

THE Servant of India

Editor : S. G. VARE.—Office : Servants of India Society's Home, Poona 4.

VOL. XII, No. 10. }

POONA—THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1929,

{ INDIAN SUBSN. Rs. 6.
FOREIGN 15 s.

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

WE cannot congratulate Government on their arrest of Mahatma Gandhi. If their object were to discourage the boycott of foreign cloth, they could not have hit upon more effective means of defeating it. For when the people know that the Government are touchy on this point, there will be a general tendency to strengthen the movement, efforts to popularise which have brought on the Mahatma the Government's displeasure. The action against him is taken apparently with a view to stopping a public nuisance, for the bonfire of foreign cloth which was to be inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi would, it was feared by the Calcutta police, be a danger to adjoining houses. Mahatma Gandhi and the other responsible persons who were organising the bonfire must be credited with the sense to see that the fire was not allowed to spread to neighbouring residences. All things considered, we think the Government is very ill-advised in launching upon this prosecution.

THE question of an inquiry into the recent disturbances in Bombay City was raised in the Bombay Legislative Council over an adjournment motion. The demand for inquiry was pressed by all sections of non-official opinion in the Council but was resisted by Government. The adjournment was however carried by 60 votes to 31, which must be regarded as a vote of censure against the Government. While the Council wanted an inquiry by an impartial non-official committee, the Home Member offered the alternative of a full report. But an official report, how-

ever full and complete, can never inspire the same public confidence that the findings of an impartial non-official committee would do. The fact that such an official report took the place of a non-official inquiry in the case of the rioting at Calcutta of over a year ago did not naturally weigh with the Council, for the circumstances in the two cases are far from being identical. Indeed the disturbances in Bombay were of a peculiar sort and merit an inquiry as desired by the Council. It is of course no use denying the force of the contention that if the inquiry is taken in hand immediately and is held in public as it must be, it will, in stead of easing the present communal tension, aggravate it. But the remedy is, not to abandon it altogether as the Home Member wanted the Council to do, but to hold it when it can be safely held. In this connection it is necessary to remember that in opening the current session of the Council the Governor made it clear that the Government had no intention of standing in the way of an inquiry if one was desired by responsible opinion. The Council, than whom it would be difficult to find a more responsible exponent of public opinion, has expressed itself in no uncertain terms in favour of an inquiry; and though the Council's wishes as expressed in resolutions passed by it are in the nature of recommendations, it would be highly impolitic on Government's part to ignore them in such an important matter. But whatever the Government's attitude, the Council has faithfully represented public opinion in this matter.

THE Excise Administration report of Bengal for 1927-28 shows the wide gulf that yawns between public sentiment and Government's policy. Quite a number of local bodies asked for the introduction of complete prohibition within their limits; but the Government refused to listen to the demand on the ground of prohibition not yet being their declared goal. Even supposing the Government had declared prohibition as its ultimate aim, it is doubtful if they would have shown greater respect to the demand. Madras and Bombay have set prohibition before them as the ideal to be gradually worked up to, but cannot be said to be any nearer to prohibition for that reason. All that an official declaration in favour of prohibition would have done is to put Government to the necessity of searching for some other excuse for turning down the demand. For we find from the

report that though licensing boards and excise advisory committees made eminently reasonable suggestions with regard to the location and number of liquor shops, all of them were not sympathetically considered; indeed the official tendency has always been to carry as few of them into effect as possible. The net excise revenue is almost stationary during the last five years, being in the neighbourhood of Rs. 2 crores. The revenue from country spirits showed a decrease of nearly Rs. 3 lakhs and was Rs. 87½ lakhs in 1927-28, the consumption amounting to 591,935 gallons as against 627,962 in the preceding year. The consumption of foreign spirits and wines show no violent fluctuations, being about 231,000 and 38,000 gallons respectively in the year under report. But that of beers is increasing to a fearful extent and has gone up by as much as 250 per cent. in the last five years. It was 223,000 gallons in 1923-24 and 541,567 gallons in 1927-28. It may be noted in passing however that the above figures do not quite accurately show the actual extent of the consumption of foreign liquor, as, we are told, private consumers import their requirements from foreign countries which are not included in these figures. The statistics in the Report show that the Noakhali district is the most temperate. It has the smallest number of country liquor shops, viz. 4, and the incidence of consumption for every 100 persons is also the lowest viz. $\frac{1}{8}$ of a gallon as against nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ in Damoh (in C. P.) where prohibition is already at work. Noakhali town has a satisfactory record as regards drunkenness and during the last three years not a single case has been instituted for that offence. Nor has there been any prosecution in the whole district for the illicit manufacture, possession or sale of liquor, both country and foreign. With a Government which had really set its heart upon prohibition this would have been the first district selected for the trial of the experiment. We do hope Bengal will come into line with national sentiment by declaring for prohibition before long.

* * *

IN a lecture delivered under the auspices of the Indian Economic Association at Madras Sir J. C. Coyaji dwelt upon some of the difficulties of Indian banks and showed how we could benefit by the experience of banking in other countries. He first referred to the difficulty of establishing a contact between joint stock banks and the native banks and traders; and he suggested the formation of associations of the latter in order to develop the right type of a bill of exchange, so as to induce the banks to rediscount it. For insuring the success of the Indian joint stock banks he thinks it is necessary to train up a class of specialized bankers. Prof. Coyaji does not approve of the idea of the Reserve Bank being made a State Bank; because the banking history of other countries shows that such a bank has rarely been the originator of an efficient system of commercial banking. Another reason is that the presence of politicians in such a bank would expose its policy to the influences of political controversies and he cites the example of the United States as a warning against a State Bank in India. As against critics who regard a Reserve Bank as superfluous he holds that a real money market cannot be developed without a Central Bank ready to rediscount commercial bills at any time; in addition it can rediscount bills drawn for financing agricultural operations and thus

render immense help in the business of marketing crops. Prof. Coyaji does not believe that time is ripe for the establishment of Industrial Banks and Exchange Banks. But we should like to ask why the State in India should not run a few Industrial Banks of its own if it is really anxious to assist industry. Mr. Layton, who was chairman, did not say anything about the banking problem, but he emphasized the work of economists in India which consisted in analysing Indian problems relating to the standard of life, the physique and nutriment of the people, the social customs and seeing them as a whole in their bearing upon the economic welfare of the people. He also exhorted educationists to impart to the public a thorough knowledge of economics.

* * *

IT will be remembered that on the eve of the last visit of the Simon Commission to Madras City four well-known Andhra leaders who had come to Madras with a view to participating in the hartal were arrested without warrant and let off after a few hours' detention. This action of the Government intended apparently to create some sort of a moral effect was rightly the subject of much strong criticism by non-officials in the Madras Legislative Council a few days ago. The arrest of these leaders was effected under section 151 Cr. P. C. which seems to authorise police officers to arrest without warrant persons whom they believe to be about to commit some cognisable offence. What is the offence which these Andhra leaders intended to commit? The worst which the police suspected of them was that in defiance of Police orders to the contrary they would have gone to the place where the Commission was expected to land. Whether the leaders really intended to do so is another matter. But even supposing they did so, they might in that case have been prosecuted in due course for disobedience of lawful orders; and in any case, committed as these leaders are to strict non-violence, there was no ground to suppose that their presence at the landing place would have resulted in any breach of the peace of their own making. A rumour was set afloat apparently to save the face of the Government that the arrested leaders were released on their giving an undertaking not to proceed to the harbour. As a matter of fact no undertaking was given by them. But the genesis of the rumour is to be found in the fact that a person arrested by the police can be set free only after he either gives a personal undertaking to desist from the offensive act or offers bail or if his release is authorised by a magistrate. The Andhra leaders neither gave any undertaking nor offered any bail nor, as is well known, were they produced before a magistrate who could have authorised their release. The fact seems to be that they were restored to liberty as soon as the police saw the erroneousness of their action, for, as was urged in the course of the debate, the use of this section in such cases is, if at all, very rare. Both the Advocate-General and the Home Member did their best to defend the police excess in question; but their arguments carried conviction to no-body—not even to themselves; for their speeches give one the impression that in standing by the police they were merely doing a duty forced upon them by circumstances rather than speaking from conviction. This is a clear case of the police allowing their discretion to be outrun by their zeal which must be taken serious notice of by the Government, if such highhandedness on the part of the police is to be put a stop to in future.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

It has been said during the last week that this year's Budget is a featureless and humdrum budget. In a sense it is true, but not in the sense in which the phrase may be used as a term of reproach; to preserve the *status quo* after the recent stabilisation of currency and prices and after the evolution of order out of the chaos created by the War is perhaps the wisest course. It is no wonder therefore that Sir George Schuster has thought discretion to be the better part of valour and avoided tampering with the tax system either way, before he has mastered the delicate mechanism of Indian finances. We are sure his caution would stand him in good stead in future years, provided only that he remembers that the State must adapt its arrangements to the wants of the greatest number and that as a result of his work at the exchequer the poor have not become less poor—to refer to two only out of the numerous Gladstonian *bon mots*. By this it is by no means suggested that this policy of sitting on the fence will be the proper one for all time to come; but for the present it will give ample opportunity for the natural forces to work themselves out and assist the process of natural restitution.

Two good features of the current year are the increase in the visible balance of trade which is in favour of India by Rs. 39.77 crores up to the end of December, and that prices in general have remained fairly stable. It is only by looking to the havoc played by the fluctuation of prices in Europe to the finances of a country that we can appreciate the inestimable benefits of a stability in prices. The revised estimates for the current year show a surplus of Rs. 30 lakhs instead of the Rs. 5 lakhs budgeted for last year. Coming to the budget proposals for 1929-1930, we are given at the outset a premonition of the additional taxation which has been only staved off for the present. When the Provincial Contributions were remitted we understood that this was done in the expectation of an assured increase of receipts on the basis of existing taxation. If therefore there is a default now, the only reasonable remedy is cutting down needless expenditure. It appears from the Finance Member's speech that he is prepared to make himself unpleasant to the heads of departments by pruning down items of expenditure, but it may be doubted whether this initial enthusiasm will be kept up.

We thoroughly approve of the proposed increased provision out of revenue for wiping off the arrears due to the whole interest on cash certificates not having been paid fully by way of the bonus disbursed so far. The details of the scheme will be given along with the general debt-redemption proposals which will have to be presented to the Assembly owing to the lapse of the present scheme which is going to be in force up to the end of 1929-30. We have always declared ourselves in favour of a liberal scheme for a sinking fund, if the financial credit of the country is not to be allowed to suffer, and

in spite of the fact that a provision of this kind involves an amount of self-denial by lessening the amount available for current expenditure we will welcome proposals for an adequate sinking fund. The greatest objection as usual lies to the continued Military expenditure at a high figure. The Lee Commission recommendations for bringing the passage concessions to the officers of the Army to the level of those granted to civil officers account for a good deal of additional expenditure. In fact the Finance Member has committed the Assembly to an Army expenditure of Rs. 55 crores for four years during which time any savings that might be effected in the ordinary expenditure would be utilized for the extraordinary expenditure for the programme of re-equipment and the expansion of the Air Force. Perhaps the Finance Member wants us to thank him for having kept the figure within this limit instead of asking for an extra grant for capital expenditure year by year. As for the Inchoate Committee's recommendations which the members of the Assembly had almost come to regard as a pledge with regard to the ultimate objective, the Finance Member has declared that the substantial fall in prices which the Committee had contemplated as possible has not been realized. The long and short of it is that any further reference to the Committee's Report will be regarded in future as the resuscitation of an antiquated document and the hope of a reduction of the military budget is deferred indefinitely for all practical purposes; and to safeguard himself in case this is regarded as a definite promise to complete the programme of modernizing the equipment of the Army within the stated period, the Finance Member hastens to add that Government are under no binding obligation in the matter. All this, to say the least, is very unsatisfactory.

The Budget for 1929-30 results in a net deficit of Rs. 90 lakhs, which is made up by drawing on the balance from the Revenue Reserve Fund. As the sum of Rs. 1 crore out of this Reserve Fund was earmarked for the financing of the Reserve Bank, the sum cannot really be utilized for meeting a deficit except on the supposition that the Government do not contemplate the inauguration of the Reserve Bank at an early date. This is also rendered probable by the intentions of the Government with regard to making the Reserve Bank contingent upon the completion of the banking enquiry as a necessary basis for further deliberations. Now that the Fund has been practically wiped out, the inauguration of the Reserve Bank whenever it comes will entail the diversion of a large sum from the current revenues of that year. There is very little justification therefore for using the Revenue Reserve Fund for the purpose of meeting a deficit except that it enables us to avoid imposing new taxation. One can easily sympathize with the Finance Member for his anxiety to avoid additional taxation till he has had ample opportunity to study the conditions all over the country and to decide, in case fresh taxation is necessary, as to what is the best direction in which to impose it. For the present therefore the Assembly can be

brought to acquiesce in this method of balancing the budget.

It is a good augury for the future that the Finance Member has at the outset of his tenure of office admitted in clear terms that we must keep our capital expenditure under effective control and be watchful to limit it so as not to overstrain the credit of Government. In view of the headlong career of Railway borrowing this enunciation of a sound policy was urgently needed; we can only hope that these pious resolves will not be thrown to the winds under pressure from various interests which have a knack of clamouring for more and more capital. The Ways and Means position as expounded by him is eminently satisfactory for the coming years as well for the year 1929-30, although we should like the Railway Capital outlay to be reduced by a few crores. The fact that the sale of cash certificates shows a progressive diminution has an upsetting effect on the future programme; it means that more reliance will have to be placed on public loans. In view of the objections we have repeatedly raised against short term securities like Treasury Bills we are glad to have the assurance that Government will still further reduce the outstandings of these bills so as to free the local money market from being dominated by their presence. The action of the Finance Member in cutting down new commitments in the railway programme to a minimum in order to keep the capital outlay within the allotted limit is certainly courageous and if he keeps the same watchful eye on future allotments there will be little cause for complaint on the score of extravagance in borrowing. The effort spent by the Finance Member in justifying a policy of economic development and proving that capital expenditure is beneficial is certainly wasted; no one has the least idea of putting a complete embargo upon capital expenditure and all that is meant by those who object to large borrowing is that the pace should be adjusted to the total wealth of a nation and not to the preconceived notions of European financiers. In any case the Finance Member has himself admitted that enthusiasm must be combined with caution. With regard to sterling loans, although such loans may occasionally be necessary, we should not like him to depart lightly from the convention established by Sir Basil Blackett that as far as possible all borrowing shall be in the form of Rupee loans in India.

With regard to the appeal of Sir George Schuster to allay all fresh controversies about the rupee sterling exchange everyone will agree with him at least so far that, whether the established ratio is right or wrong in the abstract, it would be certainly against public policy and the interests of the people to think of any fresh legislation in order to establish a lower one and devalorise the currency again. In the matter of exchange it is a truism that what is important is not so much any particular rate of exchange but that it should be stable over a certain number of years so that every one who deals in it knows where he is. In the restoration of the French currency recently

it was found out that the great financial disasters were due to the uncertainties of exchange and not simply due to a depreciated exchange consequent on currency inflation. For this reason all European countries have now stabilized their currencies even to rates differing widely from the pre-war parities of exchange. Having done likewise, we shall only give a fresh shock to wages, profits, prices in this country and disturb again the adjustment of Indian prices to the world gold prices if we restore exchange at its pre-war parity in India. Lastly the note of confidence sounded by the Finance Member is in consonance with reality; there is no doubt that the financial position of the country is fundamentally sound and her credit abroad well-established. It is equally true as he says that the productive assets of the country have been enormously increased and that the revenue position is encouraging. While admitting all this, one is inclined to remind him that there is an amount of depression in trade which, although in part due to world causes, is, in the major part, traceable to the sins of omission and commission on the part of the State. It is the duty of the Finance Member to atone for them in ways which seem to him to be the best. India is the last country in which a too facile optimism will stand a financier in good stead; in fact it may easily mislead him as to the necessity of providing against unexpected contingencies and sudden disasters. If the Finance Member continues to adopt caution as his motto, as he has declared in his speech, he will do India more good than by erring on the other side.

RATIONING DEAD.

THE policy of rationing, introduced by Sir Chunilal Mehta in the first term of the reformed Legislative Council of Bombay and carried forward by Mr. Delhavi in the second, has been suspended by Messrs. Pradhan and Jadhav in the third. While it was in operation, it effected a reduction of clear 50 per cent. in the consumption of country liquor, from 26,14,789 gallons in the basic year of 1920-21 to 13,02,679 in 1926-7. The rationing was continued during these years at the rate of 10 per cent. in Bombay City and 5 per cent. in the mofussil. This rate was first slowed down by the third Excise Minister, Mr. Pradhan, in Bombay City where the percentage of diminution was reduced from 10 to 5 per cent. in 1927-8 and the process of rationing was suspended altogether in East and West Khandesh and in the Panch Mahals. The following year Mr. Pradhan ordered rationing to be stopped in all the districts in the Presidency proper (it was continued in Sind) with effect from the 1st April 1928. On top of this we have now the report of the Excise Commissioner in which he makes a violent attack on the rationing system and gives his emphatic opinion that it should be abandoned in favour of the time-honoured policy of "maximum revenue from minimum consumption" which he calls "automatic rationing" instead of the "arithmetical rationing" which he

wishes to see displaced. While the Commissioner of Excise is thus allowed freely to attack the Government's policy actually in force, the Excise Minister himself is quite content to wait on the turn of events, apparently willing to adapt his own policy to the wishes of the Legislative Council. Government had already decided, in view of the Excise Commissioner's report, to reopen 17 new shops, recently closed, in West Khandesh; but seeing that the Legislative Council would not tolerate any action which would amount to a reversal of the rationing policy, Mr. Jadhav has now promised in deference to the Council's opinion, not to re-open the shops; but on the main question of continuing the rationing policy, he was non-committal, merely saying that the Excise Commissioner's views were his individual ones and promising to make a statement embodying Government's policy, which was still in the process of evolution.

For the moment the constitutional question that this answer raises is of even greater importance than that of the future of rationing in this Presidency. In considering this issue, however, it would be better to go a little farther backward in order to show how the Ministry is playing with the Legislative Council. As said above, the rationing policy was suspended as early as April 1928; and it might be thought that the then Minister announced his intention of doing so to the Council in the budget session of last year. Mr. Pradhan had an amplitude of opportunities for taking the Legislature into his confidence if he had so desired, but he did not breathe a word of the action he was going to take a week or two after the dispersal of the Council to the Council to which he is supposed to be responsible. On the occasion of the general discussion of the budget Mr. Pradhan dealt with many a petty point but completely passed over the vital change of policy subsequently effected. The Excise demand for grant went under the guillotine, and Mr. Pradhan could thus set to work to scrap rationing without anybody outside the official world getting an inkling of it. The fact of the rationing policy being discontinued throughout the Presidency was subsequently ferretted out by temperance workers and published by the Rev. J. F. Edwards in the *Social Service Quarterly* for Oct. 1928, but it is doubtful how many of the members of the Legislative Council know yet that the policy had already ceased to be operative since the beginning of the present financial year. This was not however the worst part of the Minister's delinquency. He was, we shall not say, inspiring, but certainly permitting, an adverse press propaganda based on official documents without giving similar access to those papers to others who had offered to make an open-minded inquiry into the subject. It became clear to all temperance workers at the time that Mr. Pradhan had made up his mind against prohibition or even a serious limitation of alcoholic liquors. He was of course welcome to hold anti-Prohibitionist views, but our regret arises from the fact that he kept them from the Council to which he was nominally accountable.

Mr. Jadhav must reckon it his good fortune that rationing had already been dead, dead as mutton, before he came into office as Excise Minister. He had not to kill it, thank goodness. His trouble arose from the fact that he could not keep the Council innocent of the change in the second year as his more fortunate predecessor was able to do in the first. The report of the Excise Department for last year is of course not yet published; and it is just possible that he too could have manoeuvred to leave this aspect of the subject undiscussed in the present session of the Council but perhaps it might have been too great a scandal. Aye, there are some scandals from which even the Bombay Ministers shrink. Mr. Jadhav therefore arranged to have a chapter of the Excise Commissioner's report containing an onslaught on rationing distributed to members of Council and allowed him to denounce the policy in Council in bitter terms. Anyone who is conversant with parliamentary practice would have thought that the Commissioner was voicing the views of the Minister, but the Minister promptly dissociated himself from those remarks and showed himself to be in an undecided state of mind. The Council, naturally enough, resented this and passed the adjournment motion thus clearly expressing its disapproval of the policy which they had every right to assume was Government's policy. This is as good as a censure upon the Minister, but the Minister is in no hurry to resign on that account. To say the least, this is very hard on the Excise Commissioner from one point of view and on the Council from another. If the Minister has really made up his mind to give up rationing, as is very likely, but wants to keep himself free to restore it, in case the Council insists, he should not have unnecessarily exposed the poor Commissioner to the Council's attack. It is a cardinal principle of ministerial responsibility that the civil servants should be carefully shielded from popular criticism and that the Minister should feel bound in honour to hold himself answerable in Parliament. If, however, Mr. Jadhav has not yet decided what his policy will be, he ought not to have allowed his Commissioner to behave towards rationing and prohibition like a bull in a China-shop. For it is for the Minister to determine policy and for officials merely to execute it. Mr. Jadhav ought therefore to have restrained the Commissioner from making observations in a sphere which does not properly belong to him. He thus erred in either case.

We are however more alarmed by the growing tendency of Ministers to seek guidance as to policy from the Legislative Council instead of giving it such guidance themselves. Whether he be in charge of Education or Excise or anything else, too many a latter-day Minister says, with Mr. Jadhav, to the Legislative Council: "I am in your hands; just let me know how much more money I may expect, and I shall make my plans of educational expansion or liquor reduction accordingly." Really, he ought to calculate the amount of revenue that should be raised by additional taxation or otherwise for the

particular object he has in view and submit a proposal to that effect to the Council for its approval. The initiative in shaping policy must thus be taken by him and must not be shifted on to others. Ministers, of course, in making such proposals have always to risk loss of office. For if they do not receive the support of the Legislature, they must acknowledge defeat and surrender the reins of power to their critics. Our Ministers however are more keen on retaining their places than shaping policies, and therefore they thrust on the Council the leadership in legislation and execution which by rights belongs to them. Under this system no vigorous action of any kind is possible and parliamentary government is bound to end in failure. This is one of the weakest spots in our politics at present.

INDIA IN 1927-28.

THE year 1927-28 will stand out boldly in the history of India on account of the appointment of the Statutory Commission for the purpose of enquiring into the working of the system of government inaugurated in 1919; this is the judgment of Mr. Coatman and nationalist India will agree with it; only the importance of the event will be envisaged in a different way by the latter. To most Indians the importance of the Commission lies in the fact that the antagonism roused by its appointment on account of the exclusion of Indians from it ultimately resulted in the framing of a constitution which, though not universally accepted, is an admirable basis for future negotiations. Although there was a lull in Hindu-Muslim rioting during the year as compared to the previous year, the year cannot be said to have a clean record in the matter. A sorry feature, as the Report tells us, of the Hindu-Muslim relations was the number of murderous outrages committed by members of one community against persons belonging to the other. As for the efforts made to reconcile the two communities the opinion of Mr. Coatman that the Calcutta Unity Conference did not carry matters very far is unfortunately too true; and it must be said that he gives a fair account of the resolutions passed by the National Congress and by the National Liberal Federation to suggest ways of settling disputes between the two communities. Mr. Coatman has tried to deprecate the work of the All-Parties Conference by pointing out that Anglo-Indians, the Depressed Classes, and the Justice Party in Madras were not represented at it; but it is their own fault if they failed to join the body which was open to all sections of opinion in India. The failure of the Conference to settle the Hindu-Muslim question in its finality which he points out may be admitted, but it does not follow that its deliberation left no impress on the public mind.

Mr. Coatman dwells on the diversity presented by Indian politics by pointing out that the politics of the Central Legislature is different from the politics of the provincial legislatures and by emphasising the varying politics of the town and the country, of the landlord and the tenant, of capital and labour and the rival policies of different communities; and adds that this complexity was introduced by the Reforms of 1919. All this is meant as an apologia for failure to give a connected account of the politics of the year and for omitting details in order to cover wide stretches. The result of the great quickening of political thought due to the cultivation of the political sense after the Reforms is, he says, the steadily

growing pressure on Government and ceaseless criticism against the very structure and foundations of the Indian Government. We are glad that Mr. Coatman frankly admits that practically all sections of political thought in the country are united in their demand for Dominion Status; he also recognizes that the Independence Resolution passed in 1927 has since been tacitly ignored by every important section of Indian political thought. He has recognized the disruptive influence of the Reforms in the matter of the promotion of a class and community consciousness but he fails to point out that most of this result is attributable to the communal electorates perpetuated by the Reforms and that it is only by their abolition that a centripetal force can be strengthened to withstand the centrifugal force. In giving a delineation of the development of the boycott situation Mr. Coatman has not minimised the importance of the clash between the two sections of the Muslim League which held two different sessions at different places. His attempt however to show that there was a good deal of support for the Commission in the beginning of 1928 by mentioning the Justice Party and the Sikh Association as its supporters is futile. Mr. Coatman makes much of the Joint Free Conference, but we have already shown how little scope it gives for a joint consultation and recent events have proved the utter futility of the so-called Joint Conference. In spite of this he believes that the announcement of the Commission's procedure "has exercised a profound influence on Indian opinion and has done much to bring about a more favourable situation than existed at the time of its publication." It is clear that he is referring to the decision of almost all the provincial Councils to co-operate with the Commission; but everybody knows what value to attach to these decisions when they were carried on the strength of the votes of the nominated members and the officials. In spite of these displays of a bias it must be admitted that he has given a good descriptive account of the doings of the Commission as well of the development of the anti-Commission opinion of the country.

The chapter on Finance gives a full history of the financial relations between the Central Government and the Provincial Governments since the settlement of Lord Mayo, including a summary of the Maston Committee's Report. Mr. Coatman sums up the financial situation by saying that all the provinces have passed through their worst financial crises. Considering however the general deficit budgets of the Provincial Governments, it is doubtful whether this could be said with much confidence, except in the sense that war effects are not likely to show themselves in future. Nor can we agree with him when he says "that the country as a whole has been steered gradually into an enviable state of prosperity". And all this he attributes to the adjustments of the financial relations! Of Sir Basil Blackett's work he says: "He raised Indian finances from a state of dangerous depression to the position which they at present occupy where they are the envy of practically every Government in the world"; hardly any one can be found who would dispute the assertion. In his opinion one of the most valuable services to India rendered by Sir Basil Blackett was the way in which he tried to invest the Public Accounts Committee with the status and powers enjoyed by its great prototype in England. This is certainly undeniable and has been admitted ungrudgingly by the members of the Assembly on various occasions.

The Report admits that lack of education is one of the main roots of India's ills, social, economic and political, and that her comparative backwardness in

so many spheres of human activity is traceable to this ultimate cause. Yet in analysing the causes it sidetracks the issue by emphasizing factors peculiar to the country; for example, it says that immense numbers of people are poor and ignorant, bound by iron tradition and age-old custom. The basic fact in India is that the State must do practically everything if this condition of things is to be remedied. While everybody will acknowledge the amount of progress made during the year to which the Report refers, it cannot be gainsaid that immense strides have still to be made before illiteracy is reduced to a vanishing point. The problem will thus always have to be kept in the forefront by the Transferred departments in all their deliberations and every sum of money that can be spared from other items will have to be utilized to take us nearer the goal year after year. With regard to local self-government, Mr. Coatman does not seem to be inclined to judge unfavourably of local bodies as many of the Local Governments have done in their memoranda to the Simon Commission. He says that it is not easy even now to form an opinion on the post-Reform working of local bodies for the reason that financial stringency, political stress and lack of experience have all affected them; consequently it is difficult to decide what weight to allow to these factors in passing a final judgment.

On the all-important question of the Skeen Committee's Report and its adoption, Mr. Coatman contents himself by being a mere chronicler; there is not a single expression of opinion nor even a mild criticism of the policy of Government in the matter; probably his function is confined merely to criticism of the members of the Assembly and of the Indian politicians.

CULTURAL AUTONOMY IN ESTONIA.*

ESTONIA has a population of manageable dimensions, being not bigger than that of Bombay City. Most of it is homogeneous, 87.8 per cent of it being Estonian. Of the balance, 8.2 per cent or 91,103 is Russian, 1.7 per cent or 11,319 German, 0.7 per cent or 7,850 Swedish, 4.4 per cent or 4,566 Jewish, while 1.3 belongs to other nationalities. All minorities are afraid of the majority and the Estonian ones are no exception to the rule. But Estonia has solved the problem of its minorities by the peculiar device of cultural autonomy about which Dr. Zacharias wrote in this paper in May and June last. The underlying idea of cultural autonomy is to safeguard the minorities against any possible forcible imposition by the majority of its own culture on them. This is secured by giving the minorities, if they so choose, full freedom to order their cultural life in any manner that they may deem fit and proper. Every citizen in Estonia enjoys freedom to determine his or her nationality and a minority is recognised as such if at least 3000 persons come forward to register themselves as belonging to it. Cultural autonomy is exercised by what is known as the Culture Council which is nationwide so far as the particular minority is concerned, and comes into existence if at least 50 per cent. of the minority concerned take part in its elections. There is also the further proviso that "at least 60 per cent. of the members of the first Culture Council must be in favour of the Culture Board." A Culture Council so formed is entitled "to organise, administer, and control public and private schools and other educational institutions of the minority and to provide for other cultural needs of the minority and to establish and control necessary institutions."

The Estonian Year Book, 1929. Edited by the Chief of the Central Bureau of Statistics, Tallinn, 1929. 8 x 5, pp. 314. 5s.

So soon as the Culture Council finds itself able to function, "all public schools of the minority hitherto maintained by the State and the Local Government," are transferred to the Culture Council which also has the control of the private schools of the minority transferred to itself. "The expenses of the Board, of its school system, etc. are borne by the minority" and the sources of its income include "part of the funds assigned by the Government and the Local Government for the maintenance of public schools, taxes imposed by the Council with the consent of Government on members of the minority community and special funds, donations, etc. from Government and private institutions and individuals." Though the book relates to 1929 it does not furnish up-to-date information as regards the number of minorities that have so far elected to go under this law. But it appears that until December 1926 only two minorities, the Germans and the Jews, were granted full autonomy in regard to cultural matters and had elected their own councils under the relevant law. By this means Estonia has been able to give to its minorities a feeling of security against possible oppression and injustice by the majority. In cultural autonomy India too might have perhaps found a way leading towards the solution of her communal problem, if its possibilities had been properly explored. But howsoever she may solve her communal problem, there is much in the working of cultural autonomy in Estonia which is of interest and instruction to her.

As might be expected, elementary education is compulsory in Estonia and was made so as late as 1922. Accordingly all children of 8 years of age are required to attend primary schools until they have completed the four years' course or they are 15 years old. A new law passed in 1920 will however come into force on next New Year's day under which "compulsory education provides for all children from 7 to 16 years of age a course of six classes in the primary school and of at least one class of two years in the extension school." As a consequence of the efforts of the Estonian Government to educate its population, literacy is widely spread there, the number of illiterates among persons above 10 years varying between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 per cent; and these too mostly aged people who lacked opportunities for instruction. As for the younger generation it is difficult to find an illiterate person in it. In regard to higher education as well, the ratio of university students to the population is highest in Estonia, being in 1925 one student per 236 inhabitants as against 670 inhabitants in Germany, 680 in Sweden, 769 in Finland, etc.

Particular care is taken to interest the parents in their children's education. To this end at least three times a year their meeting is convened by the Pedagogic Council of teachers when questions concerning the education and instruction of children are discussed.

How much is done to promote adult education is evident from the fact that in 1928 there were over a thousand organisations actively working towards that end. These organisations arrange an average of 400 courses every year, mostly treating practical subjects. As a means of retaining literacy public libraries, which in 1923 numbered about 600, play an invaluable part. Their value has been realised by the Government to the extent of obliging, under law in force, the administration of each town and borough to maintain at least one public library and to purchase books every year to the value of two cents per inhabitant, Government contributing an equal amount.

The book gives very useful information about the other aspects of Estonian life and may be stud-

ed with benefit by those wishing to know more about it.

D. V. A.

REVIEWS.

EUROPEAN MONETARY REORGANISATION. THE RESTORATION OF EUROPEAN CURRENCIES. By D. T. JACK. (King.) 8½ × 5¾. pp. 218. 10s. 6d.

IN this volume Mr. Jack of the University of Glasgow recounts the story of the monetary reorganisation which has been effected in nearly every country in Europe. He is a strong advocate of the Genoa Resolutions in favour of establishing the price of gold. The strong point of the book is the well-selected statistics which he handles with consummate skill. In the introduction the effects of currency inflation on the rise in prices and the disequilibrium between the internal value of a currency and its external value are very lucidly explained. One interesting conclusion drawn by Mr. Jack from a study of currency inflations is that in the later stages the depreciation of currency becomes the cause of budget deficits although in the earlier stages it is vice versa. His advice therefore is in all such cases to concentrate primarily upon the task of stabilising the value of currency. The theoretical considerations advanced in discussing the several alternative methods of stabilisation lead to the result that the possibility of restoring a pre-war gold parity presents itself only in the case of countries where depreciation has been moderate, the only solitary instance being the United Kingdom. In the case of every other country the process of devaluation had to be adopted.

Coming to individual countries the problem in the United Kingdom was a readjustment of sterling prices to the gold prices in the United States. This however was never realized; but taking advantage of the exchange reaching parity in June 1924 it was decided to return to the Gold Standard, and as the author has shown, the position has been maintained since the adoption of the Gold Standard in May 1925 by the Bank of England by every means in its power including the rise in its rate of discount. In answer to the critics of the Gold Standard the author has made it clear that the maladjustment of prices after its introduction has nothing to do with the return to the Gold Standard, but is the product of universal disorganization of currency. In Denmark and Sweden the old gold parity was established by the process of deflation. The greatest demoralisation due to inflation and budget deficits is to be seen in the case of Germany and the restoration in her case is one of the most remarkable achievements of the post-war period. Mr. Jack gives one of the ablest resumes of this reorganization.

The beginning of restoration was made by the foundation of a Rentenbank founded with a credit of gold marks on the security of real property and by the reorganization of the Reichbank charged with creating a unified stable currency. This, combined with the purchase of foreign exchange and a rationing of credit, brought about complete restoration. In reading the account of French stabilisation the reluctance of the French authorities to practise deflation seems inapplicable in view of their reputation for sanity and caution. One result observed in other countries is made more prominent in the case of France; the rapid rise in the external value of the franc during the last two years has added to the difficulties of the export trades. The establishment of the pre-war parity of the franc, unless the rest of the world follows suit, will lead to a fall of

prices, which will be nothing short of disastrous. In spite of this we believe that the French ought to have led the way in checking the post-war orgy of inflation. In the case of Russia we have to notice a definite departure from the policy of establishing a regime of barter. Russia with all its boast of a new order of things had to tread the same path which other European countries traversed by founding a Central Bank issuing notes in terms of a new unit and ultimately demonetizing the Soviet roubles by exchanging them for gold roubles at the rate of 50,000 million of the former to one of the latter. In fact the Russian monetary reconstruction has been a marvel, considering that prices had in 1923 risen to an index of 648 millions from an index of 1 in the basic year 1913.

In the concluding chapter the author, while admitting gold as the only common standard, praises the Genoa Conference for recognizing the method of devaluation as an alternative to a return to the old parity by the method of deflation. In view of further changes in the value of gold however the author raises the issue of the stability of the purchasing power of gold and the allied issue of a scarcity of gold. And he settles the issue by recommending the more general adoption of a Gold Exchange Standard, by dispensing with an internal circulation of gold and substituting foreign bills, drafts and deposits for actual gold in the reserves of the Central Banks. The fact that foreign liquid assets to the extent of 1600 million dollars were held by thirty Central Banks, he regards as good augury for the resolutions of the Genoa Conference being adopted by the Central Banks of Europe.

The volume renders a great service to the cause of international amity under the aegis of the League of Nations by emphasizing the need for a cooperation between the Central Banks for securing a continuous stability of monetary conditions. It commends itself specially by a lucid exposition of one of the most intricate situations created by the aftermath of the War.

V. N. GODBOLE.

A PAGE FROM GERMAN HISTORY.

LETTERS OF THE EMPRESS FREDERICK. Ed. by FREDERICK PONSONBY. (Macmillan.) 1928. 8¾ × 6. pp. 492. 25s.

IN the history of the nineteenth century there is perhaps no figure more tragic than Empress Frederick of Germany. As the daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Consort, Empress Frederick was fortunate in her birth and childhood. Her education was carefully attended to by the Prince Consort, and the exacting mental discipline which her father enforced upon her gave her qualities of concentration and assimilation which she never lost. If she was fortunate in her birth and childhood she was even more fortunate in her marriage. The Crown Prince of Germany (who in 1888 became Emperor Frederick) whom she married was a husband after her own heart, and she was quite happy in her marriage. To add to her happiness 'Fritz,' whom she loved and adored, covered himself with glory in the Danish War, the Austrian War and the Franco-German War. Everything indicated that her future would be as happy and prosperous as the past. But that was not to be. It seemed as though the Gods were highly jealous of her prosperity, and sent her misfortune after misfortune. First came the loss of one of her children, Waldemar, in 1879. Then in 1888 her husband became the Emperor, and she the Empress of Germany, on the death of the nonagenarian William I. But

after a reign of barely ninety days, her husband, Emperor Frederick, succumbed to the fell disease, cancer. With the death of her husband, life was "gall and wormwood" to her. To add to her misery, her son, William II, became estranged from her. Taking advantage of the unhappy relations between mother and son, a virulent campaign of vituperation was started against her which pursued her even beyond the shores of the Styx. Bismarck calumniated her in his 'Reminiscences' which were published during the Empress' life-time. Other contemporaries of the Empress followed Bismarck's footsteps. During her last days the Empress writhed under the criticisms of her conduct which appeared in those publications. Her death in 1901 did not put an end to this campaign of calumny against her. Her son, the ex-Kaiser William II, in his 'Memoirs' has attacked her, and Dr. Emil Ludwig in his biography of 'Kaiser Wilhelm II, has done her injustice by criticising her in strong terms.

Why was Empress Frederick calumniated, distrusted and even hated in Germany? The fact was that the Empress held liberal opinions which were anathema to Bismarck and the Prussian Junkers. The Empress' policy is revealed in her letter to Queen Victoria on June 8, 1888:—

"We loved Germany; we wished to see her strong and great not only with the sword, but in all that was righteous in culture, in progress and in liberty".

Germany was an autocratic state and Bismarck hated the Empress for her liberal ideas. To attack her because she entertained liberal opinions would have been unwise. So Bismarck and the Junkers accused the Empress of intriguing against Germany in the interests of England and of keeping her husband under control. This had the effect of rallying all the patriotic Germans to Bismarck's side and the Empress became the target of attacks. Sensitive to a degree, the Empress resented criticisms of her conduct, and life was very bitter to her.

It is this tragic figure of the nineteenth century that forms the theme of the book before us. Sir Frederick Ponsonby has edited the letters of the Empress to provide an answer to those cruel and slanderous accusations from which her memory has suffered. In 1901 Sir Frederick Ponsonby accompanied Edward VII to Friedrichshof where the Empress was lying seriously ill. After Ponsonby had been at Friedrichshof for three days, he was sent for by the dying Empress who asked him to take charge of her letters and take them to England without the knowledge of Kaiser William II. Before she could direct him as to what to do with the letters after taking them to England, Ponsonby was asked to leave the room by one of the servants of the Royal household. In accordance with the expressed wish of the dying Empress Ponsonby removed the boxes of letters, by putting labels on them 'China with care,' 'Books with care'. Arriving in England he kept him in his private house, Cell Farm, at Old Windsor. There the letters have remained all these 27 years.

Sir Frederick Ponsonby explains in the introduction why he has chosen to publish the letters and that now. The letters were not intended to be burnt. The Empress could have done that herself, and need not have requisitioned the services of Ponsonby. "The fact that she should have sent for these letters, looked through them, deleted passages, and finally have sent them back to England seems to point to her having contemplated their publication" (p. xvii). The Editor of the letters was her godson, and the son of one of her greatest friends, the late Sir Henry Ponsonby, and he as the Private Secretary to King Edward VII would have exceptional facilities for

taking them to England. The Empress did not give the letters to her brother, King Edward VII, for she thought that publication of the letters would not meet with his approval.

It is a well-known fact that when Bismarck's Reminiscences and other contemporary memoirs were published the Empress writhed under the criticisms of her conduct and wanted her side to be heard. The Memorandum to Queen Victoria dated September 13, 1888 soon after the death of her husband, would also support the theory of her desire to publish her letters.

Though Sir Frederick Ponsonby divined the purpose of the dying Empress in choosing him to be the custodian of her letters, he did not publish the letters soon after her death in 1901. But the continual reference to her and criticism of her conduct in recent publications forced Sir Frederick Ponsonby to publish Empress Frederick's letters in the interest of historic truth.

These letters awaken interest not merely as affording historical information, but as forming rather a touching illustration of what Macaulay has with equal truth and felicity termed "the sweet womanly courage" of a loved and loving wife. These letters give a survey of European politics from 1858, the year of the Empress' marriage, to 1901, the year of Queen Victoria's death. They tell us what her husband, Bismarck and other prominent persons in Germany thought of certain diplomatic events.

The letters give the lie direct to the statement that the Empress was responsible for the fatal end of her husband's illness. Dr. Emil Ludwig in his 'Kaiser Wilhelm II' says:—"Her distrust of German therapeutics has come to be regarded as largely responsible for his tragic and untimely end." Nothing is farther from the truth. The letters prove beyond all doubt that Dr. Morell Mackenzie came to Germany at the invitation of German doctors at the probable instigation and certainly with the full approval of Bismarck." The only fault of the Empress was that she relied on the English specialist too much, but that was not because of his nationality, but because Dr. Morell Mackenzie did not diagnose the disease as cancer and consequently did not advise an operation—a thing dreaded by the Empress. But this view of the English doctor was against the considered views of German doctors who diagnosed the disease of Frederick as cancer and advised an operation. Later on it was proved that the malady was cancer. All Germany thereupon said that Dr. Mackenzie was a quack and that the Empress had deliberately sacrificed her husband's life to gain her own ends. The Empress became very unpopular and even her son William II regarded her as having been partly responsible for the death of his father. The letters reveal two facts. One is that the English specialist came not at the invitation of the Empress, but at the invitation of German doctors with the full approval of Bismarck. The other fact is that the Empress trusted the English doctor too much and made tactless remarks on German doctors. But to say that the Empress was responsible for the unfortunate turn of the disease is nothing but a travesty of truth.

The letters also account for the estrangement between the Empress and her son. The Empress was very tender and affectionate to her son, and wanted him to be a liberal-minded monarch. The Prince too was very affectionate to his mother, but all was changed in 1880 when he returned from the Potsdam garrison. In the most impressionable period of his youth he was brought under the influ-

ence of the military clique dominated by Bismarck and Waldersee. This was the turning point in his career. Prince Wilhelm hated his father for his liberal opinions and his mother for her English sympathies and progressive views. "He had an intellectual quickness and ability, but combined with sensibility which made him susceptible to flattery and resentful of anything that tended to detract from his own importance. As a result mother and son were frequently estranged."

The book before us reveals to us the real Empress Frederick "who, in spite of her faults, always devoted her energies to secure for Germany the political and cultural leadership of Continental Europe. It is the irony of fate that those who insulted and derided her during her lifetime and after were also those whose autocratic and militaristic views eventually brought the Germany that she loved to the abyss of disaster."

The world must be indebted to Sir Frederick Ponsonby for having published the letters of a much derided, calumniated and distrusted sovereign. After going through this brilliant book, everyone will come to the conclusion that the unpopularity of the Empress was due to her liberal ideas and to the fact of her being an English princess. It may be interesting to note that the ex-Kaiser has decided to take legal steps against the publication of a German translation of the letters of the Empress Frederick edited by Sir Frederick Ponsonby.

M. V. SUBRAHMANYAM.

TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY.

BOLSHEVISM, FASCISM AND DEMOCRACY.

By FRANCESCO NITTI. Translated by MARGARET M. GREEN. (Allen & Unwin.) 1927. 7¾ x 5. pp. 223. 7s. 6d.

SIGNOR NITTI, the ex-Prime Minister of Italy, is both a politician and writer of international repute. His books "Peaceless Europe (1922)", "The Decadence of Europe, (1923)" and "They make a Desert (1924)" have certainly established his fame as a sound thinker and a man of wide sympathies. He fervently believes in Liberalism and sincerely hopes for its revival.

In the book under review the learned author tries to compare and contrast the principles of Bolshevism, Fascism and Democracy and comes to the conclusion that "Liberal and Democratic institutions will emerge victorious and reinvigorated from their struggle against revolution.....Freedom and Democracy are not of the past, they are of the future; and the present crisis will render their triumph more certain and more irrevocable." (p. 205).

Such being his firm conviction, Signor Nitti thinks Bolshevism and Fascism as nothing more than 'Red and White' reactionary movements, which 'are, merely transitory phenomena.' He has broadly compared the three leading systems of Government, discussed the *raison d'être* of them all, and come to the conclusion that Fascism is bound to vanish. His criticism of Fascism, however, savours too much of resentment and ill-feeling. Political antagonists cannot be very impartial judges of their opponents. As such we must take Signor Nitti's description of Fascism 'as a conception embodying the negation of freedom and democracy' with a grain of salt. Nobody can deny that Signor Mussolini is a power and must be reckoned with in international politics. His thoroughness is wonderful and his sincerity to serve his country unquestionable. To deny the Duce efficiency in government

is to ask too much of the reader. Signor Nitti has cited a long list of repressive laws of the Fascist Government. But, one wonders, if all of them are ever enforced. We do not mean to defend this sort of legislation. Far from it. What we want to show, however, is that the Fascist Government is not alone in having many repressive laws on its statute book.

Signor Nitti's description of Bolshevism is more sympathetic, though not altogether unbiased. He rightly urges that Bolshevism is the consequence and not the cause of the prevalent disturbed condition of Europe. He is candid enough to admit that China was ruined not so much by Bolshevist propaganda as by the shameful exploitation of European Capitalism. He declares, 'In those Chinese provinces where the anti-foreign agitation is most violent, European capitalists have ruined more lives than the casualties in a great war.' In the chapter on 'Capitalist Excesses' he ruthlessly attacks the greedy and rapacious conduct of the European capitalists in the Near and Far East. However, his picture is incomplete inasmuch as he has omitted even to touch upon the question of India's exploitation by the British capitalists for the last 150 years. R. C. Dutt's "Economic History of India" would have furnished the learned author reliable and ample information on the point.

Signor Nitti's is a catholic mind, and his work is a valuable study of current history written as it is in lucid and forceful style.

D. V. TAHMANKAR.

SHORT NOTICES.

A LOST NATION. By JATINDRA NATH MITRA.

(Author, Serampore.) 7¼ x 5. pp. 149. Rs. 3/8

WE need not doubt that the author wants us to consider his book as a serious piece of literature. It is all the more painful, therefore, to have to observe that it would be very difficult to find a book on the subject of Indian politics, which is more disappointing, than the present volume. Whether it is the language, the facts, the ideas or the reasoning contained in the book that we consider, the same cannot be said to rise very much above the level of a school boy essay. How little can we trust the judgments of foreword-writers as a guide for our reading is illustrated by the peculiarly unmeaning and mi-leading foreword contributed to this book by the Raja of Santosh. The thesis of the book, bearing the title "a Lost Nation," is to make out that India is not a lost nation and that if it follows the ancient Indian sociological principles, or what the author considers to be such, she may yet carry out the rôle of a world teacher. In particular, the author wants us to give up modern industrialism and to be more respectful towards our religious duties and institutions. This done and the establishment of village states brought about, the author has no doubt that India will welcome the protecting alliance with the British Empire and will again benefit from the steady and progressive influence wielded by the Princes and the big Zamindars. Eliminate from the present picture of Indian political and economic life the political swarajist and the industrial capitalist and then, the author has no doubt that the British Empire, Indian princes and the landed nobility will unite to raise India to the pinnacle of material progress and moral spirituality. It appears that the book was addressed, at least in part, to the Statutory Commission. If, however, the Commissioners cannot find in India any better sort of evidence, they can be trusted to make the fullest use of such stuff as readily offers itself. That,

however, need not worry the nation, or for the matter of that, our author.

D. G. KARVE.

SONGS OF THE CELL. By HORATIO BOTTOMLEY. (William Southern, London,) $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. pp. 10. 2s.

I MUST confess that I found this book tedious reading. Short though it is, a poet is born, not made. Mr. Bottomley is not a born poet. The book starts portentously, with a somewhat blasphemous poem in the style of the 'Mune Dimittis,' in which Mr. Bottomley tells us that his release from Maidstone Gaol heralds a Divine Mission. Mr. Bottomley has much to say about the hard lot of his fellow prisoners, and, with him, we are genuinely full of sympathy for the hard cases, but it would be hard to pronounce him 'not guilty' of the charge of exaggeration, while there is no doubt that it is his intention to stir up more revolt against the Law of the Land.

The poem R. S. V. P. tells us of the psychological effect of prison walls, which we had previously suspected, and one or two of Mr. Bottomley's other poems are instructive. Indeed one had almost begun to hope that our songster would only sing the songs of others, till under the promising title of 'To My Dog' we were disappointed to find that we were expected to believe that his fate was undeserved.

A great deal of space is devoted to religion, a misfortune of which the readers of 'John Bull' prior to Mr. Bottomley's incarceration must have been forewarned. Mr. Bottomley's profound ignorance of this subject is proved by his complete lack of belief in immortality and his apparent blame of God for man's godlessness.

Under the heading 'In a Lighter Vein' one hoped for some relief from the gruesomeness of the major part of the book, but one was soon undeceived and finished one's task with a feeling of peculiar repulsion at the conceit of this notorious scandal monger.

BERNARD FOX.

THE MEANING OF ADULT EDUCATION. By EDWARD C. LINDEMAN. (New Republic, New York.) 1926. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. pp. 222.

THIS is perhaps one of the most arresting essays on Adult Education. There is an indescribable vigour about every line in it. Truly does Lindeman (whose literacy began in his 21st year) say that "the whole of life is learning and therefore education can have no ending". As things normally obtain, education consists in blind "degree-hunting" and stuffing oneself with formalised knowledge with that end in view. Whereas, its real mission begins where mere job-education ends, then to bring out the total individual personality of man, so that it becomes intensely creative. Standardised education fails to do that by trying to beat all men into some approved pattern.

"Individuality is the qualitative relation between elements of personality. We live in a social environment but we have our being within the organic unity of particularised selves. Difference is the base of personal integrity... Nothing exciting can happen in a world of uniformities and homogeneities".

"The aim of Adult Education", Lindeman continues to observe, "is to make adults happier in their hours of leisure." It makes men realise that

"Life is also one of the creative arts, else its ultimate meaning is boredom... Whenever we are presented with the opportunity of bringing beauty out of ugliness, har-

mony out of conflict, goodwill out of hatred, potency out of sterility, intelligence out of ignorance, in short whenever it becomes possible to add a new quality to experience, we stand in the presence of creation... If we faced conflict in life as an opportunity for creativeness, most of the drabness, futility, waste of human intercourse could be transmuted into exciting adventures... We are not all equipped by temperament, organic integration, or environmental surroundings, to produce works of art but we can all live artistically."

Adult education possesses this virtue that its aim is not to prepare man for the "bread and butter" struggle in life, but to give him the new learning so essential to enable him to take "an organic view of life".

P. I. O.

LECTURES AND ADDRESSES BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE. By ANTHONY X. SOARES. (Macmillan, Bombay.) 1923. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$. pp. 160. 3s.

THIS book consists of selections from the speeches of the poet and Mr. Soares in his preface says that the selection has been confined exclusively "to such speeches of Dr. Tagore's as give an insight into his views and individuality." After discoursing on the formative influences of his early days, the poet condemns civilisation which only means piling up one thing on another and emphatically denies that it is progress. Similarly he criticises construction as being merely mechanical and shows how creation which has life about it is preferable. Next he discourses on art as opposed to soulless manufacture and then deplores the rise of aggressive, materialistic nationalism in India. A chapter on international relations follows in which he points out how greed instead of love is guiding the relations of one nation with another. The voice of humanity then takes the poet on a pilgrimage to Europe where men are active and highly organised, but alas, he is sorely disappointed; for he finds that voice discordant and jarring, what with the smoke from the factories and the incessant noise. A talk on the realisation of the Infinite appropriately brings the book to a close. There is no other recommendation needed for the book than that Dr. Tagore has signified his approval of the choice of discourses.

S. P. S.

INDIAN AFTER-DINNER STORIES. VOL. I. By A. S. PANCHAPAKESA AYYAR. (D. B. Taraporevala.) 1928. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5$. pp. 59. Rs. 4.

MR. A.S.P. IYER I.C.S. in introducing his thread-bare stories makes an ambitious claim for them. Through them, he hopes to split the sides of this land, "where there is too little healthy laughter," with paroxysms of it. This is really a case of far-fetched self-deception. The natives of India are fortunate in this, that they know when to laugh and when not to, and nothing but something genuinely "in the lighter vein" induces laughter in them. Never will they so much as even ruffle their critical facial nerves, if unimpressive stories, too short and tame for the bed side, too narrative and shallow for the dinner table, are related to them. Little did Mr. Iyer take into account the not to be easily eclipsed popularity of Natesan's Stories of Tenali Raman and other jesters, Siris Chandra Vasu's "Folk Tales of Hindustan", Rev. Day's "Tales of Bengal," the novels and novel-like short stories of Tagore, Mrs. Ghosal, the Chatterjee Sisters, Venkatramani, Rajam and G. K. Chettur, before he put his insipid stories into expensive print.

K. VENUGOPAL RAO.

HALF THE BATTLE. (2nd Edition) By BARCLAY BARON. (Toc H, London.) 1928. 7½ × 5. pp. 72.

THE glorious Toc H is what its restless adherents have made it. If Tubby's overflowing love has brought it into existence, it derives its compelling power from the noble associations, built round it by many sterling hearts. The first House of Poperinghe—a mere experiment then—fulfilled the need of the occasion. The soldier on the battlefield had one long distressing time of shooting to look forward to and the Toc H relieved his oppression by offering him some healthy diversion. He found in it a real home, a truly democratic club and temple, where the noble and the general unceremoniously brushed shoulders with him. After the war, chameleon-like, it changed its plans and in order to cherish the bonds of kinship engendered by the war, it took the form of a club which in addition to giving men of bright as well as dark shades physical and spiritual refreshments, "served as a depôt for the diffusion of a wider outlook and for the recruitment of social workers pledged to (1) a wide human interest in the lives and needs of their fellows, (2) to the study of local conditions, civic, social, and religious and to challenge their generation to spiritualise them, (3) to mitigate by habit of mind and word and deed the evils of class-consciousness." Much inspiring water has flowed under the Toc H foundation since 1921 and many are the marks that have sprung out of the parent stock. It has in its own way fought many a valiant "war to end war" by melting the thick fog of social prejudices standing between men and men. The Prince of Wales has lit the original lamp and the fire has travelled to many parts of the world.

There is every hope in this vast desert of life, that with the spread of Toc H more inviting oases will give place to warring elements that now predominate. Thanks to Tubby and his fascinating "Tales of Talbot House," readers have become familiar with the Toc H. They will now eagerly read "Half the Battle" as it revives other tender memories that have escaped Tubby's attention.

K. V. R.

WOMEN OF ASSAM. By E. E. VICKLAND. (Judson Press, Philadelphia.) 1928. 8 × 5. pp. 179. \$ 1. 50.

MISS VICKLAND is one of the few missionaries who has kept aside her missionary rôle for the time being and given us a really appreciative study of the women of Assam. There is in her the same irresistible desire to lead them all to Christ, but one does not mind it, seeing that she is conscious that "the light of their womanhood is no less bright because it is hidden." Being tender-hearted, she made her way into their hearts and found "new windows upon life" which deepened her "faith in the innate fineness of all womankind." "Their life expresses itself," she writes, "not only in their clothing but in the pageantry of their ceremonies, the richness of their food and the elaborateness of their etiquette. The very shadows of their life are so deep that they give existence its rich tinge of seriousness." Miss Vickland however is painfully aware that this gorgeous exterior hides agonizing wounds.

"Repression is the rule of behaviour toward women according to Hindu law. From childhood to old age, the Hindu woman looks to some one else for her authority and guidance. Women must be quiet... A well-bred

woman is shy even with her brothers... They do not become mistresses of a house as we understand the word. There is a saying, "a woman's wisdom brings doom."

The Moslem women have nearly a bad as time behind the visible bright veil. "Our Moslem sister sits in deep mental gloom, her position fixed and unalterable by social law, her soul cramped by the restrictions of religion." Prof Khuda Bakhsch agrees with Miss Vickland when he says:

"Take an European and an Indian home and see the contrast. The wife in the West is a friend, a companion who is never in mortal horror of a rival to contest or supplant the affection of her husband as the wife in the East is. The Eastern wife may at any moment be dislodged by another and relegated to everlasting sorrow and gloom. The idea colours the whole life of women. They are meek, submissive, humble, painstaking, patient, but that is in most cases not by choice but by compulsion. Polygamy and divorce go hand in hand."

New ideas and forces have now touched and quickened this inert mass of life. "There is no caste in love," says an eminent Indian woman lawyer. Miss Vickland rejoices that the women are breaking, however ineffectually, through the pseudo-religious bars that surround and oppress them. Where a "righteous" civilisation is found side by side with crude aboriginal life, the latter is known to be more merciful to women and in other respects more truly refined than the former. "The Ao women have all the rights socially they wish. There is no degradation of women."

The book possesses a charm of its own because it is born of the author's natural sympathy.

S. N. T.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

- STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND RELATIONS.** By A. PEARCE HIGGINS. (Cambridge University Press.) 1928. 8½ × 5½. pp. 314. 15s.
- THE MOTOR MECHANISM OF PLANTS.** By JAGADIS CHUNDER BOSE. (Longmans.) 1928. 9 × 5½. pp. 429. 21s.
- INDIAN ECONOMICS.** Vol. 2. By G. B. JATHAR & S. G. BERI. (D. B. Taraporevala, Bombay.) 1929. 8½ × 5½. pp. 623. Rs. 5-4.
- THE FORESTRY QUESTION IN GREAT BRITAIN.** By E. P. STEBBING. (John Lane.) 1928. 7½ × 5. pp. 217. 7s. 6d.
- GOTAMA THE MAN.** By MRS. RHYS DAVIDS. (Luzac.) 1928. 7 × 5. pp. 302. 4s.
- ULSTER: ITS ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTIQUITIES.** By HENRY CAIRNES LAWLOR. (R. Casswell, Belfast.) 1928. 9½ × 7½. pp. 224. About 10s.
- SIBYLS AND SEERS.** By EDWYN BEVAN. (Allen & Unwin.) 1928. 7½ × 5½. pp. 189. 7s. 6d.
- THE LIFE OF SPACE.** By MAURICE MAETERLINCK. Translated by BERNARD MIALL. (Allen & Unwin.) 1928. 7½ × 4½. pp. 171. 6s.
- SELECT DOCUMENTS ON BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY, 1830-1860.** Ed. by KENNETH N. BELL & W. P. MORRELL. (Oxford University Press.) 1928. 8½ × 5½. pp. 610. 25s.

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