

The Servant of India

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CONTENTS.

	Page
TOPICS OF THE WEEK.	289
ARTICLES :—	
The Princes' Bargain	291
Peace or Victory?	292
"Abdication to an Oligarchy." By Observer.	293
OUR LONDON LETTER.	294
REVIEWS :—	
Evolution of Indian Politics. By C. V. Hanumantha Rao.	297
The Truth of Life. By Prof. C. R. Devadhar	298
The Structure of the Universe. By C. Seshachar	299
SHORT NOTICES.	300

Topics of the Week.

Indian Women's Demands.

A MEMORANDUM has just been submitted to the Joint Select Committee on behalf of the All-India Women's Conference and the Indian Women's Association, which contains the views of Indian women as a whole on the proposals for their enfranchisement and representation in the Indian legislatures contained in the White Paper. These are pronounced unsatisfactory by them and are subjected to strong criticism. In the first place, they have no use for a constitution which assigns an inferior status to women as compared to men. Their unequivocal demand therefore is that in the future Indian polity women should enjoy perfect equality with men—a fact which should find specific mention in the citizen's charter of fundamental rights. Adult suffrage is no doubt the best method of implementing this sound principle in so far as electoral arrangements go; but adult suffrage is generally not regarded as a matter of practical politics for some time to come. Indian women are prepared therefore to be content with a second best in the interval. Their suggestion is that no higher educational qualification than mere literacy should be insisted upon as a condition of enfranchisement and that the property qualification required in the case of a voter for elections to provincial councils should also hold good in the case of the Federal Assembly. The arrangement under which wives and widows of men who have acquired the vote owing to their possession of the property qualification makes no appeal to the women represented by these two bodies. To them it is nothing short of an anathema that their civic rights should be made to depend upon such an extraneous factor as marriage. The better arrangement, in their opinion, would be to extend the franchise to persons above 21 in urban areas which, together with

the two methods already proposed, is expected to bring up the number of women voters, both for provincial legislatures and the Federal Assembly, to over fourteen millions. The White Paper proposes indirect election in the case of women members of the Federal Assembly. To this as also to the communal franchise and representation proposed in their case the two bodies take strong exception. Who can gainsay the fact that in making these demands Indian women have shown themselves to be truer democrats and better nationalists than many so-called national leaders?

Section 144, Cr. P. C.

HOW facile is the tendency on the part of the police, to misuse, in the name of the public peace, the provisions of section 144, Cr. P. C., for preventing (to them) inconvenient popular demonstrations is well-known to all those who have any acquaintance with contemporary events. A recent instance of this tendency happened in Calcutta. Only in this case the intentions of the police were frustrated by the admirable firmness shown by the Magistrate. In connection with the last anniversary of the death of Mr. C. R. Das on the 16th inst. Congress flags were expected to be hoisted on buildings owned or controlled by the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, of which the late Mr. Das was for some years the Mayor. The Police had no difficulty in persuading themselves that this would lead to a breach of the public peace. An application was therefore made on their behalf to the Chief Presidency Magistrate for the issue of an order under section 144, Cr. P. C., directing the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation not to display nor to allow anybody else to display such flags on the Corporation buildings. The plea of the police was that if such flags are put up it would dangerously rouse the feelings of those who are opposed to the Congress; while if they had to be pulled down it might lead to serious disturbances, as on some occasions in the past. The application was opposed by the Corporation on the ground that the Congress, not having yet been declared an illegal association, the hoisting of its flag could by no stretch of imagination be regarded as illegal and as such forbidden. In these circumstances the Magistrate, the Hon'ble Mr. S. K. Sinha, flatly refused to oblige the police. In his opinion, it was not the hoisting of the flag but its being pulled down that had led to trouble in the past. In this case the duty of the police was clear. They ought not to interfere with the hoisting of the flag but to warn the mischief-makers of the consequences of their action and even to bind them down under section 107, Cr. P. C. We daresay that in the absence of the kind of prohibitory order required by the police Congress flags made themselves prominent on Corporation buildings on June 16 without their having led to any untoward consequences and the Magistrate deserves praise for preventing what has

happily turned out to be an unwarranted interference with the liberties of the people on the part of the police under the pretext of protecting the public peace.

* * *

Indian Colonisation.

THE Government of India have issued a communique stating that the Government of the Union of South Africa have appointed a committee to carry out a preliminary investigation as to the countries to which Indians from India and South Africa might emigrate for the purpose of colonisation. This is not the Committee envisaged by the Cape Town Agreement of 1932 in which the Government of India agreed to cooperate with the South African Government in the exploration of possibilities of Indian colonisation. The Committee now appointed consists only of South Africans and has no representatives of the Government of India. It is charged with preliminary investigation, preparing the materials, as it were, for the other Committee to examine. Moreover, the present Committee is not empowered to visit the prospective countries but to carry on its investigation from South Africa. It is impossible to take this Committee seriously. The Union Government must be jolly well aware that this is not exactly the time when any country will be glad to receive emigrants from another country and afford them facilities for colonisation. But Mr. Heaton Nichols and the *Natal Mercury* have been crying themselves hoarse over the inaction of the Government in implementing this part of the Agreement. Apparently to satisfy this clamour, the Union Government have appointed the Committee. Mr. Heaton Nichols, who is a member thereof, will soon realise the impracticability of promoting a colonisation scheme just now and that will be a good service done.

A more valuable gain is that for the first time, an Indian from South Africa will be given a place on a South African Government Committee. It will be a new departure in that colour-prejudiced land, which has special significance.

* * *

Aden.

THE recent press note from Simla on the subject of Aden should go far to allay the public fear that its proposed transfer would be a *fait accompli* without the knowledge of the people vitally affected by it. The note reiterates the assurance given more than once on behalf of the Government that the Indian legislature would be given adequate opportunities of discussing any decision that may be come to in this regard. But the people whose fortunes will be even more directly affected by the contemplated step are the people of Aden and it is clear that their wishes must be the real determining factor in this affair. Government have done well in giving an explicit assurance that if the transfer was effected, no racial legislation or segregation will be permitted. This should be enough to overcome the opposition of those who were apprehensive that Aden on transfer to the Colonial Office will be a miniature South Africa in the matter of racial relationship. The principal reason dictating the severance of Aden from India is its geographical position with its consequent unsuitability for inclusion in the proposed Indian Federation. But the most tangible advantage to India of the separation of Aden would be that Indian revenues would be relieved of the annual contribution of about Rs. 20 lakhs, which is at present paid towards the cost of the military and political administration of Aden. It remains to be seen whether this is a sufficient inducement to Indian interests to agree to the proposed transfer.

Natal Municipal Franchise.

IT was a most reasonable request that Sir Maharaj Singh made when he asked, according to the Pietermaritzburg Correspondent of the *Hindu* that the municipal vote should be restored to the Indians in Natal. Indians as a matter of fact enjoyed the municipal vote till 1924, when they were deprived of it. The demand for restoration gains point and urgency from the fact that recently the peri-Durban areas, in which large numbers of Indians live, have been incorporated in the Municipal Borough of Durban, the administration of which has never been too sympathetic towards Indians. The incorporation has added to the rates that Indians have to pay, but does not ensure that they shall get adequate attention. It is in the interest of the Europeans themselves that the municipal franchise should be restored to Indians. For without it, it is inevitable that the sanitary and municipal services should be neglected in the Indian areas and that will be a danger not only to Indians but to Europeans. The European population cannot animadvert on the insanitary conditions in Indian areas and at the same time deny them the only means of rectifying them.

Sir Maharaj Singh's request is very modest. He does not ask for a volume of representation which will swamp the European vote. He would agree to safeguard against such a contingency. All that he asks for is some representation which will ensure that the needs of the Indian areas will not be grossly neglected.

What is the prospect of the request, eminently reasonable and all too modest, being granted? Sir Maharaj Singh is not likely to indulge in kite-flying. The labours of the three Indian Agents could not have been in vain in mitigating the unreasoning prejudice of the bulk of the Europeans in Natal against Indians. The Indo-European Councils have been at work bringing Indians and Europeans together in friendly discussion of mutual relations. Sir Maharaj Singh has advocated informal talks between groups of representative Indians and Europeans to clear misunderstandings and reach agreements, a most excellent and desirable thing. The timing of the request, we fancy, is not without relation to the inclusion in the present Union Cabinet of Gen. Smuts and Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr. It must be said to the credit of the former in mitigation of his sins against Indians that he resisted the demand of the Natal Provincial Government to disenfranchise Indians for municipal purposes more than once when he was the Prime Minister. Mr. Hofmeyr, the present Minister of the Interior, was himself the chairman of the Commission which surveyed the municipal conditions of Durban and peri-Durban areas and advocated the amalgamation of both. On the Indian question Gen. Hertzog himself does not stand where he stood when he formed his first Cabinet in 1924. His outlook and also sympathies have broadened. While it would be foolish to minimise the difficulties they have to face if they mean to do justice to Indians, we would fain believe that the situation is not as hopeless as it was a decade ago.

* * *

Kolhapur in 1931-32.

THERE is hardly anything in the administration report of Kolhapur State for 1931-32 which calls for special notice. The only feature which deserves mention is the establishment of what is termed an "independent" High Court for the State. What exactly is sought to be indicated by the adjective is not very clear. Does this mean that the Judges of the High Court who are to number three will not be the servants of the State amenable to the control of the

Maharaja ? This is too good to be true. But if by any chance it is the unexpected that has happened in this case the State deserves our congratulations on its latest effort to ensure undiluted justice to its subjects.

It is observed that out of a gross revenue of Rs. 1,42,87,000 as large a slice as nearly Rs. 11 lakhs was required for the ruler's expenses, which may roughly be said to represent three times the amount spent by the State on the education of its people numbering over 9½ lakhs. While it is a matter for satisfaction that the number of schools increased by 14 to 671 and that of scholars by about 1,500 to 39,600, Kolhapur is still very far away from the ideal of universalisation of elementary education. Assuming 15 per cent. to be the proportion of the school-age population, it is found that the number of children that have to be ultimately brought to school comes to over 1,42,000. In other words the number at present under instruction is no more than a fourth of that to be eventually instructed. This is very unsatisfactory and it is to be hoped that this matter will receive the attention of the State authorities who should lose no time in chalking out a programme of compulsory education leading to universal literacy within a measurable distance of time.

Lastly, we cannot but own to a feeling of keen disappointment that this premier State in the Southern Mahratta Country is yet showing no inclination to associate the people with its administration, while less important States have gone much ahead of it. This is a matter which requires to be urgently looked into by the Maharaja so that a scheme of a popular legislature may be framed at no distant date. We shall be pleased if in their ex-administration report we could get some information showing the steps taken to that end. Statesmanship lies in meeting a popular demand before it becomes too insistent to be ignored.

Articles.

THE PRINCES' BARGAIN.

THE memorandum presented to the Joint Select Committee on behalf of the Indian Princes is, to say the least, highly disappointing. From the short summary cabled to this country it appears that the Princes have demanded that such of them as preferred to do so should be allowed to come into the federation through a confederation. It is difficult to say what significance attaches to this demand. The Maharaja of Patiala had sponsored the idea of confederation as against Bikaner's federation. *Amour propre* plays a large part in the politics of the Princes, and it was found necessary some time ago to placate the Maharaja of Patiala by approving of both federation and confederation. It is just possible that confederation may not go beyond a formal request for its recognition in the constitution. Mr. Mir Maqbool Muhammad, on the other hand, stated on behalf of the Standing Committee of the Princes' Chamber that 40 out of the 199 members of the Princes' Chamber had already signified their intention to join the confederation. Sir Akbar Hydari at once stated that Hyderabad was not joining the confederation. It is fairly certain that neither Mysore, nor Travancore, nor some of the major States in Upper India will join it either. The 40 States mentioned by Mr. Mir

Maqbool Muhammad must be minor State Members of the Princes' Chamber. It is an open secret that there has been great jealousy between the numerous States as regards the representation, direct and individual, that they may get in the federal chambers. Perhaps the smaller States feel that they by combining among themselves will be able to counteract the superior influence of the other major States. Whatever that may be, in proposing to enter the federation through a confederation, the Princes concerned are, perhaps unwittingly, creating a permanent hiatus between British India and the Indian States, thereby discounting the very basic purpose of the federation, namely, administering common subjects through a common legislature representing political and economic policies and refusing to be guided by considerations of religion or residence.

By excluding paramountcy from the purview of the federal Government and by reserving the right to nominate their representatives to the federal Chambers and reserving also the liberty to join the federation in only such matters as each Prince thought fit, the Princes have safeguarded, nay, more than safeguarded, their special rights of sovereignty and the integrity of their dynasties and the character of their administrations. Is it necessary to go further and deliberately weaken the federation? For that is what the demands of the Princes are bound to do. By a confederation it has to be understood that the members thereof will, whatever be their individual opinion and internal differences, stand and vote together in the federal chambers. Such a procedure, by preventing the formation of parties on the basis of differences of opinions and interests, goes directly against the principle of the responsibility of the executive to the legislature. The communal electorate in British India has already vitiated the principle of responsibility and the confederation will vitiate it further and render it a mockery. Also, it is inconceivable that 40 States can have always similar interests and can always vote together without serious injury to some of them. As long as the entry into the confederation is voluntary, it is more than likely that very few States will long continue membership thereof. The divergent economic interests of the States will compel them to part company and align themselves with political parties from British India with common interests.

Another proposal of the Princes is that, whatever be the number of States that will join the federation, they should be allowed the full quota of seats reserved for all the Indian States. It will be remembered that it was stated in the White Paper that federation would come into being only when Rulers representing not less than half the aggregate population of the States and entitled to half the number of seats in the Federal Upper Chamber, joined it. There is no danger of a federation being formed with too few States in it. Under the circumstances the demand is, to say the least, excessive and betrays distrust of the Legislature.

Yet another demand of the [Princes is that under no circumstances should their States be liable to direct

taxation. The Percy Committee, which contained no representative of British Indian publicists but contained the representatives of the Indian States and which acquiesced in grave injustice to the British Indian taxpayer, has itself recommended with the consent of Sir Akbar Hydari and Sir K. N. Haksar, that the corporation tax should be leviable on the Indian States. Apparently the States now object even to this. It is a most unfair demand. If it were accepted the expenditure of the federal Government will have to be met increasingly by indirect taxation, if British India alone is not to shoulder the burden. An increase in either the salt tax or customs duties is inadvisable. The former has been objected to for generations now by all Indian publicists. The latter will soon reach the point of diminishing returns. The horror of direct taxation in the Princes is difficult to understand, particularly when they will have a voice in the levy and the proceeds of the taxation will be used for common purposes and not for those of British India.

The Princes demand that the Upper Chamber in which they will have a larger share of representation, should share the power of the purse which in the White Paper, following the British practice, is vested largely in the Lower Chamber. This is another of their propositions to which it is very inadvisable that British Indians should agree.

It may be that in making these pretentious demands the Princes are only bargaining for the utmost that they can get and that their adhesion to the federation will not turn on their securing them. Mr. Panikkar said as much but even so, the Princes are overdoing it.

PEACE OR VICTORY ?

THE international situation is far from reassuring. The search for peace on the one hand is being counteracted by provocation for war on the other. The Disarmament Conference in Geneva and the World Economic Conference in London have been straining every nerve to prevent war and preserve peace. Their gallant efforts have been more than marred by the sabre-rattling and insolence of Herr Hitler in Germany. He has antagonised not only Russia, the ancient enemy, but also Austria, the erstwhile ally and he has given a fresh lease of life to the suspicions of France against Germany. Russia, Austria and France are all alarmed though for different reasons. Communist Russia and Socialist Austria are not happy over the persecution of Communists and Socialists in Germany. The internal persecution of the Socialists in Germany has had external repercussions in Austria which bode imminent danger. Austria has retaliated against the German persecution of Socialists by herself persecuting the Austrian Nazis. Apparently Russia could not retaliate as Austria did because there are no Nazis in communist Russia! Or Russia would have "liquidated" them by now.

Germany's claim for arms equality goes against the Versailles Treaty and has given point to the

excuse that France always urged against disarmament proposals: her security is in greater danger than ever. Under the circumstance it would be almost a miracle if the efforts for European peace succeeded. All indications point to the contrary. It will strain to the utmost the statesmanship of Europe to prevent it from being drawn into a conflagration more disastrous than the last war of 1914-18.

But why is Germany in such a state? Why is she again a threat to world peace? Herr Hitler, if press reports are true, has out-distanced many a tyrant of old in ruthlessness of his persecution of the Jews and the Socialists and the Communists. Great Britain may justly preen herself on the moderation of her repression of subject peoples in India compared with what Hitler has been practising against German citizens. It is a most amazing thing that in the year of grace 1933 any country calling itself civilized should be capable of such unmitigated and barbarous persecution of its own peoples as Germany under Hitler has been. Why has a nation which has been famous for its culture and civilisation, for its pre-eminence in art, literature and science, tolerated the Hitler regime? The reason for it may be found in the Versailles Treaty which the victors in their arrogance of success imposed on vanquished Germany. It humiliated Germany and she has not forgotten it; could not. The more thorough the humiliation the more determined her resolve to wipe it out, cost what it may. All else was of secondary consequence; everything must be sacrificed to achieve this one purpose. Even a tyranny at home and a conflagration abroad is preferable to continued national humiliation. Verily, the defeat of the vanquished is more dangerous to peace than the success of the victors.

Has all this no urgent lesson for England and India? At the moment the Government of India and the Congress stand even as the victors and the vanquished stood at the Treaty of Versailles. The road is clear for the Government to impose humiliating conditions on the Congress and plume itself on its victory. But the victory will be as dangerous to peace as the success of the Allies in the Great War has been. The bitterness of humiliation will long sour the temper of the people, not only of avowed Congressmen but of most Indians; it will become an obsession with them, so much so that they may stop at nothing to hurl back the humiliation and retrieve their self-respect. The defeat of the Congress will not mean merely the defeat of civil disobedience but of non-violence and even of constitutionalism.

There were not wanting people of great influence in the country who attributed the famous Montagu declaration of 1917 not to constitutional agitation or even to a lively appreciation on the part of Great Britain of the loyal support that India gave her in her hour of need, but to the fear of a demoralised Britain who flung out sops to those who had it in them to make her position worse. England's misfortune was India's opportunity. Even now there are those who believe that only a world cata-

strophe, involving Great Britain, can bring India what she wants; nothing else. Mahatma Gandhi and many other leaders may be trusted not to exploit the misfortunes of Britain; the Mahatma suspended his civil disobedience campaign during the Boer War and actually co-operated with the Government. He may do so again and in India. His sense of chivalry would recoil from the exploitation of other's misfortunes. But to the extent his influence is weakened, to that extent will also be weakened this sense of chivalry. And a growing number of people will welcome secretly, if not openly, another world conflag-

ration so that India may exploit it and come into her own.

It is a great misfortune that the lessons of such recent history enacted right under their very eyes are being lost on the Conservatives in England, who, oblivious of the disastrous consequences that must follow if their tactics succeeded, swear by the strong hand and no reforms in India. A loyal and contented India is a far greater safeguard of British interests in India and of world peace than repression and constitutional safeguards. Peace and victory do not abide together: Britain must choose between the two

“ ABDICATION TO AN OLIGARCHY. ”

WHEN you find that somebody's thought moves on a different plane from yours, you are tempted to put him down for a crank and take no more notice of him. One hopes, however, that Col. Wedgwood will meet with a better fate at the hands of Indian nationalists. In his evidence before the Joint Select Committee he did not plead, as might be expected from his antecedents, for the total elimination or even drastic relaxation of the safeguards outlined in the White Paper and for the granting of all or almost all the powers connoted by Dominion Status, but put up a passionate opposition even to the extremely meagre reforms now proffered by a Tory Government. In a recent speech in the House of Commons he expressed the view that if in the proposed reforms the central legislature was to be so extraordinarily reactionary in composition, he would rather give as much as possible to the provinces and leave no more than was absolutely necessary to the centre and further take care that the little that might be left at the centre was not placed wholly at the disposition of the legislature. This is no doubt an extreme view, and seemingly thoroughly reactionary, coinciding in all externals with the view of Mr. Winston Churchill. But when such a thoroughgoing radical as Col. Wedgwood puts it forward, it certainly behoves our nationalist politicians to pause and ponder it well and deeply.

Why does Col. Wedgwood cry out against Abdication in no less strident a voice than Mr. Churchill? Because he thinks that the abdication would be not in favour of a democracy, but an oligarchy. We all know it too but we submit in view of what we regard as unavoidable circumstances. It is true that the introduction of the Princes necessarily involves the introduction of a reactionary element, but we are warned by British statesmen that, unless the Princes are brought in, central responsibility cannot be thought of, and faced with the alternatives of some little power at the centre, wielded though it be mostly by reactionaries, and an unreformed central government, we are driven much against our wish to choose the former. It will be an oligarchy that will rule in Delhi, but it will be an indigenous oligarchy, and it is any day better than a foreign bureaucracy. If the claims of democracy are not satisfied, those of nationalism at any rate will be to some extent. It is at this point that our nationalists come into conflict with

Col. Wedgwood. He seemed to support nationalist demands so far — so much so that at one time his name was considered for the presidency of the Indian National Congress — only because they happened to be identical with democratic demands. Indian politicians till now were in the happy position of not being required to choose between nationalism and democracy. For the first time in history they are called upon to opt for the one or the other. They have elected to place nationalism first and democracy long after. Col. Wedgwood would like them to postpone nationalism to democracy.

The choice is not really so hard as may seem at first sight. By throwing democracy overboard, we do not succeed in keeping out the foreigner. The foreigner dominates all the same, though he does so from behind the Princes. So long as paramountcy is a function to be discharged exclusively by a foreign government, in complete dissociation from the wholly or partially Indian government to be installed in Delhi, one can never be sure that the so-called Princes' nominees will not in fact be the British Government's nominees. Apart from this, the safeguards to be introduced into the constitution will eat up, as is very properly pointed out by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others, most of the responsibility at the centre. It is *such* a self-government that the Indian politicians will have possibly to deny themselves in sticking out for democracy. But even this sacrifice is too much for them. One further point must be noted, and it is of the first importance. If the oligarchy, so little self-governing, which is to be established in India, behind the facade of a responsible government, had in it the saving grace of providing a momentum for the early advent of a real democracy, the compromise would be worthy of consideration. But it is an indisputable fact that the oligarchy with which we shall be blessed immediately will not only not make the introduction of democracy easier in future but will make it sheerly impossible; for the constitution leaves the eventual elimination of the nominated block permanently to the sole discretion of those who are to have the right to nominate. Those then who, like Col. Wedgwood, place democracy before everything else, have some excuse if they refuse to entertain a scheme which, without conceding any real power, only brings into the constitution a new reactionary element which

it will become impossible to replace at any time in future without its own consent.

Col. Wedgwood thus sets his face against federation itself, which forms the basis of the constitutional discussions going on at present. Or rather he will admit into the federation only those States which may be willing to send, like the British Indian provinces, elected representatives into the central legislature. He does not believe that more than three or four States like Mysore, Travancore and Cochin will be prepared to do so, and therefore in his scheme, which he has put forward as an alternative to the White Paper scheme (accurately described by the *People*, by clever suggestion, as the W. P. scheme), he assigns no more than 10 out of 160 seats in the central legislature to the States. He does not make the grant of central responsibility dependent upon the States providing a sufficiently big deadweight in the Council. It therefore is a matter of no consequence to him if only a few States join now and the resulting federation is exceedingly thin and even nominal. But he will on no account admit a State into the federation unless it agrees to the election of its representatives the same as British India. The biggest element of reactionism which disfigures the Hoare scheme he would remove in this manner.

But there are other factors which also go to make the constitution seriously defective, e. g., communal electorates. This of course is a more difficult matter to deal with than the Princes. For we can cut out the States altogether if they do not adapt themselves to democratic practices, but we cannot cut out the minorities in the same way. The States have to be introduced in the constitution anew, and we can resist their introduction. But the minorities are already there and cannot be kept out. Nor would it be desirable if we could keep them out. Col. Wedgwood therefore suggests that, till they agree to the common electorates, they should come in by nomination. Nomination must not be accepted in the case of the Princes; but it will have to be temporarily acquiesced in in the case of the minorities. Is nomination, then, better than communal election, the critic will ask. I suppose Col. Wedgwood's answer will be: "Yes, because if you put the minorities under nomination they will very soon agree to common electorates if the British Government gives them a choice only between nomination and common electorates. But if you agree to communal electorates these will have a tendency of perpetuating themselves." There is much force in this reasoning. Another temporary provision he suggests is that there should be 10 British officials in the legislature, the same number as is recommended in the White Paper for the upper house. But the 40 seats to be filled by nomination in behalf of the minorities and the 10 seats just mentioned are to be added, after the transition period, to the 100 seats to be filled up by election by the provincial councils, themselves composed of members returned by popular election on a universal franchise.

There is one very novel suggestion which Col. Wedgwood makes. It is to the effect that of the 100

members that will be elected by the provincial legislatures 30 (to be selected by the central legislature) should sit in the British Parliament, their own seats in the Indian legislature being taken by 15 Commoners and 15 Peers from among the members of Parliament. This suggestion is evidently intended to implement the fundamental character of the British Empire as an Indo-British Commonwealth. Constitutional purists will raise many technical objections to this course, but the desirability of some such provision will not be seriously questioned. This, however, is not the most important part of the scheme, the most important part being that nomination by the Princes and election by minority communities must be done away with at any cost. If these are retained, his own advice to the British Government will be: "Don't give any power at the centre where the Princes by nomination will be able to hold the British Indian people in thrall. If the power that is to be conceded will reach the people, go the utmost length in conceding it. But if the Princes are to intercept it, you had better retain it in the hands of Parliament. This body, even if it be composed predominantly of die-hards, will be more liberal than the Indian legislature dominated by the Princes." For, as he said on 28th March in the House of Commons, "there is not a Tory member in this House who is not better than ten Indian Princes." The question for Parliament to consider is, he would say, not whether Britain should transfer power into Indian hands, but whether by such transfer it will in fact pass into more liberal hands. This question has a side to which Indians upon their part must give their most earnest consideration. Will it be in the national interest, upon a long view, to make it the objective of their endeavour somehow to wrest power from the Britishers — even if the wresting is purely illusory and involves a gratuitous introduction of a conservative element which no constitutional device will serve to remove in future?

OBSERVER.

Our London Letter.

(BY AIR MAIL.)

(From Our Correspondent.)

LONDON, June 16.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC CONFERENCE.

THE long-delayed and much advertised World Monetary and Economic Conference opened at the Geological Museum on Monday last, with an inaugural address, in English and French, by the King, followed by a presidential address from Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, who happens to be at the same time the Prime Minister of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Only one nation was absent at the Conference—Panama, which has explained that it cannot afford the luxury. The other nations evidently felt that they could not afford the luxury of being absent.

The Conference is perhaps the greatest, the most universal, and the most far-reaching in consequence of any in history. More people have been brought together than ever before. The cost of this interna-

tional venture is said to be very large, the cost of its failure is generally recognised to be incalculable. Two questions are being asked: can it succeed, will it succeed? The pessimists are of the opinion that notwithstanding its claim to be a world conference, there is little, if anything, of the world mentality about those, or almost most of those, attending the Conference. The optimists are inclined to the view that, whilst that might have been true as recently as a year ago, the very force of events has brought about such a change of mentality among far-sighted statesmen, some of whom are attending this Conference, that they cannot but realise the inter-dependence of the nations as well as of the individuals that compose mankind.

I remember that arising out of, but not directly connected with, the meetings at Geneva and elsewhere, of the World Conference for the Promotion of Peace through Religion a movement began to take shape for the establishment of an Institute of World Affairs envisaging humanity as one and mankind as a unit. The purpose of such an Institute would, amongst other things, involve the study of problems affecting human life from a world, as distinguished from an international, point of view. It would thus differ in method, if not in objective, from such bodies as the British Royal Institute of International Affairs. There is no word in the English language that really corresponds with the all-embracing French term "mondial". Events are so happening, however, as to compel the nations and the statesmen to concentrate upon a world view of things to the exclusion of international balances of interest or of merely national evaluations, and it may be that, notwithstanding the enormous difficulties in the way and the unpropitious character of many of the happenings the world over that appear to give encouragement to isolationists, particularists, and all others who are by temperament opposed to the universalists, the Conference will be able to establish propositions of mutual conduct and world-relationships that will restore, if gradually, mutual confidence and international trust.

As regards the Indian association and connection with the Conference, the Advisory Committee has been dropped because Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas and Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar refused to serve on it in view of the character of the Indian representation in the Conference itself. Sir Phiroze Sethna would have doubtless taken the same line had he been available for consultation. He, however, returned from Geneva, where he had been attending the I. L. O. meeting, only on Saturday afternoon and after a decision had had to be taken in his absence. It is likely that the position of India on the tariff issue will come up at an early date for serious criticism. I am informed on excellent authority that several of the countries attending the Conference are annoyed and irritated by the high tariff policy adopted by India, especially of recent years, and which they regard as not corresponding to the requirements of the times when everybody is uniting to demand, in principle, reduction of tariffs. My informant gave me the impression that in justification of the Indian position it was probable that the British and the Indian Governments would be aligned together, and that it would be urged, first, that tariff increases were needed for revenue purposes, and that, secondly, they were justified in order to build up and protect infant industries in accordance with precedents set by other countries, including the very countries now leading the criticism to which I have above referred. So far, apparently, no opportunity has yet occurred to enable the Indian spokesmen to put forward their specific point of view. Sir Atul Chatterjee, who had already spoken, did so as the mouthpiece of the International Labour Office,

primarily with a view to the mitigation and reduction of world-wide unemployment that was recently the principal subject under its consideration.

THE WAR DEBT.

The greatest possible relief has been expressed in all quarters at the decision of the Cabinet to tender token payment in silver of the instalment due on the American War Debt and payable on Thursday of this week, and that President Roosevelt in taking note of the payment has placed it upon public record that, in his opinion, this does not constitute a default by Great Britain. The debate on the Foreign Office Estimate on Tuesday, when Parliament resumed after the Whitsun recess, was thoroughly artificial. Nobody wanted to hear Sir John Simon or to discuss foreign affairs; everybody wanted to listen to what Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who is leading the British delegation at the Economic Conference, had to say on the negotiations that were then known to be proceeding between the Cabinet and the American Government. Again and again the Government spokesmen had to inform the House that it was not yet possible to make a statement. It was very much like the report of the look-out for the rescue party that had not yet reached the beleaguered city, and it was not in fact until late on Wednesday night that Mr. Chamberlain was in a position to make the announcement so vital to the steadying of the exchanges and to the preliminary success of the Economic Conference. Several other countries have followed the British example in making token payment of the instalment due on June 15 to America. Several more, including France, have again defaulted. One only, Finland, has paid in full, and the whole question of inter-governmental debts will have to be settled, one way or another, before economic and financial restoration can be achieved. It is believed that a British Debt Commission will proceed to America about the end of September next, for the purpose of trying to come to a fresh agreement with the United States.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE CONFERENCE.

Whilst most of the attention of the public that can be diverted from sport and attention to the weather has been given to the World Economic Conference, it is useful to take note of the interesting three days' Conference of women from Great Britain and other parts of the British Commonwealth that has been taking place in London this week under the auspices of the British Commonwealth League, to which most of the important women's organisations in this country are affiliated. The British Commonwealth League, too, has been dealing with topics of enormous importance including World Unity and the British Empire, the Mother of To-day in the British Commonwealth, the Political Status of Women, the Situation with regard to Slavery, and so on. The sessions were well attended by delegates from many countries. In the session dealing with Women's Franchise, the united demands of Indian women were put forward by Rajakumari Amrit Kaur, who recently arrived in London to give evidence before the Joint Select Committee. Her able presentation before an audience largely composed of women, including the veteran Mrs. Despard, who had figured prominently in the struggle for the vote in this country, made a very deep impression. The Conference also had the opportunity of hearing Mr. N. M. Joshi, than whom there is no better interpreter of the needs of Indian women in industry. The difficult subject of the effect of Child Marriage and Purdah on Motherhood was discussed by Mrs. Rama Rau and Dr. Lankester, whose wife is doing so much to advance the cause of India in many capacities. For those who are particularly interested in India this Conference was significant

for its help to place the problems confronting Indian women in their right perspective alongside those of women in other parts of the Commonwealth. It gave the lie once more to much that is being said and thought of the fitness of Indian men and women to manage their own affairs and acted as a corrective to the one-sided view created by books like "Mother India."

THE UNION OF BRITAIN AND INDIA.

The opponents of Indian reform are not being allowed to have matters all their own way. The Indian Empire Defence League is gathering in the troops from the titled aristocracy, ex-Indian civilians of the older school whose contact with India is usually far from recent and people like Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who notwithstanding that he has spent the greater part of a lifetime outside of India, is still regarded in some circles as an authority on India on the strength of books like "Kim" and "Barrack Room Ballads." These are the sort of people who have not yet woken up to the new era in India, or who, having gone to sleep, show unmistakable signs that they will never wake up again.

The Union of Britain and India, however, is composed largely of ex-Indian officials of more recent experience in India and more liberal temperament. Their most recent recruits include Professor John Coatman, Sir John Cumming, Sir Selwyn Feremantle, Sir Laurie Hammond, Sir Maurice Hayward, Sir Philip Hartog, Sir Ernest Hotson, Sir Frank Hudson, Sir John Kerr, Sir Henry Lawrence, Sir Edward Maclagan, Sir Hugh Macpherson, Mr. James Rea Martin, Sir A. E. Nelson, Professor H. G. Rawlinson, Sir Stanley Reed, Sir W. J. Reid, Sir Benjamin Robertson, Sir Thomas Smith, and Sir William Vincent. It is noteworthy that the new Governor of Bombay, Lord Brabourne, is to be Treasurer of the Union. All of these gentlemen are general supporters of the Government's policy and it is likely from what I hear that the viewpoint that they represent is held by the majority of the people of this country, who are far from being stampeded by the Churchill-Lloyd propaganda. Indeed, they gave an indication of their general attitude towards people like Sir Arnold Wilson, who is a frank opponent of the Government's India policy and Sir Edward Grigg who, with modifications, is a general supporter. The former was returned to Parliament by a heavily decreased majority, whilst the latter on the whole kept his position. Even the *Daily Express* is a little taken aback by these results. In neither case does it think India was made the main issue at the bye-election. The paper accordingly suggests either that an early attempt should be made at a bye-election to force the pace on India and make it the major issue, or if, in fact, India is not a live issue in the constituencies, the issue should be dropped and concentration should be put upon questions of greater moment. In the meanwhile the Government policy has scored a victory, when a condemnatory resolution moved by Sir William Davidson was defeated decisively in favour of an official amendment at a meeting this week of the Council of the Metropolitan Area Conservative and Unionist Association.

THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

The proceedings of the Joint Select Committee are pursuing their course more slowly than had been anticipated and it seems quite clear that the Committee will not be able to bring its labours to an end by the end of July, with the result that Parliament instead of being prorogued will be adjourned until the autumn about the 28th July. This will mean that the Committee will be able to continue its labours during the recess, and the session will be resumed for the necessary short period for enabling the

presentation of the report in November. It is believed extremely unlikely that the machinery of the Select Committee will make provision for a Minority Report or Reports. What I believe is likely to happen is that members dissenting on particular points will be entitled to submit short notes on the grounds of their dissent. It is also expected that some at least of the Indian members, certainly including Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on behalf of himself and a progressive group that looks to him for leadership, will submit detailed notes of their views, either on the general schemes or on particular points for annexure to the Report.

In the meanwhile, whilst there are no more signs of unity in the British Indian delegation than when I last wrote, it is becoming increasingly evident that in the absence of a greater degree of unity than has for some time prevailed it will be virtually impossible to proceed substantially beyond the limits of the White Paper. It is possible, therefore, that before the end of July there may be closer accord among British Indian delegates, with the object of pressing more strongly the Indian objection to the scheme as it stands.

Whilst the proceedings, except in so far as they are officially published, of the Joint Select Committee and of the British Indian delegation, are ostensibly private, it is clear from leakages in *The Times* and *The Morning Post*, that some of the members of the Committee, or of the British Indian delegation, or both have not been as loyal to their condition of secrecy, or discreet within the latitude that might reasonably be allowed, and might have been expected, and this has caused a certain amount of irritation, both among the members who have held themselves strictly to their duty and to those Press correspondents who have tried to observe the regulations imposed upon them. One illustration of the way in which such a leakage has been used for anti-Indian propaganda purposes is revealed in a *Morning Post* comment upon the cross-examination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who is now under examination as a witness before the Committee, and has already sat in the witness chair for six hours without having yet completed his evidence. What was supposed to be the private decision of the British Indian delegation was substantially reproduced in the *Morning Post* and the opportunity was taken to make a venomous attack upon Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, whose cross-examination of Sir Michael O'Dwyer was expected to be of a damaging character to the latter. Sir Tej Bahadur, who is described as a Kashmiri Brahmin (which in *Morning Post* parlance is a term of reproach), and as a subtle and skilled cross-examiner, in order to expose the unscrupulous character of Sir Tej Bahadur's career and reputation, the paper says that "Although calling himself a Liberal, he has always been in close touch with the Congress Party." The *Post*'s readers are therefore left to draw their own conclusions as to the character of those on whose behalf Sir Tej Bahadur would be speaking.

The evidence of the Services is far from finished and Sir Michael O'Dwyer's evidence still has to be completed. In view therefore of the shortness of time between now and the rising of Parliament, and in order that, if possible, all the witnesses shall have been heard by that time, the Committee is, at any rate for the present, to meet four days a week, including two afternoon sittings in addition. On Monday Colonel Wedgwood, M. P., will give evidence and he will no doubt have to explain to the Committee and to the British Indian delegation the wide divergence between the views that he is at present understood to hold of a thoroughly reactionary character, and those to which he gave expression in his well-known

book on India, written, I believe, in 1921. Indeed I am in a position to state without contradiction that it is with the greatest difficulty that when he was a Cabinet Minister he was prevailed upon by friends, whom he then consulted privately, to refrain from tendering his resignation from the Cabinet as a protest against the unprogressive policy in regard to India of most of his colleagues in the Government.

Reviews.

EVOLUTION OF INDIAN POLITICS.

POLITICAL INDIA, 1832-1932. Ed. By SIR JOHN CUMMING. (Oxford University Press.) 1932. 20cm. 324p. 3/6.

THIS book like its companion volume "Modern India" is a collection of articles on the various aspects of the Indian political problems during the course of a century ranging from 1832 to 1932. There are defects as well as merits in a book of this kind—we get here the opinions of various writers on the political development and evolution of the country; at the same time we do not get a continuous idea of that evolution arranged in logical and chronological sequence, such as would have been the case if one single writer had been responsible for the whole work. Anyway it is a laudable attempt; and the Editor must be congratulated on his bringing together a galaxy of writers to contribute to the contents of the book. The fact that all the writers are Britishers or Anglo-Indians and not one of them an Indian, though regrettable, does not seriously interfere with the value of the contributions; and most of them write with sympathy and understanding.

The first place in the collection is given to Lord Irwin's paper on "The evolution of Political life in India." Lord Irwin's analysis of the political forces operating in the country is an unbiassed attempt at appraising the viewpoint of the various organizations working for political ends. He does not indulge in an indiscriminate attack upon the Congress, which he says "is a world famous and unquestionably powerful body," though, he is, it must be pointed out, not on quite safe ground when he says that it is mainly a Hindu body. But it is unfortunately true, as he says, that Congress cannot so far be said to have developed a practical programme that would stand the test of administrative responsibility. On the other hand, it must be confessed that so far the Government have given no opportunity to the Congress to evolve a programme of that description and it therefore rests upon them to draw up the future constitution of India in a manner which will draw in the Congress to undertake the work of administration and harness that undoubtedly strong political body to the task of constitution-building. Lord Irwin is also perfectly right in animadverting upon the communal character of the political parties in India and his comments on them deserve to be taken to heart. He says:—"If they (the political parties) are to be a strength and not a weakness to the India of the future, they must lift their eyes beyond the immediate community sympathies and attachments that have so far been the main motive of their existence. And gradually, it must be hoped, the operation of responsibility in the political field will evoke the formation of true political parties pledged to the promotion of real political programmes."

In chapter II Prof. Dodwell gives an account of the evolution of the educational policy of the Government of India from 1832 to 1884, and in Chap. III, Prof. Rushbrook Williams deals with "the Indian

National Congress in its various phases". Prof. Williams points out that three principal streams jointly constitute "the broad and swiftly flowing river of Indian Nationalism", the first being a striving to attain for India a unity in diversity, the second being the realization of the ideal of freedom and self-government, and the third being a determination to safeguard the cultural heritage of India from the inroads of the dynamic civilisations of the West. He divides the history of the Congress into three periods, 1885 to 1904 being the period of the dominance of the Centre party, 1904-1916 the period of the rise of the left, and 1916-32 the period of the dominance of the left. Prof. Williams draws the conclusion that the Congress has become sectional not "Indian", partisan not "national", a caucus not a "Congress",—a conclusion partly true, though on more grounds than one it can be contested.

The fourth chapter is written by Mr. J. A. Jones, formerly Editor of the *Statesman*, in which he gives a running account of the fortunes of the Moderate or Liberal party; and while commending them for rejecting the "barren path" of non-co-operation, accuses them of timidity and weakness in discrediting the work of the Central Legislative Assembly and thus providing a handle to the Swarajists to damn the Reforms. Mr. Jones however points to a real point of weakness in the Liberal armour when he says that they had no electoral organization and party unity. But he is worse than ungrateful when he asserts that it is the Moderates' immoderate rhetoric in the criticism of the Rowlat Report that was responsible for the grotesque fears created in the minds of the people. He also accuses the Liberals of eating their own words and falsifying their own creeds of constitutional agitation when, under the leadership of Sir T. B. Saprú, they decided to boycott the Simon Commission. But every Indian will agree that the Liberals have in that matter acted honourably and with the highest of motives and any criticism of their conduct based upon the plea of inconsistency cannot be accepted for a moment.

The next chapter on "Mohammedan Movements" by Sir Theodore Morison gives an account of the growth of the communal spirit among Mussalmans, and the spirit of pan-Islamism that dominates them. In chapter VI, Sir Hugh McPherson traces the origin and growth of communal antagonism, especially between the Hindus and Mussalmans leading up to the announcement of the Communal Award by the British Government. He is perfectly correct in saying that the communal antagonism, so much in evidence in recent times, has more a political and less a religious basis and the question is one of satisfying minority interests and safeguarding their rights. A number of writers contribute to chapter VII, which relates to "Minority Communities," Sir Patrick Fagan writing about the Sikhs, Mr. Charters Malony on the "Depressed Classes," Sir Hubert Carr on the British commercial community, Sir Campbell Rhodes on the Anglo-Indians and Rev. Paton on the Indian Christians. All these sections are well-written, though some of them are entirely colourless as for example Sir H. Carr's on the British commercial community. The section on the depressed classes, as indeed all the others, is mainly historical, and it suffers from this defect that it does not take account of the recent change in the attitude of the caste Hindus towards them and the big wave of reform that has been sweeping the country. An account, written probably in 1932, ought necessarily to have taken this factor into consideration.

Chapter VIII on "Women in Indian Politics" written by Mrs. Gray, gives a succinct account of the advancement of women, though its silence as

regards the part which women would occupy in the future India is an unsatisfactory feature of it. One would have liked Mrs. Gray to deal with the lives of some of the great women who played a notable part in rousing and developing the consciousness of their own importance in national life of Indian women.

Mr. John Coatman's chapter on Parliamentary Institutions contains a summary of the development of representative institutions in India. He is right when he says that the Reforms of 1919 failed to secure the emergence of political parties based upon differences in political programmes and he pays a tribute to the Congress Party, which may be said to have attained the position of a well-organised political party. His praise of the work of the Council of State which, according to him, has behaved throughout as a true "Senate of the Nation" is ill-merited, especially when we remember that on several critical occasions the Council acted in opposition to the overwhelming body of popular opinion as expressed by the Legislative Assembly.

Chapter X by Sir Evan Cotton is a collection of short biographical sketches of some outstanding political leaders and the next chapter by Mr. Pratt attempts to assess the influence of Gandhiji as a factor in Indian politics. Chapter XII contains an account of movements like the anarchical movement, the Red Shirt movement and so on. Chapter XIII deals with Indians overseas.

From the point of view of the general reader, chapter XIV on the Federal Idea by Sir Robert Holland is an important one. He traces in outline relations between the Indian States and British India leading up to the definite formulation of the ideal of a Federal India in which both units will be partners. Sir Robert Holland is a sympathetic defender of the Native States, which he thinks should be safeguarded against encroachments from outside. But it is as much as one can see that the retention in fact of all those rights would mean the very negation of the ideal of Federal partnership and the doctrine of equal sacrifice by all federal units. Sir Robert Holland does not either fully endorse all the claims advanced on behalf of the States or contradict them; but he indirectly supports them when he says that "it is certain that, whether in respect of paramountcy or any other of the great issues involved in Federation, the constitution that will unite and rule India will not be shaped so as to tally with legal theories or the doctrines of political science." All of which amounts to saying that British India should recognise all the privileges that the States put forward and also all the exemptions that they claim, though they may not accord with the strict constitutional basis of a Federal union.

Chapter XV on the Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931 by the Marquess of Zetland is also an interesting one. Lord Zetland recognises that "in theory the arguments in favour of the solution urged by the Indian delegates, namely, the creation of an executive responsible to the legislature, were unassailable." But as an apology for the non-recognition by the British Government of the Indian delegates' proposition, he brings forward the "facts" which the British delegates were unable to ignore—the existence of minorities, the apprehended dominance of the constitution by Congressmen and so on. The writer attaches rather too much importance to these seemingly insuperable obstructions, though there is another side to the picture also, according to which these obstacles will lose much of their efficacy with the introduction of the responsible system of government.

The last chapter by Mr. Brown summarises the political situation in India in 1932.

On the whole, the book is a valuable one, being more so from the historical viewpoint than from the point of view of the opinions which the various writers express on the subjects they have dealt with.

C. V. HANUMANTHA RAO.

THE TRUTH OF LIFE.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MAHABHARATA,
VOL. I. By N. V. THADANI. (Bharat Publishing House, Karachi) 24cm. 432p. Rs. 12/-

ONE often reads in the Brāhmanas passages like the following:—

"They say, 'In that the cake is on eleven potsherds, and Agni and Vishnu are two, what is the arrangement here for the two, and what the division?' That for Agni is on eight potsherds; the Gayatri has eight syllables; the metre of Agni is the Gayatri. That for Vishnu is on three potsherds, for thrice did Vishnu stride across this."

"A pap in Ghee should he offer, who considers himself unsupported..... Ghee is the milk of the woman, the rice grains that of the man; that is a pairing; with a pairing, verily thus does he propagate him with offspring and cattle for a generation."

We would like to place a few extracts from the book under review side by side with these passages and it would be observed that the method of interpretation, and the facile manner of drawing out the symbolism of any given act are in the same spirit in both the cases. Thus we read—

All systems of Hindu Philosophy may be looked at from three points of view... Each of them corresponds to the idea of a great energy of life: Vedanta to Buddhi or Heat, Yoga to Mind or Electricity, and Sankhya to Ether or Magnetic energy. (p. 83)

There are seven principal energies of life, from Buddhi to the element 'Earth.' Corresponding to these three are seven members of the Solar system: the Sun corresponding to Buddhi; the Moon to the Wind; Mars to Ether; Mercury to Air; Jupiter to Fire; Venus to Water and Saturn to the element "Earth." (p.245.)

An interesting illustration of the relation between Purusa and Prakriti, or zero and the nine numbers, is to be found in the form of the Hindu marriage ceremony, which too is conceived as a union of Prakriti and Purusa through woman and man.

The pair are seated to face the east, the place of the Sun, the supreme source of manifest life, whose image below is the sacred fire kindled before them. The figure of the nine mansions or *Grahas*, is drawn to represent Prakriti, whose place by the fire as an image of the Sun, symbolises the first union of the Supreme Purusa and Prakriti on earth. When the ceremony commences the bride is seated to the right of the bridegroom, and it is completed only after they have gone round the fire or *Grahas* four times and measured seven steps, and then they change their places, and the bride is seated to the left of the bridegroom.

All this is but an illustration of the Union of Purusa and Prakriti according to the system of thought already explained. The four circles round the fire are the four stages through which all life must pass to become manifest; the seven steps represent the seven divisions of life from Buddhi to the element 'Earth,' which must be taken to create life anew; while the places to the right and left represent the correct position of Purusa and Prakriti. When the ceremony begins, the pair are still uncreative; and so the bridegroom is seated to the left of the bride, like zero in respect of numbers; but when it is completed, he (zero), having been made creative in respect of the bride, is given his correct place, and that is to her right. (p. 171-2).

Such interpretations, however, are held to be puerile, fanciful and lawless—in fact sheer drivel. What would these scholars think when they find similar modes of thought applied to the whole of our sacred literature and to the epics and the Purānas, by a modern? The main idea of the present work, in the words of the author, is 'that the Sacred Books of the Hindus, from the Vedas to the Mahābhārata deal with the problem of all problems—the Truth of Life, conceived in various ways. The Vedas examine the different theories of life—its origin, manifestation, and end—in the form of hymns; the Brāhmanas represent the supreme creative energy conceived as action in sacrifice; the Upanishads and the six systems of Hindu Philosophy deal with the same subject with less symbolism and more directly; while the Purānas and the great epics of Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata describe it in story-form.' The author further tells us that the whole conception of life as understood by the ancients is based on the organic cell or ovum, out of which has been evolved the great ancient idea of the Golden Egg. The Sanskrit language itself is conceived as a picture of Brahmanda, reproducing by means of its vowels and consonants, general structure, Sandhi rules and grammatical forms, the idea of the cell, and the form, action and interaction of its constituent parts; so that each expression, word or letter might be the mirror of a great science, a great philosophy, and a great religion, all united together in one truth.

All this is highly ingenious and the author certainly deserves credit for the laborious cunning with which he has correlated the sacred literature of the Hindus and the sciences known to them with the fundamental conception of life; and one is simply staggered at the boldness and violence with which the author lays bare the latent symbolism in each concept of philosophy or science or religion.

And what is our Mahābhārata according to this new method of interpretation? "The story of the Mahābhārata is not a history or a tale of romance but a pictorial representation of the three great systems of Hindu Philosophy, their agreement and difference, connection and conflict..... The final battle of Kurukshetra is but a contest between the system of Vedānta on the one hand and the system of Yoga and Sāṅkhya on the other."

It will be seen that this conception of our great epic is subversive of all accepted views regarding the origin and development of the work which undoubtedly has preserved the history of a great struggle, and has sprung out of the flotsam of the past.

It is too great a strain on our credulity to believe it to be a representation of the three principal systems of philosophy. Similarly, to believe that the Sanskrit language is a deliberate creation of man, and that it is a picture of the central conception of life as conceived by the ancients is an opinion that bemuses with its reckless singularity a reader who has other notions regarding the origin of language and the laws of linguistic development.

The book is daringly original; and while it is impossible to subscribe either to the main thesis or to any of its details, yet it is a highly entertaining and challenging document.

C. R. DEVADHAR.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE.

EARLY ASTRONOMY AND COSMOLOGY.
By C. P. S. MENON. (Allen and Unwin.) 1932.
22cm. 192p. 19/6

THIS is an attempt to ascertain the structure of the universe as first conceived by Man and to find out if

the various ancient civilizations had a common concept or borrowed the idea from each other. He has also advanced a novel theory about the origin of the solar and lunar zodiacs.

A cursory study of the available ancient literature of the Greeks, the Babylonians and the Hindus shows that the earth was considered a flat circular disc with the Heavens as a solid vault covering it like a huge bell. Homer describes the earth as a flat circular disc surrounded by the river Okeanos; the sun, the moon and the stars rose in the East from Okeanos and moved beneath the bell-shaped Heaven and plunged into the Okeanos in the West. Hesiod, another Greek poet, conceived the earth as a plane dividing the universe into two hemispheres. The Babylonian scheme of the world represents the earth and the solid vault of the heavens as supported by the "DEEP" (waters); above them were the "Upper Waters", and above them the sun-illuminated home from which the sun emerged every morning through a door in the East and into which he entered every evening through the door in the West. According to the Hindu Puranas, the world is flat and made up of a number of concentric rings, alternately land and sea. The central island is our earth, the Jambu-Dwipa divided into four quarters of which the southernmost is India. At the centre of the earth is a huge mountain Meru; round which revolve the various celestial bodies in horizontal orbits at definite heights above the earth. The Chinese conception seems to be similar to that of Puranas.

Mr. Menon puts forward the novel theory that the earliest conception of the world was square and that the circular shape was a later development. He refers to passages in ancient literature in support of his theory. In the Rig-Veda the earth is said to be "four-cornered"; the bricks used for constructing fire-altars are four-cornered, for all the bricks are after the manner of the earth. The Satapata Brāhmana says that the earth is four-cornered, the four quarters being her corners. The square shape of the altars and other buildings familiar to the Vedic Aryans indicates their primitive conception of the world. The plans of their villages and cities were square. Huge pyramids on square bases built by the Egyptians and other ancients indicate what they conceived the universe was like. To Mount Meru is attributed a square section by a few among the diverse authorities quoted by Al-Beruni. The author gives another ingenious proof for the square conception by verifying the accuracy of figures given in Suryaprajnapti, a Jain astronomical treatise assuming the Jambu-dwipa to be square-shaped as also the orbit of the sun. Incidentally this proves that the figures given by ancient astronomers are not imaginary but obtained by actual observations and calculations. The symbol used by the Chinese to represent the earth is a square enclosing four small squares formed by joining the middle points of opposite sides of the square. The author comes to the conclusion that the ancients must have independently the same conception and that no nationality borrowed from another.

Another interesting suggestion by the author is about the origin of the twelve signs of the solar zodiac and the 27 nakshatras (28 including the nakshatra Abhijit or the lunar zodiac). Mr. Menon shows how the numbers 4, 12, 28, 60 and others which occur so often in all the ancient systems and which are usually ascribed to a correspondence with certain astronomical periods, can be obtained. By dividing the sides of a square into 4 equal parts and joining the points of division by lines drawn parallel to the sides and rubbing off the four squares in the centre, we get a square with 12 squares marked

near its border—a figure frequently used by the Hindu astrologer. Similarly, by dividing the sides of the square into 8 and 16 parts we get squares with respectively 28 and 60 small squares on their borders. By further doubling the number of divisions we can get other mystic numbers. The author suggests that the division of the solar zodiac into 12 parts preceded the assignment of various animals and other objects to distinguish them. The lunar zodiac consisting of 28 nakshatras is suggested to have been obtained in a similar way. The square conception of the shape of the universe is considered to be the basis of all these divisions. Prof. Filon, in the foreword to the book, says, "It now appears, if Mr. Menon is right, that these numbers originate in a mathematical, not an astronomical, necessity and that they are used to build up a geometrical framework into which the astronomical phenomena were fitted. That some of them happened, curiously enough, to fit fairly closely may well have been the cause of superstitious wonder and possibly the justification of the well-known phrase ascribed to Pythagoras that 'numbers rule the Universe'... Much, of course, remains to be done before such a theory could be regarded as established, but Mr. Menon can claim to have set up a signpost which may well point to the unification or at least the better co-ordination of our knowledge of Man's earliest attempts to form a coherent picture of the Universe."

Three appendices giving the corresponding names of constellations used by various nations and a very useful glossary are given at the end of the book.

C. SESHACHAR.

SHORT NOTICES.

INDIAN ISLAM. By MURRAY T. TITUS. (Oxford University Press.) 23cm. 290p. 12/6.

"Summon thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and with kindly warning: dispute with them in the kindest manner."—Quran, xvi. 126.

"Say to those who have been given the Book and to the ignorant: Do you accept Islam? Then, if they accept Islam, are they guided aright: but if they turn away, then thy duty is only preaching: and God's eye is on His servants."—Quran, lii. 20.

"And endure what they say with patience, and depart from them with a decorous departure."—Quran, Lxxiii. 10.

"Then if they turn their backs, still thy office is only plain-spoken preaching."—Quran, xvi. 84.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion"—Quran, ii. 257.

THIS book, according to the author, is a religious history of Islam in India. It is one of the series of volumes published under the title of "The Religious Quest of India," Dr. Titus being one of the joint Editors of these volumes. The first object of the series is "to work in the sincere and sympathetic spirit of science" and thereby "to understand the perplexingly involved developments of thought and life in India and dispassionately to estimate their value." The second is "to set each form of Indian religion by the side of Christianity in such a way that the relationship may stand out clear."

"Indian Islam" however does not at all fulfil the second purpose. Dr. Titus in the preface explains the reasons for writing this book. He says, "nowhere is there to be found any comprehensive treatment of Indian Islam from the standpoint of religious history." There is no doubt that the need for such a work has been felt for a long time. Such a work after a considerable amount of research

would certainly help politicians and people of the two major communities to understand one another. As Dr. Titus tells us, this volume is confined to "a discussion of the religious history of Islam in India; how it came, how it spread, how it divided and sub-divided, how it has been affected by its environment and how it has reacted to modern conditions" and in ten chapters he covers the history of Islam in India from 711 to 1930. His division of the subject is convenient and logical and the five appendices and the bibliography with the glossary of Islamic terms furnish very useful information.

I. S. HAJI.

GLEANINGS. BY MANOHAR LAL ZUTSHI. (The Indian Press, Ltd., Allahabad.) 1933. 24cm. 274p.

A RICH repast is gathered in this book from our own land of regrets and other neo-modern countries for the mental consumption of all in India who know not where they are in a world pulsating with progressive life. It is rare for a man past his middle age to possess the courage of Mr. Zutshi's heterodox convictions so far in advance of their time as they are not even now shared by his younger countrymen. Nobility of outlook is not the privilege of youth any more than that retrograde thinking is peculiar to the aged. In India somehow, except for a few notable progressives here and there, the young and the aged are all alike in that they love and cling to whatever is stale and outworn. Reading the political opinions which Mr. Zutshi entertained a quarter of a century ago, it cannot be said that we today are any the wiser or more heroic than he. Curiously enough, the social problems of his younger days meet today not with the opposition of ignorant "old fogies" as then, but with the hostility of cultured reactionaries. Since then, though much superficial water of religious and social reform has flowed under the Indian bridge, one still misses the balanced leadership of Mr. Ranade, nor do we possess the clear intelligence of Mr. Zutshi to see that "we Indians, whether Hindus or Mohamedans, are suffering from an overdose of religiosity. Turn where we may to matters political, social, industrial, 'religion' bars the way. With religion usurping the place of secular factors, progress is absolutely impossible. Secondly, we must learn the great value and that great need of *silent patient preparation*. There is too much 'push', too much impatience, a too hasty expectation of result in our public life. Thirdly, we must *give up national vanity* and a foolish belief in the wisdom of our ancestors. Last, but not the least, we have to learn from Japan the lesson of an intense, almost fanatical *patriotism*. There is plenty of pseudo-patriotism just now in our country floating like garbage in the midst of the waves of political agitation. A wave of reaction, of stupid and senseless reaction is sweeping over the country and threatens to undo *the little good achieved by the help of a higher and more virile civilisation*. (In reviewer's italics.) The overthrow of authority and custom and the development of a sane and healthy rationalism in their stead is the *sine qua non* of Indian progress."

The book contains reviews and articles of live significance to Indians and in these days of misguidance or absence of proper guidance, Mr. Zutshi throws trustworthy light on the path ahead of us such as will suppress the tendency to become a degenerate and dying race and be wiped off the face of the Earth.

K. VENUGOPAL RAO.