

THE BURDEN OF SWARAJ

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**BEING A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF
CERTAIN BROADER ISSUES UNDERLYING
A NATIONALIST CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA**

BY

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For
My Mother

PREFACE:

The most outstanding fact about life in India to-day is the political movement. Its fundamental inspiration is undoubtedly nationalist. Yet the ideal of political realisation of Indian nationalism has hitherto remained vague. I do not, however, for a moment suggest that the absence of definite ideals of political life before the ken of Indian nationalists discredit the Indian national movement. The political struggle of nationalism is everywhere so exacting that the wresting of political power, the immediate objective, obsesses the entire vision of the nationalist mind. Yet power is but a means to an end. And I believe the struggle of Indian nationalism has reached a stage when thought must be directed to the planning of the political life under the nationalist *regime*. The book is an attempt at provoking thought precisely in this direction. It need hardly be stressed here that the vital meaning of Swaraj will lie in the manner in which the Indian nationalists organise the political life calculated to the maximum promotion of the peace and happiness of the Indian people. This problem, I consider, is in a large measure constitutional. But any attempt at constitution-making for the nationalist India must, in my opinion, proceed not so much along the rut of commonplace worn-out liberal maxims of the mid-nineteenth century, as on the harmony of the present-day advanced poli-

tical thought of the West and the political experience and social ideals of our own land. Unfortunately public discussion on constitutional issues has taken such questions as adult franchise and 'responsible government' too much for granted. As a student of Indian politics and of political institutions generally, I have been unable to endorse the existing popular views on these subjects. I do by no means claim to have said the last word on them. I have sought to write myself as a critical exponent of my own points of view based on my own reading of current Indian affairs. I should be content if a similar critical attitude be developed among my readers, it being no matter to me what conclusions they might draw for themselves. My object is essentially cultural, using the word in an Arnoldian sense.

A word is needed about the title of the book. The conception that Swaraj is more a responsibility than a right has been the recurrent refrain of my discussion in the following pages. It is this fundamental assumption which has given a distinctive identity to my treatment of varied subjects and in one word sums up my own approach to the constitutional problem. Of the various limitations of treatment of the subjects I am myself conscious. Chapter IX of the book, for instance, is not intended as a serious study of the intricate financial problems which will face a new nationalist government; there I have touched off only a few broad points to interest those who have kept finance at an arm's length thinking it a dry, if not a sordid, subject.

Similarly, I have intentionally refrained from examining the Karachi resolution of the Indian National Congress on fundamental rights. While it is a welcome move in the right direction giving the lie to the charge that Congress has compromised between 'capital and labour, youth and old, man and woman,' the programme outlined in the resolution is too tentative and in some points too meticulous. I have thought it, therefore, desirable to leave it entirely out of my examination.

In conclusion, I must express my gratitude to the Editor of the *Annual Registers* the volumes of which for recent years I had had many occasions of referring to and gleanjng materials from. I am also indebted to Messrs. S. Roy M.A., and K. Bose M.A., specially to the former, who out of their abundant sympathy for the poor eye-sight of the writer, practically saw the entire book through the press. My acknowledgment is finally due to my wife Mrs. Subarna Purkayastha M.A., who rendered me various help too numerous to recite.

K. M. P.

May 1, 1931, Calcutta.

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