations on the part of the suzerain power to give protection to those who owe allegiance to it. It is, therefore, the right of the Indian States' subjects to demand protection from misrule and maladministration from the paramount power. It is neither mendicancy nor want of self-respect. So long as the paramount power enjoys the sole monopoly of defence and the authority to maintain peace and order, it is absolutely necessary for the subjects of Indian States to approach the British Government for redress on the strength of undoubted allegiance. For otherwise, if there had not been this paramount power, it would have been perfectly legitimate for the subjects of Indian States to raise a standard of revolt and rebellion to root out oppression and misrule. Sir Thomas Munro distinctly observed: "The usual remedy of bad government in India is quiet revolution in the palace or a violent one by a rebellion. But the presence of British forces cuts off every chance of a remedy like this." Whenever, therefore, an appeal is made to the paramount power to intervene in the affairs of an Indian State it is by reason of the inherent rights of citizenship which the Indian States people enjoy under the paramount power. We, therefore, wish that this aspect of the question is rightly understood and correctly appreciated. It is necessary to make vigorous efforts to counteract the machinations of the Indian Princes if by their persuasion they induce the expert Committee to support the claim of autocracy by *ex parte* statements. It would be most suicidal on the part of the subjects of Indian States to allow judgment to go by default. The reluctance similarly to have organic connections established with British India is equally unwise and short-sighted.

On the whole the proceedings of the Conference mark an important stage in the progress of political evolution of the Indian States' subjects. Well begun is half done. The speeches of the two Chairmen and the whole proceedings have laid a strong foundation to carry on political propaganda on sound and correct lines. The enthusiasm displayed by the delegates and by the sympathisers of this movement by the promise of handsome contributions for carrying on this work of the Conference is indeed very encouraging. The appointment of the General Secretary of the Executive Committee and the Provincial Secretaries of the four important groups and the financial help promised to continue the work all the year round certainly augur well for the future and we hope and trust that the office-bearers of the Executive Committee assisted by the

general support of their sympathisers and strengthened by the willing co-operation of sincere workers in the various States will be able materially to advance the cause of the submerged 70 millions of subjects living in abject degradation under autocratic rule in Indian States.

G. R. ABHYANKAR.

THE PROBLEM OF DISARMAMENT.

GENEVA, NOVEMBER 30.

WHEN at the fag end of the session of the eighth Assembly in September a working basis was at long last discovered by the Disarmament Committee, due principally to the initiative of the French delegation, it was not taken too seriously. That the whole problem of approaching the disarmament question had yet to be faced was the impression which the delegates, for the larger part, took away with them. "We were before a wall, now we are before a window," was the picturesque way in which the French delegate characterised the glimpse of the solution which was the agreement arrived at by the Committee, and public opinion attributed to it no more importance than was warranted by the vague literary terms in which that agreement had to be referred, to make it convincing. Within two months all this has changed, and if one may judge from the reactions to the Preparatory Disarmament Conference which is meeting here to-day (at a time when political currents are apt to take swift and uncalculable turns) it becomes evident that disarmament has forced itself on the practical programme of diplomats. At no time is this question likely to prove separable from its political bearings, and it is very probable, as M. de Brouckère of the Belgian delegation suggested during the last Assembly, that the League will find it necessary to maintain a permanent Disarmament Committee doing police duty. But, at the moment, disarmament has a special political significance which explains the prominence given to it by the principal Powers. The fact that the British Government have suspended the construction of two cruisers already sanctioned and their admission of the long-standing French thesis that disarmament must take into account the potential industrial and military strength of the States (which they had formerly opposed) should be proof of the direct practical importance of the question. The British have a sixth sense for politics and if a theme catch their initiative it is because it has an immediate effect.

THE DETERMINING CAUSES.

The causes which determine this change may at first sight appear to be the participation, in the Conference which starts to-day, of Soviet Russia and the United States of America, two of the most considerable non-members of the League, without whose co-operation any work in this matter would be largely incomplete. This circumstance should be happy, and, generally speaking, it is interpreted in the League circles as a happy augury of future results. But such transparent sincerity is to be rarely looked for in international matters where between nominal and real causes there is usually a big and ugly gulf. If we turn away from Geneva and look at the capitals of

the Powers whose representatives are now here, the real causes manifest themselves. In Great Britain Lord Cecil's statements as well as the utterances of Messrs. Lloyd George and MacDonald have made it quite clear that, notwithstanding the apathy on the part of the Conservatives as regards this question, they should show some sympathy for the sake of the overwhelming force of the criticism they have to face. Besides, so strong have been the effects of the failure of the Three-Power Conference in America, and so intensely have they reacted on Anglo-American relations that the British Government have been constrained to make conciliatory gestures. Taking into consideration the policy of economy to which the Coolidge administration is wedded and the "Big Navy" theme it has to face on account of the British position at Geneva, it should not be surprising if diplomatic pressure from Washington has been at work. There is also a rumour that the President as well as the Senate (the controlling power in matters of foreign policy) have in view the inauguration of a series of arbitration treaties "renouncing war as an instrument of public policy" and aiming at enabling the United States "to resume the position of emphatic leadership in all that promotes international peace and understanding." The Continent of Europe, specially France, is most eager to bring about that arrangement. Considering the resources of the United States and the general unpopularity of Great Britain (which Sir Austen Chamberlain recently acknowledged), it is to the latter's interests to abandon the unbending attitude which has recently characterised British diplomacy and to manifest greater willingness in international co-operation. The British attitude may also be explained by the fact that in the forthcoming conference France is likely to assume the British rôle. In the last Assembly, it will be recollected that the French and German theses regarding disarmament were opposed, for while France made it conditional on security, Herr Stresemann openly denounced that attitude. The prevailing feeling in France (which is general and marked) is that Germany has skilfully engineered the Soviet participation in the Conference with a view to obtaining support for her thesis, and consequently the first business of the French at Geneva is to be on the defensive. In Great Britain opinion is sharply divided on the prospect of a reconciliation between the Soviets and British representatives at Geneva at the initiative of the German Foreign Minister; while in Germany, it is needless to emphasize, the principal objective is to make her position as between Locarno and her natural allies more easy, and to obtain greater freedom in increasing her armaments if general disarmament prove difficult. Public opinion in Germany cannot tolerate any longer the present state of inequality. To add to all this, the Soviets have not been too careful of their statements, as usual, about their mission to Geneva and have broadcast wild and alarming things. Viewed in the light of all this it would seem almost as if the League had better leave disarmament alone for a while and go on a holiday for a year or so, lest irony should overtake its efforts

THE LEAGUE'S OBLIGATION.

That the League cannot do if only because by article 8 of the Covenant it takes upon itself the obligation of bringing about general disarmament as a preliminary to peace. The last Assembly revealed the strength of feeling which exists on this question among the member States. The prestige of the League beyond a doubt depends on this achievement and the peculiar organisation of the League makes prestige its mainstay. It is becoming customary in certain quarters to interpret the Covenant so as to imply that the League's business is only to spring into activity at the moment of danger somewhat like a fire brigade. This interpretation would make the League a busybody for adopting a restrictive attitude towards sovereign States in peace time. The convenience of this doctrine is apparent, but it could hardly be convincing when, on account of the forcible disarmament of spirited peoples, underground organisations have sprung up vitiating the entire politics of Europe, and marks set to communities in the flush of victory are bursting on every side. The Treaty of Versailles is dead and Europe is crying out for its revision. Success for the League in the disarmament issue means that there is some chance of effecting this revision from Geneva by other than warlike means, while failure here amounts to winding up of 'the establishment for peace' over here. The League has no occult virtues and history has a record of its predecessors having come to nought because the perversity of human will proved too much for reason. If the competition in armaments, secret and open, were to continue unchecked, the League's doom is set. Neither the letter nor the spirit of the Covenant, therefore, would bear any other interpretation than the League's obligation to decide this issue. The League must stake its existence on it if need be, and the proof of this is the position disarmament assumed in September and in November.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PROBLEM.

With the best will in the world, the Powers would find disarmament the most difficult problem. With reluctance it cannot be solved at all. The initial difficulty is the lack of a common method of computing military strength and expenditure. The passage at arms recently between Mr. Lloyd George and the British War Office illustrates the first of these considerations. Figures cannot be facts if incomplete. The effective fighting strength of a country cannot obviously be exhausted by its standing army (or navy or air force) and as regards expenditure, besides the difference in currency, the value of money needs to be considered. Among the conclusions generally agreed upon due to the League's work already in this domain are: 1. the interdependence of disarmament, security, and arbitration; 2. the necessity to go into the potential capacity of the country for industrial mobilisation in estimating its armed strength; 3. the necessity of adapting a common model military budget to facilitate comparison; and 4. the advisability of withholding restrictions over the construction of civil aeroplanes with a view

to converting them for military purposes. But quite a number of problems still remain to be solved before the Disarmament Commission can be said to have transcended its preparatory stage and started its work in earnest and among these are: 1. the standard of measurement of naval armaments, tonnage or size or category, 2. the significance of 'trained reserves' 3. the limitation of air effectives, 4. of budgets, 5. of naval reserves, 6. the enumeration of the implements of war in service and in reserve, 7. annual statements as to the total number of civil aeroplanes and dirigibles, 8. the designs of fire weapons, and 9. the nature of fire-arms from the point of view of facility of production. The great amount of complexity involved in this question needs hardly even to be indicated, for if reliable and complete disarmament is possible, the States need not arm at all. The tradition of State sovereignty must be a perpetual obstacle not only against obtaining reliable particulars but also in determining the standards of authorised defence forces. Very little consideration is enough to show that if the League can grapple successfully with this problem its substantiality is assured, while if it fail the opposite must also be said. While the circumstances under which the present Conference meets have, therefore, the advantage of rendering the issue real, due to considerations which alone have a chance of influencing the natural inertia of chancelleries, they also contain the menace of precipitating deep-seated animosities, prejudices and reserves, and confounding further the complex political situation in Europe at the beginning of the second decade after the greatest war in history.

P.S. As this letter goes to the mail it is possible to say that the Soviets have justified the anticipations about them and have submitted a thesis for disarmament, which, among many other equally radical things, urges the immediate abolition of the Ministries of War, of Air, and of Marines in every country!

OUR EUROPEAN LETTER.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Geneva, November 30.

INDIA IN PARLIAMENT.

THOSE in India who have been taught to look up to the Labour Party with excessive confidence must have suffered a delusion reading through the minutes of the debates in the Houses of Parliament last week. The unanimity achieved in the House of Commons as regards the Commission (which enabled the *Times* to have a triumphant leader on "An Issue above Party") was in striking contrast with the tumultuous discussion in other matters. It was a week in which Labour had so manifested its spirit that observers abroad rubbed their eyes to look a little closer at what was happening at Westminster. Not even in the matter of foreign policy, a subject whose treatment in the House has immediate and serious repercussions at Geneva, could Labour be persuaded to be a little less outspoken, notwithstanding tangible concessions. But where India was in question Lord Birkenhead had just to go over to the other side to Mr. MacDonald, whisper something into his ear, and all was arranged. Besides showing who was the better politician as between the Secretary of State for India and the ex-Premier, the debate definitely proved that

where Imperial interests were the consideration, British politicians, no matter to which Party they owed allegiance, might be trusted to close up their ranks, and to present a united front. Considering that India directly touches a class of people whom Labour finds most difficult to conciliate, it is no doubt a tactical move on the part of the Labour leader. Not that all those in the Labour Party are behind Mr. MacDonald in this and such other questions—this was proved even last week—but as long as Mr. MacDonald leads Labour, it is not wise to reckon upon Labour to assert itself on behalf of India. And as long as Mr. MacDonald is there, under ordinary circumstances, no one in the Party can touch his position. Nothing short of a determined and united front in India can create an impression in England. If that will be effected, even the Conservatives may be trusted to respond, for, lack as they may lofty idealism, they are endowed with wonderful sensitiveness to realities and admirable reflexes. Without this condition in India Labour can do nothing as its right wing will have to be conciliatory to vested interests and the left will heed to no argument for Indian Home Rule other than the argument of thereby achieving Labour Rule in India.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

But we may not close our eyes to our responsibility, however indirect, in what happened when the *personnel* of the Commission came before the Commons. If the argument that no Indians were chosen because in the existing state of communal tension no choice can be satisfactory went home as readily as it did, we have to blame ourselves for it. The continued gravity of the communal conflict which every cable from India has been emphasizing for months past is not calculated to make up the mind of the ordinary European in a matter where advanced thinking marks him out for reproach. Besides, all Indians ought seriously to exercise their imagination and see for themselves the probable effects of a double failure of the combined intelligence of a country, reputed for its wisdom, in settling the question of cow-killing and music before mosques, on a war-weary populace grappling with realities. It is possible to prove the existence of similar trivialities in the European complex, for human nature is much the same everywhere, but such dialectics can yield us only metaphysical satisfaction. The powerful, influential, and effective part of the world of whose understanding we stand in need today, whether due to a benevolent or malevolent destiny, is the part, judged by whose standards our blemishes are crimes. We may not swear by its political ideals and swear at its social conceptions. The emancipation from crippling and confining social practices is as much (and judging from the point of view of the foreigner much more) a proof of genuine nationalism than a reversal to the spirit of the past. No reversal can be good in itself, and if Santiniketan and Sabarmati inspire respect in a foreign visitor, it is because, besides other things, they awake in him the suggestion that India may move forward under her own inspiration. Unless we can make that answer more and more convincingly to the extraordinary interest in India now shown in Western lands, its outcome will be largely against us. In our time it is not enough to point to India's past as in the last century of the romantic movement. "Mother India" still reigns and those who are out to discover the truth about India for themselves, even on account of that one book, are many. In an international centre such as this where official and extra-official gatherings are many, an Indian soon finds out the amount of attention he draws to himself as the representative of his country.

AT GENEVA

Geneva in the coming few weeks is likely to pro-

mise lively news to the rest of Europe. It is all a case of troubles and crises and if there is one silver lining to the cloud it consists in the fact that Geneva has become the storm centre as it should. Besides disarmament, in which domain the Soviets are expected to practise anarchy by throwing in some impossible radical proposal, the other delicate situation which Geneva anticipates is the possible consequence of Sir Austen Chamberlain being here at the same time as a Soviet delegation. Herr Stresemann's presence makes for the drawing nucleus and it is difficult to see to what exactly is the British objection addressed seeing that Mr. Baldwin in his Guildhall speech and Comrade Stalin in a recent speech have avowed the intentions of England and Russia to come together. The influence that Germany may acquire by being the third party is probably the cause of dissatisfaction; if so it is futile because the natural conditions make Germany the determining factor in an Eastern Locomo as they make England in the Western. The Economic and Financial Committees, which have begun their meetings, are somewhat inconspicuous but important events. A conspicuous as well as important task awaits the Council of the League when it meets here next week. This time it is believed the League will have difficulty in delaying or side-stepping the issues before it. The Polish-Lithuanian dispute is by far the most important of these on account of its recent manifestations which cannot be treated as the periodical symptoms of the anticipation of a Council meeting at Geneva because Germany has associated with Russia in warning Poland. It has required all the influence of French diplomacy and M. Briand's tact to exercise restraint in the Baltic area. The death of the strong man of Roumania, M. Jean Bratianu, has added to the instability in the same zone and has by no means solved the Roumanian-Hungarian dispute which comes before the Council again. In the Balkans Italy's new treaty with Albania is a menace and Yugo-Slavia is looking for an opportunity to raise the question of its incompatibility with the Covenant of the League. A merry Christmas!

REVIEWS.

INDIAN BANKING.

ORGANISATION OF INDIAN BANKING.

By B. T. THAKUR. (Lalchand and Sons, Calcutta.) 1927. 8¾ × 5½. pp. 469. Rs. 15.

MR. THAKUR'S excellent book on the "Organisation of Indian Banking" is published at an opportune time when the question of the establishment of a Reserve Bank and of introducing banking legislation in India is being discussed throughout the country. His work is particularly valuable as the advantage of being a responsible officer in one of the foremost Indian banks invests his opinions with a peculiar authority arising from deep inside knowledge of the work of a bank coupled with unbounded national enthusiasm. His severe strictures on the attitude of the Imperial Bank towards national interests and its disabilities in being transformed into the Reserve Bank and the strong case made out for a share capital Reserve Bank are extremely interesting and useful at the present juncture. It does not, however, seem advisable to follow his plan of organising only one Indian Exchange Bank to finance all the foreign trade and of converting the Imperial Bank to fit into that place.

He has detailed the present handicaps of Indian banks and elaborates a system of banking law for Government control of banking in India. It mostly follows the U. S. A. Federal Reserve basis, though he is opposed to the ban on branch banking that prevails in U. S. A. He has made unexceptionable suggestions regarding the abolition of Government treasuries and the utilisation of Government funds and postal savings deposits in order to encourage trade and industries and regarding the manner of payment of Government revenue so as to encourage the banking habit in the country. It would be most useful to adopt the improvements he suggests in the Postal Savings Department and in liberalising the policy of Government towards the establishment of agricultural and industrial banks. There are however certain suggestions which cannot be readily appreciated, such for instance as the Safety Fund scheme involving the earmarking of 5 per cent. of each bank's annual net income for a national purpose, the practice of examining every considerable borrower's financial position by the bank's nominee; he is disposed to impose unduly stringent restrictions on foreign banks, which is of course out of the question from more than one point of view. I have also my fears that Municipal and Local Board banks apart from their lack of business knowledge are apt to be a handicap to incipient Indian banks.

There are several novel features in "Banking Organisation" that he desires to introduce, such as two classes of Directors, (a) ordinary, representing shareholders, (b) special, representing depositors; the introduction of postal voting; bank acceptances or bills on behalf of clients; Trust business; Syndicate operations, and so on. His thorough knowledge of banking practice is evident in many of the technical questions which he discusses in a most lucid style.

C. GOPAL MENON.

INDIA'S SAINTS.

TEACHERS OF INDIA. By C. A. KINCAID. (Oxford University Press.) 1927. pp. 120. 7½ × 5. Re. 1-8.

THIS is the last book that Mr. Kincaid has published in India and contains very interesting lives of India's saints. Mr. Kincaid rightly suggests that the saints of India, although living strictly religious lives, played, unknown to themselves, a leading part in the history of their country. Those who have read Justice Ranade's "Rise of the Mahratta Power", are familiar with this view. There Ranade also suggests that the saints and the prophets of Maharashtra were chiefly responsible for the Mahratta Empire. Whatever may be the truth in this view, one thing is certain that the Indian saints and sages, who lived isolated lives, had nevertheless an enduring influence upon the political life of the country. Of course we do not find all this in Mr. Kincaid's simple stories. He does not concern himself with showing how one of these saints or all of these saints, whose lives he has portrayed with zeal and interest which we do not find in an ordinary civilian, played their part in the making of its political history, and yet the lives that he has given us are all of full interest even for those who are politicians first and anything else afterwards.

There is another characteristic of the writings of Mr. Kincaid. He does not write with a mind poisoned with preconceived notions, nor does he make the slightest attempt to show that the lives of the Hindu saints were in any way inferior to those of Christian saints. I am not sure how far Mr. Kincaid is interested in the propagation of his national faith. As a civilian he was not expected to interest himself in any faith, national or foreign. His official indifference to the Christian faith has perhaps made him a better judge of the Indian saints than any other man who is interested in Christian propaganda.

Mr. Kincaid begins with the life of that great saint, Jnaneshwar, the founder of Marathi. The so-called miracles which are said to have happened in his life are not omitted but related with the simple faith of a child, although I do not think that the author believes in them. Jnaneshwar's conversion to Brahmic rights has also been told with characteristic candour. Then follow the lives of Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram, Ramdas, Mahipati, Kabir, Nanak and other religious teachers of the Sikh religion, Mirabai, Narsinha Mehta together with the lives of two modern religious teachers, viz. Kesava Chunder Sen, the third great leader of the Brahma Samaj and Swami Dayanand Saraswati. All these lives are portrayed with the same impartiality, and Mr. Kincaid has laid India under a deep obligation by making its rich spiritual treasures accessible to the people outside. These efforts, although avowedly non-political, are sure to result in some political good. When people in the west will at their leisure turn their attention from the affairs of their lives to these pages written by one of them, they will realise that a country like India, although painted as black as possible by busybodies like Miss Mayo, cannot after all be degraded when it could produce such a brilliant galaxy of saints and martyrs who made religion the sole reality of their life and achieved salvation for themselves as well as for their country through an intense and living faith in God. Modern India, being blinded by the glamour of western civilisation, seems to be losing this sense of God which made her and her saints great in the past. This only seems to me a temporary period of unrest and transition when old ideas are found wanting and are being replaced with new. Ultimately a time will come when India will again shine in all her glory with her faith in God hallowed by age-long traditions and sanctified by the lives of the saints. Mr. Kincaid could not have chosen a better subject for these very interesting articles than the lives of the saints of India. I have very great pleasure in recommending this book to every thoughtful reader.

G. Y. CHITNIS

CEYLON.

CEYLON: THE LAND OF ETERNAL CHARM.
By ALI FOUAD TOULBA. (Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., London.) 1926. 9¼ × 6¼. pp. 348.

MR. ALI FOUAD TOULBA is lost in ecstasy in his description of the Island. Everything he sees in the Island seems to fill him with wondrous rapture and delight. The natural beauty, the landscape, the flora, the fauna, the avifauna, the delicious fruits, the roads, the hotels—all seem to fill the heart of our author with intense joy. He finds the people of Ceylon a family—the Sinhalese, Tamils, Burghers, Britishers and Moors a most kind and hospitable people. It is the social life of the people which he finds most attractive; whether he is at the Kandy Perhera or the Hindu Veil Festival or the August Races or the Queen's House Ball, he finds himself at home in any company.

Religion has been the factor which has always welded and made the great nations of the world. Our author with all his religious fervour seems to forget this fact. The whole life of the people of Lanka was bound up with her religion, Buddhism, and that of the purest type and her ancient monuments and temples testify to this fact. The ruins of Anuradhapura, Kandy and Polonnaruwa, which our writer most cursorily mentions, are rather religious than social. The ruins of Ceylon are in many ways unlike the ruins of our author's Homeland—Egypt—for they lack that individuality, and that human touch which the ruins of Ceylon possess. People may assert that there is a danger in taking any speculative interest in ancient ruins, but when such interest is based on aesthetic experience, they possess that rare individuality which leads one to gauge the spiritual life of the people. This is a point which our author misses in his survey.

The author's patriotism and his zeal for the cause of his homeland are very striking. His desire for full independence and not merely self-government for his country is quite worthy of a loyal son. He is a member of the Nationalist Party, whose tenets, origins and causes are very ably set forth by George Young in that most impartial book entitled *Egypt*. Mr. Ali Bey is not quite a stranger to the Island, for Ceylon was the land of his birth. That sojourn was indeed sad to him and to all his people. Our author was the son of Toulba Pasha, one of the seven Pashas exiled during the last decade of the last century, due to troubles in Egypt. Ali Bey has not been unobservant during his short visit to the Island in the latter part of 1921 and the charm of the first impressions have been to him a living reality. The attraction for the "common objects" of the Island our author records in language so penetrating and so illuminating that even a casual reader of the book will be seized with the desire to visit Lanka. The description of places, towns, buildings, and mountain scenery are very true to life. They are given in vivid and succinct language; he is in no way given to hyperbolic language, just because he is fascinated by all he sees. He writes as if he were one of the soil. When Cave brought out his *magnum opus*—"The Book of Ceylon" and later when Mitton wrote the "Lost Cities of Ceylon", they were both severely criticised as not facing facts and being inaccurate in their statements, thus wounding the feelings of the people of the land, but that cannot be said of Mr. Ali Bey's book. The criticisms he offers are nearly all constructive and he has said many things to make Ceylon a happier land.

On page 96 he writes on the general use of the word Native. He feels about the word as any Oriental would feel. He refers to how all peoples east of the Suez are slightly designated by this uncanny and ugly expression. It is the birth-right and heritage of each individual to be called by the nation to which he belongs. A native of England is English; of France French; of America American; but a native of India a Native, of Ceylon a Native, be he of whatever station in life. The Westerner must learn to rise to a newer and nobler spirit and give up these shibboleths. "The West should endeavour to be as courteous to the East as the East is habitually to the West". Again he says: "A man is a man, and a gentleman a gentleman for what he is worth, and how he comports himself. Neither the white skin nor the colour of the Occident is a hallmark of excellence and superiority."

There are many things the author tells us about the Island. He tells us about the Ceylon police—Mr. H. L. Dowbiggin's little army and the great work it does. The Ceylon police is the pride of the Island and it is not too much to say that it will

compare very well with the police in any land. The charm and fascination of Kandy he narrates in Chap. XV—the most beautiful spot, as he says, in the whole world. The Peradeniya gardens and the Kandy lake have a place in his heart. He pays a glowing tribute to the Rev. A. G. Fraser. The Scotland of Ceylon—Nuwara Eliya—he does not forget. It is a great delight to find that the author does not Anglicise words as many visitors do. It is most irritating to find people doing so. The book has nearly a hundred beautiful and well-chosen illustrations.

The book would serve as a *vade mecum* to many a visitor to the Island, but its usefulness will be only for a few years to come. The book is too full of personal reminiscences to be of any permanent use. Cave's "Book of Ceylon" will continue to be the *vade mecum* yet to visitors to the Island. Nevertheless this book must find a place in any library as a book on travel.

Our author's object is to tell the readers of the great charm of the Island; he wants people to visit her shores and learn the truth of what he narrates. "Go thither yourself", he says, "and let Ceylon but once come your way and ever will you be thankful. It is not only Europe with her untold treasures and manifold attractions that can to you be a lodestone, but here in the 'Pearl of the Eastern Seas', the Serendib of Sindbad, the brightest gem in Britain's Diadem, will you find a land most wondrous to behold, most exquisite in its charm."

P. E. WICKREMESINGHE.

THE ABSOLUTE AT LARGE.

THE ABSOLUTE AT LARGE. By KAREL CAPEK
(Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London) 1927. 7½ × 5.
pp. 293. 7s. 6d.

IT is an exciting problem that this young Czech writer moots at the beginning of this book: "What would happen if God or the Absolute imprisoned in matter were suddenly let loose on the world?" Marek, the Czecho-Slovakian engineer, invents a machine "the Karburator" which provides for the complete utilization of atomic energy. By breaking up the atom it releases boundless power, so that with half a hundredweight of coal one can sail right round the world in a steamship; and ultimately even a pebble or a handful of dirt can take the place of coal. Along with this illimitable physical energy the Karburator radiates the spirit of God as a by-product. This machine is launched on the industrial world, and what is the result? Yoked to agriculture it multiplies corn a myriadfold; harnessed to a boot-factory it piles up mountains of boots. The mints overflow, and currency notes are far too many to paper the walls of entire cities; the world's system of banking and commerce bursts like a bubble. On the spiritual side of the bargain, the subtle Divine emanation from the Karburator turns grasping, hawk-eyed business-men into saints, martyrs, clairvoyants, and prophets.

So far we can follow the writer with avid interest but not further when he wrenches the chain of sequences for the purpose of his satire. The present industrial civilization is thrown into chaos and the nations plunge into the Greatest War of all history. Only thirteen men survive, who, instead of finishing each other, wisely resolve to give up this "rum game" of fighting. The logical evolution of events following from Capek's premises would take us not, as he pictures, to the Armageddon but to the world-utopia. This warping of logic for purposes of satire and the general looseness of structure detract from our interest in the second half of the book. The resemblance that we first see between this book and

the so-called "scientific romances" of H. G. Wells, we later on discern to be superficial, for it lacks not only the close plausibility of Wells' romances but also the scientific atmosphere with which Wells contrives to envelop them. The initial idea itself, namely that of a machine liberating spiritual power, may appear somewhat odd; but philosophy has no business to poke its saturnine nose into the realm of droll fancy.

The book is not merely a huge satire—it is a powerful urge towards the spirit; and the world will do well to listen to this voice from the Czech Patmos.

R. SADASIYA AIYAR.

SHORT NOTICES.

THE RACIAL BASIS OF CIVILISATION. By FRANK H. HENKINS. (Alfred A. Knoff, New York and London.) 1926. 14 s.

I MUST confess at once to having enjoyed this book. The author is an American and Professor of Sociology in Smith College and has taken "A Critique of the Nordic Doctrine" as a sub-title to his work. It is self-explanatory and the vein of combativeness necessary for its character contributes not a little to making it delightful. But that is not its main fascination. The problem of colour is in the agenda of current controversies and the literature on the subject is so much overflowed that one cannot help feeling thankful to Professor Henkins for stating with some precision the position of science. The western world today is passing through a particularly queer time. Almost every movement tends to become religious. The League of Nations is religion, anthropology is religion and so are the *Morning Post*, Fascism, Socialism, raw vegetables, sun baths, and cremation. It is hardly necessary to say that the term 'emotional' may well be substituted for 'religions' in this context. Even science is succumbing to it and the fierce rivalries among scholars are comparable to priestly jealousies. Just as with us almost any generalisation has come to be called metaphysical, so too, over here, almost any theory borrows the plumage of science. The peculiar theory which the author sets himself to demolish is the occult superiority of the Nordic race. His hammer strikes well and true and the fact that he has to bring under it the "Anglo-Israelites," the famous English Chamberlain of Germany, and no less a man than the psychologist McDougall shows something of the range of obsession of this doctrine. Fantastic as it may seem, this semi-theological, semi-anthropological creed of Anglo-Saxon eminence becomes dangerous when we contemplate the reaction to another creed strictly analogous to it, the German *Kultur*. Professor Henkins's conclusion seems to be: "There may be something in it, we know mighty little what that something is, and what is certain is that all your claims are utterly pretentious." In how many other similar fields may not science declare similarly if scientists were only true! Indian readers of this book may profit doubly by its perusal, first, in being enabled thereby to hold their own rationally before the new idol which would have them fall at its feet, and, secondly, by being enabled to demolish another idol which has managed to exact their worship, the caste system. The book is divided into two parts, one critical and the other constructive. So extensive, frank, and many-sided are the discussions in it that it would be quite misleading to summarise their conclusions in any simple formulas. That by itself is one at least of the signs of its value and should recommend it to all who are interested in the subject.

RAGHUNATH RAO.

ANCIENT INDIAN TRIBES. By B. C. LAW. (The Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, Lahore.) 1926. 8¾ × 5½. pp. 191.

THIS book is No. 12 of the Punjab Oriental Series. The learned author has dealt in this volume with five of the ancient Indian tribes, namely the Kashis, the Kosalas, the Asvakas, the Magadhas and the Bhojas, the Kosalas and Magadhas occupying more than half the space. The history of these tribes or countries, so frequently mentioned in Brahmanical and Buddhist works, has been treated rather exhaustively, though the impression is somewhat of disjointed and sketchy essays. The vast material brought together from the Buddhist sacred books, and Jatakas, Puranas and literature does credit to the learning of the author and we hope it will serve the purpose of a reference book to scholars. We wish, however, that a more systematic and chronological treatment were given to the subject so as to make it more interesting to the general reader. The printing and get-up leave much to be desired.

ORIENTALIST.

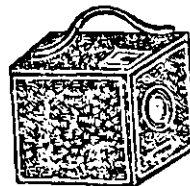
BOOKS RECEIVED.

- THE STATESMAN.** By HENRY TAYLOR. (W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., Cambridge.) 1927. 8½ × 5½. pp. 191. 7s. 6d.
- EAST AFRICA, A NEW DOMINION.** By A. G. CHURCH (H. F. & G. Witherby, London.) 1927. 9 × 5½. pp. 315. 18s.
- SAN MIN CHU I: THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE.** By DR. SUN-YET-SEN. (China Committee, Institute of Pacific Relations, Shanghai.) 1927. 9 × 5½. pp. 514. \$4.
- CIVIL LIBERTY.** By ED TH M. PHELPS. (The H. W. Wilson Company, New York.) 1927. 8 × 5½. pp. 194. 90 cents.
- THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE LEAGUE.** By VARIOUS AUTHORS. (Europa Publishing Co., London.) 1927. 9½ × 5½. pp. 235. 12s. 6d.
- WHAT'S RIGHT WITH CHINA.** By O. D. RASMUSSEN. (The Commercial Press, Ltd., Shanghai.) 1927. 8½ × 5½. pp. 255. \$3.50.
- STUDIES IN BROWN HUMANITY BEING SCRAWLS AND SMUDGES IN SEPIA, WHITE AND YELLOW.** By HUGH CLIFFORD. (The Richards Press, Ltd., London.) 1927. 8 × 5½. pp. 264. 7s. 6d.
- INDUSTRIAL CO-PARTNERSHIP.** By CHARLES CARPENTER. (Labour Co-partnership Association, London.) 1927. 8½ × 5½. pp. 115. 2s.

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