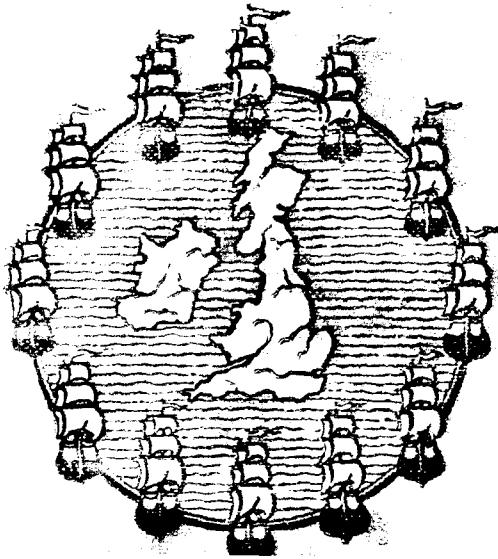


THROUGH ISLE & EMPIRE



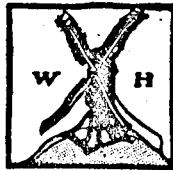
THROUGH ISLE AND EMPIRE

THROUGH ISLE AND EMPIRE

BY THE
VICOMTE ROBERT D'HUMIÈRES

TRANSLATED BY
ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS

WITH A PREFATORY LETTER BY
RUDYARD KIPLING



LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

All rights reserved

TO
HENRY VENN COBB

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
A LETTER BY WAY OF PREFACE	ix
INTRODUCTION	xiii
PART THE FIRST	
IN ENGLAND	
I. ARRIVAL—FOG—ECHOES OF WAR	3
II. CORONATION TIME	13
III. THE WALLACE COLLECTION	24
IV. SOCIETY—SUPPERS—SPORT	32
V. SOME THEATRES	41
VI. SOME HOUSES—THE THAMES	50
VII. COMPARATIVE MANNERS	66
VIII. HENLEY—ALDERSHOT—HAMPSHIRE—THE POOL OF LONDON	83
IX. ALONG THE SOUTH COAST—A VISIT TO RUDYARD KIPLING	92
PART THE SECOND	
EGYPT	
I. CADIZ—GIBRALTAR—SPANISH DANCES	107
II. AT SEA—CAIRO	113
III. ENTERTAINMENTS	117
IV. TEMPLES AND TOMBS	121
V. THE STREETS—HASHISH—IN LOWER EGYPT	130

PART THE THIRD
INDIA

CHAP.	PAGE
I. AT SEA—CALCUTTA—GAJETIES	141
II. CALCUTTA: THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS— THE SQUALID QUARTERS	152
III. HINDU INDIA—BENARES	159
IV. IN RAJPUTANA—JEYPORE	171
V. MOSLEM INDIA—OLD DELHI	178
VI. THE MOSQUE OF KUTB'UL ISLAM—THE RUINS OF TUGHLAKABAD	186
VII. THE VERSAILLES OF AKBAR THE GREAT— FATEHPUR-SIKRI	194
VIII. THE OLD GARDENS OF KASHMIR	209
IX. THE PALACES AT AGRA AND DELHI—THE TAJ MAHAL	216
X. ENGLISH INDIA—HILL STATIONS—SIMLA	229
XI. ON THE SLOPES OF THE HIMALAYAS—GUL- MARG	240
XII. A POET OF INDIA	246
XIII. PRINCES	253
XIV. KAPURTHALA	261
XV. MORE MAHARAJAHS	267
XVI. TOURISTS, PORTRAITS AND MASQUES	273

PART THE FOURTH
THROUGH DECCAN

I. DOWN TOWARDS SOUTHERN INDIA	285
II. KARLI—BIJAPUR—PONDICHERRY	289
III. MADRAS—THE GREAT PAGODAS	294

A LETTER BY WAY OF PREFACE
TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

My dear Vicomte d'Humières,

Thank you very much indeed for your book on the Island and the Empire which I have been reading with the greatest enjoyment. There are few things more interesting than to see one's own country from without and eyes that are as penetrating (and as merciful) as yours make the interest a keen pleasure.

From the point of view of an inhabitant, I am specially delighted with your tributes to the energy of the race, a thing which some of us at times to-day begin to doubt. There exists—I am glad you did not see it—an England which, ruined by excess of comfort, has gone to sleep and, because it snores loudly, believes that it is thinking.

Your comments on the Army seem to me very just. Above all, you have put your finger upon one vital point of our training

when you speak of the men who "understand that they must not understand." I think that is at the bottom of many of our successes and our failures. It is the first thing which we teach our boys.

Your studies of India were purely delightful to me, especially those of Rajputana, where I wandered once when I was young, through Chitor, Jeypore and the rest. Of the South which interested you so much I know but little, though a great deal of the romance of dead India is there. I wish you had seen something of the new India. The India of the factory and the railway, the oriental moving unperturbed through modern machinery and adoring his Gods in the shadow of the engine-sheds and the boiler-rooms. It is not beautiful, but it is significant.

Believe me, I agree most cordially with all you say on the value of a good understanding between our countries; and this not only for the need of to-day, but for the hope of to-morrow. The two lands, so it seems to me, supplement each other in temperament and outlook, in logic and fact. Even if this were not the case, we must remember that there is not so much of liberty left in Eastern Europe

that the two leaders of Freedom should dare to dispute between themselves. We both have to deal with the "unfrei" peoples, the veiled and cramped lands where the word of a king is absolute power. If we should quarrel, who will profit? The Middle Ages with the modern guns. Isn't that true?

If I could see you, I could discuss more at ease than here a thousand interesting matters in your book. Notably what you have observed of the national coolness of temperament. No, our "chastity" is not all cant. It is an administrative necessity forced upon us by the density of the population. Imagine a land with four hundred people to the square mile—if they were penetrated with a refined and enduring sensuality! It would be an orgy! It would impede traffic. Consequently, we are brief and businesslike in such matters. Also it is a meat-fed people, of whom 6,000,000 (or more than one seventh) live in a city which, for five months of the year, swims in semi-obscurity alternating with profound darkness. We realize that this is exciting to certain nerve-centres and we—the land—take exercise to counteract the stimulus. "We understand that we must not understand." To under-

stand everything may be to pardon everything, - but it also means to commit everything.

I have only one complaint to make, but it is a serious one. In your book you have said that I adore Offenbach! I am not a musician, but even I have some dim knowledge of pleasing sounds and I fear you must have misunderstood me. No, not Offenbach, never Offenbach. Except on a barrel-organ, as a relief to the songs of the music-halls, my own perhaps!

I would sooner be the "aggressive imperialist" of fiction than an adorer of Offenbach.

Very sincerely yours,

RUDYARD KIPLING.

BATEMAN'S, BURWASH, SUSSEX, Aug. 7, 1904.

INTRODUCTION

I

NONE will dispute that it is to the advantage of nations to know one another. The advantage becomes more positive when the object of our study is a neighbouring people whose civilization is influencing or must come to influence our own. And the advantage becomes one of the first order when, as now, the nation in question has but lately united itself to us by a compact, even though it were a purely utilitarian compact.

Any contribution towards this task of enlightening one's fellow countrymen as regards the souls and motives of a neighbouring race is useful and opportune. It is a case, in fact, of dispelling heavy and inveterate shadows of ignorance and misunderstanding. The humblest spark can lead us one step forward. Herein lies the excuse for this book.

It has no pretensions to academic harmony, to historical impartiality or to sociological serenity. It is a collection of impressions. Only, these are not quite the same that would be jotted down by a hurried or inattentive traveller. They have undergone the process of sorting rendered inevitable by the repetition of the same visits, by an increasing familiarity with persons and things, by long-continued sojourning, by the proof of men and views, by the study of books and the soil. These sketches represent in an imperfect and epitomized form the spoils of many journeys to England in the course of the last ten years, of two winters spent in Egypt and of a fifteen months' stay in India and Central Asia. In their variety, which will sometimes appear incoherent, the reader will perhaps discern a continuity of preoccupation: the psychology of the Englishman, both at home, in the midst of his traditions, and abroad, in the midst of adventure, in contact with different environments and peoples; as in India, for instance, where he re-enacts daily, in his relations with the subject race, the memorable meeting of Alexander and the Gymnosophist, as told to us in the narrative

of the Greek historian : action and vision face to face and dumb.

The endeavour, therefore, of these pages is to give an idea of English life as seen from within rather than as observed from without. But I should not consider that I had completed the book which I have in mind if to these documents, which are in a measure abstract and inconclusive, I did not add some of the reasons why the group of mankind which the Anglo-Saxon race represents appears to me worthy, above all others, of our philosophic attention and our social esteem (as an eminently valid and hardy shoot of the specific tree) and well-suited to complete by its master faculties our natural gifts thrown into the common stock. It would be interesting to establish that the understanding which has just been effected is prompted not only by frail and perishable motives of convenience, but by more profound reasons derived from the respective temperaments of the two races and to draw an inference as to the future of this union (in spite of provisional denials) and the great lesson which the world can gain from a realized alliance of this novel kind. Lastly, by way of a first homage to that

English practical sense from which we have so much to learn, it would perhaps be well, in passing, to suggest a few preliminary actions, a few points of etiquette, useful little pieces of advice to prevent misunderstanding at the outset. I will try to indicate in advance the points at which there is a danger of our characters clashing, the occasions of distrust that have to be overcome, the feelings to be conciliated. There could be nothing more delicate nor more useful to be effected between two races which would complement each other less well if they resembled each other more.

It is here no question of idle panegyric or sentimental declamation. I would establish that the business has a great chance of benefiting the contracting parties and even conducing, in a more or less near future, to the general civilization of the world. I would reconcile the profound instinct which brings the two races together with the greater, the supreme instinct which is that of their preservation; I would look beyond the present and show the compact of yesterday becoming, for both nations, a guarantee of lasting strength and, for humanity, perhaps, the first

memorable example of an alliance already consecrated by geographical proximity, by kinship of institutions and blood, by reciprocal commercial advantage, an alliance from which we may one day expect an order of more intimate, more healthy and more general spiritual exchanges.

2

I can only summarily remind the reader of the reasons for which the English people presents an eminent type of the human species. Its constitution, which was praised by Montesquieu more than 150 years ago, its laws, an unequalled example of the adaptation of the political machine to the needs of the individual, imply the higher utilization of all the energies of the country. The aristocracy plays a preponderating part and yet its privileges do not cause it to forget its duties; moreover, it is open to all-comers: intellectual, military, industrial magnates rise to it, so to speak, mechanically, just as its younger sons fall back into the commonalty. It is an ideal which is constantly held forth,* which is in

* H. G. WELLS: *Mankind in the Making*, chap. v.

no way unattainable, which creates emulation instead of creating envy. Lastly, it has not the ridiculous note of poverty.

The idea of fortune is logically allied with that of aristocracy. The great problem, how to transfer the powers of the aristocracy of birth, to-day in its decline, to the aristocracy of money, is here easily solved. Money rubs off its dirt at the contact of those of whom it has become the "peer:" this does not happen in America, which contains no inspiring model, nor in France, where, indeed, it seems as if the aristocracy, nowadays, took its tone from money.

As for the people, it would be difficult to assert that it is happier here than elsewhere, but at least it does not exhaust itself in hatreds and revolts and it is deeply imbued with a sense of the necessary inequality of social positions, which corresponds with that of human faculties. In any case, it is assured of two supreme benefits: liberty and justice. The respect that surrounds a magistracy above suspicion (observe the expression of an Englishman in whose presence a Frenchman indulges in the jests current among our people concerning the morality of the judges

of our Courts of Appeal and of Error: he will be profoundly scandalized) hallows a system of law from which, through all the lumber of its antiquated doctrines, shines an admirable regard for the sacred rights of the individual.

The race is a fine one, full of vigour and tenacity and combining both idealism and realism. The most marked characteristics of its men appear to be stoicism, the practice of truth, a sense of respect and hence of duty, generosity. In short, the Englishman presents a good specimen of the physical and moral individual in a society which espouses his wants and exalts his energies to the highest point in order to attain the best possible result.

None of all this is new. These summary outlines were necessary, however. The complete picture will be found in Taine's fine studies, those models of intelligence and impartiality, which, from the author's mental habit, the date at which he wrote them and the circumstances in which they appeared, admitted of but one tacit conclusion.

3

It would be of a more immediate interest to forestall the common objections and to endeavour to correct the more stubborn prejudices that separate the two nations. What are the favourite reproaches which we are accustomed to aim at the English character?

The reproach of egoism contains nearly all of them. It is marked by a sort of childish sophistry at the start, because it applies the old formulas of individual morality to those aggregations of individuals known as nations; and this constitutes a first cause of error. Imagine a nation that should be "meek and lowly in heart," that should "love its neighbour as itself," that should "turn the other cheek also," or practise only the elements of Gospel morality! The picture is absurd. The Emperor William II., a subtle exegetist and an irreproachable Christian, would find in the development of this idea an excellent subject for his next speech of welcome to the recruits of the German Empire.

I do not mean to say that this morality—that of asceticism, of the ancient *odium generis humani*—is any better adapted, in the era which is now commencing, to the individual than to the country. Its formula, discussed on every hand, has no longer over our minds the empire which it retains over our hearts. A noble action does, in fact, necessarily imply a sacrifice for our moral and æsthetic exigencies. Modern wisdom will still have a great difficulty in rendering palatable this simple truth, namely that an ideal can be disinterested only on pain of being unfruitful.

4

Under which forms does this English egoism chiefly offend against that pure model of disinterestedness and altruism offered by the French burgess of our Third Republic?

That which strikes him first is, perhaps, disloyalty. He complains of having been “done,” he fears lest he should be “done” again. The revolts of sentiment pale beside this grave, primordial objection.

“Perfidious Albion” is a phrase invented by the pamphleteers whom Napoleon loyally

kept to besmirch the British dynasty and parliament. It made a great hit. It covered all the defeats due to the incapacity or improvidence of our governments in their relations with England. One of the most venerable stereotypes of our newspaper press represents us, at different historical moments, as "pulling the chestnuts out of the fire" for a greedy and faithless ally, whereas there would have been more just grounds for blaming our own inability to see, in a given situation, the real advantages that escaped us, in the Crimea or Egypt, for instance. We console ourselves by objurgating a more prudent accomplice and recognizing in ourselves a superior, though somewhat belated honesty. One is mindful of that phrase of Laclos' which I have already quoted in the text of this book :

"That is so like men ! All equally rascally in their designs, the weakness which they display in the execution they christen probity."

Without pretending to confer upon England a monopoly to which she does not herself lay claim, I may say that the love and practice of "fair play" (a sort of middle-

class chivalry) and of truth, those pronounced characteristics of modern English education and manners, have made their way into her political morals. Lord Curzon, for instance, furnishes an instructive type of that new generation of statesmen, endowed with bolder tendencies, a love of clear and swift solutions, a professed abhorrence of the diplomatic lie (see the preface to his book on Persia), a frankness which is the natural luxury of strength.* I know not that Mr. Chamber-

* That famous British perfidy appears very harmless in the face of the methods of certain rival Powers. Albion is an artless school-girl beside Russia. To prove this, I will quote the arguments which Lord Curzon uses to establish the reality of the Russian peril with regard to India. These are the plan for the joint expedition against India designed by Napoleon and the Emperor Paul; that of Skobelev; that of Kuropatkin, the military heir of Skobelev, who is the leading exponent of Central-Asian tactics in the Russian army and whose movements in the Russo-Japanese war England has every sort of reason for following with interest; the written testimony of M. Zinovieff, the head of the Asiatic Department of the Russian Foreign Office, admitting the political object of making an impression on England and checking her attempts against Russia's expeditions and progress; down to, lastly, the documents discovered at Kabul in 1879: the letters from General Stolietoff to the Amir of Afghanistan, provoking the latter, after the signature of the treaty of Berlin, "to treat the English with deceit and fraud," which Russia was to render fruitful by her support.

lain has ever been taxed with perfidy. He represents rather an extreme type of the opposite tendencies which we will now proceed to examine.

5

In default of cunning, one readily accuses England of harshness, pride and cruelty in her methods towards other countries, neighbouring or subject. Upon what are these accusations founded? Let us examine the gravest. The Irish question first presents itself: a complicated question, heart-rending, difficult to judge with coolness. It would seem as though England, after the brutalities of conquest, remained inert rather than hostile in the face of the problem set before her. Certainly, this inertia is none the less to be condemned; but such movements of opinion as the Home Rule campaign and such accomplished facts as the recent agrarian

Stolietoff was sent by General Kaufmann, the Governor-general of Tashkent, and the machination contrived by these two worthy soldiers was a master-piece of duplicity fit for the dreams of veteran diplomatists. Russia, for the rest, abandoned the Amir whom she had duped and "the good faith of Russia has never on either side in English politics found an honest spokesman since."

reforms of Mr. George Wyndham (which possibly mark the date of a real renaissance for Ireland) have closed this phase and relegated the memories of hatred and oppression to that past in whose depths every nation hears the voice of remorse.

There is also the problem of India, where publicists, travellers and artists have allotted to England a direct responsibility for the ravages of famine. It would need a volume to study the question whether the sum total of welfare, justice and prosperity has increased in India under British sway. It seems impossible to deny it, notwithstanding the inevitable shadows on that huge picture. But new necessities have arisen. That swarm of humanity, due precisely to the security and the benefits of the English administration, is unable, subject as it is to the capricious rains, to solve the problem of its existence. England appears to be no more responsible for this calamity than France for the eruptions in Martinique. This is the conclusion that follows from the learned articles of M. Chailley-Bert on the immense network of canals of irrigation in India, from M. Albert Métin's lucid econo-

mical studies and, to mention some English sources, from the valuable information which I owe to the obliging kindness of Mr. H. Seymour Trower, the president of the Navy League, and of Sir William Lee-Warner, of the Indian Council.

Private initiative has sent considerable sums from England for the starving natives, of whom the greater number have been saved by the Famine Relief Works. I could mention poor members of the Indian Civil Service who have given up an important part of their pay for the relief of the same unfortunate people. Nevertheless, we read, in a book on India published in French (though not written by a Frenchman), such lies as the assertion that the Anglo-Indian officials receive additional allowances in times of scarcity! Man still remains powerless before the sport of the eternal laws that grind him down until he masters them. Bad faith, chattering imbecility, a certain sensuous pleasure in compassion all insolently make it their business to distribute the causes and effects of the most obscure phenomena, in whose presence true knowledge remains thoughtful.

Public charity, on the other hand, in

England herself, is exercised with a fulness which we have no right to grudge. Immense hospitals exist by the generosity of private individuals. No one can deny that the Englishman is a greater giver than the Frenchman. He is also more humane. No people displays so much solicitude for animals. The barbarism of the Spaniard or the oriental is unknown to him. Every tourist has seen, in the streets of Naples and Cairo, exhortations to show kindness to the beasts, watering-troughs set up for their benefit, both due to English initiative. This characteristic is not without its beauty.

I will add that England does not number among her institutions such standing reproaches as those schools of miscreants and desperadoes which we call disciplinary companies. A nation that tolerates such adjuncts to the liberties which it has proclaimed has no right to pass censure upon any other.

6

To return to English "egoism," it assumes, we say, other and mitigated forms upon which our prejudices bestow the names of

“haughtiness” or “coldness.” This needs explanation.

Nothing is more disconcerting and afflicting to our expansive (sometimes theatrically expansive) natures than that English reserve which is nothing but the modesty of certain manly feelings, a superlative delicacy in refined souls, a scruple which at least dictates an incontestably noble attitude, despite its stiffness, to the average man.

It would be essential to remove the misconception created by a false interpretation of that “human respect” (an exactly expressive phrase) which screens the Anglo-Saxon’s soul and causes him to dislike excessive gestures, sentimental quaverings, rhetorical or moral mummeries. This characteristic has its origin in a strong inner discipline, a certain sluggishness of imagination, a feeling for the “style” that best suits the obstinate rather than passionate genius of the English. They have promoted this tendency to the rank of a virtue and with profound reason. If its discreetness does not increase the charms of sociability or the easy confidence necessary for ordinary worldly relations, it gives guarantees against indiscretion, favours the home

life (among subjects susceptible to it, for, obviously, self-control is of value only among individuals endowed with a self to control) and imparts dignity, security and elegance to the life away from home. Every Frenchman who has had experience of England admits this. It is only fair to say that these qualities are common to all aristocratic culture. Our own possessed them, with an easy grace added. But we retain only the vestiges. Our democracy will perhaps look upon lessons taken from another country with less suspicion than upon those derived from traditions which it abhors and which it has but too well succeeded in forgetting.

Note that the Englishman does not maintain this reserve so strictly towards the foreigner as towards his own kind. It is not the solemn and supercilious distrust which we imagine to be kept up for the exclusive benefit of the alien, but a general attitude. To us it appears inconceivable that members of the same club, meeting day after day for twenty years or more, should not know such elementary facts regarding one another's lives as whether, for instance, they be married or unmarried. This occurs, however. Two intimate friends

who are separating for years, with a prospect before them of adventures, of dangers, of probable death, will display a stoical dandyism in talking, up to the last moment and to the parting pressure of the hand, upon indifferent subjects. Whichever we may prefer, we are bound to allow more dignity to this power of self-government than to the exuberance of the Neapolitan. The latter perhaps adds to the picturesqueness of mankind, the former certainly adds to its greatness.

Moreover, although this mask often covers vulgar souls, it also sometimes conceals the most delicate sensibility, an exquisite freshness of soul and of spiritual bloom, an engaging manly simplicity, a confidence yielded with an unconstraint and a loyalty that never belie themselves. And it is not a paradox to declare that the Englishman will perhaps raise this mask more willingly for a sympathetic foreigner, one speaking his language and appreciating his country, with whom he dares for a moment to unlace the harness of somewhat artificial constraint and convention in which the etiquette of his education confines him in the presence of his fellow-countrymen. The relations of friendship of this kind which

I have known and experienced have always left a lasting and kindly memory with the men whom they bound together. It is through meetings of this kind that the elect form the most profitable connexions: they usher in wider and more effective sympathies. It does, in fact, seem difficult to believe, looking at the progress which has been achieved, that the relations between peoples should remain for ever regulated by the same primitive instincts that cause the ferine to fling itself upon its rival or its prey and that the only advance made upon the methods of the stone age should be a mercenary alliance or a competition at the point of the sword.

7

English reserve, as it displays itself or rather shrinks back in sobriety of gesture, rarity of speech and reticence in broaching any personal subject, appears to us so strange that, in default of coldness, we tax it with being hypocritical. This brings us to the chapter of the hypocrisy of the English! How often have we not heard this reproach uttered against our neighbours? An im-

portant portion of our halfpenny press would be starved, if this other old stereotype were taken from it. This hypocrisy, superimposed upon the avowed worship of frankness, of fair play which I have just set forth, appears to us a refinement of duplicity. At first sight, our repugnance is justifiable. There is no greater effort of impartiality possible to a French brain than to explain cant and make excuses for it. Its roots touch the gloomiest conceptions of primitive reason: the savage's terror before the implacable Moloch. I spoke above of the love of fair play as a sort of middle-class chivalry: one might say of cant that it is a middle-class asceticism. It is an asceticism stripped not of its cruelty, but of its mysticism and its picturesqueness, an asceticism that has performed the feat of reconciling itself and its dogmas with affirmed piratical instincts and of installing the Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubim of the Old Law on board the beaked galleys of the ancestral Vikings. Wherefore cant, ridiculous and futile in its essence and its origin, burdened with every crime since the death of that truculent and genial Elizabethan England, the England of

Marlowe, Webster and Shakspeare, from the murder of Mary Stuart, that bright and passionate figure of the Renaissance hated by the Scotch preachers, down to the exile of Byron and Shelley, the ostracism that struck a Swinburne, the gaol that opened to receive a Wilde, the political ruin of a Parnell convicted of adultery, this cant is to us abominable. It is, moreover, equally ridiculous in its fruits, for, in the extreme classes of English society, the highest and the lowest, it does not don a morality superior to that of other nations. There remains the middle class, the fount of the living strength of the country, which is still imbued with puritanical traditions, although its ideas are growing broader day by day. Well, it is difficult not to admit that, in this class above all, the excesses of cant represent the defects of valuable social qualities. Upon the whole, he who boasts of his virtue is better than he who boasts of his vices, although we must first determine the constantly changing sense of the words vice and virtue. England has not cleansed of the old sediments of asceticism those jars in which they still adulterate the wine of the new vintages. But she keeps

the jars. In France, we have only the press in which we dance crowned with vine-leaves, drunk, vainly drunk with the new wine of ideas that runs away and is lost.

Yes, this hypocrisy is the sign of a great respect for good. Only, it is the good of yesterday to which it is subjected by a farce which to us appears vile and which, in reality, is pious. In any case, it is provisional, for this good defined according to the formulas of future morality, that which is being elaborated at the bottom of the crucibles and under the lens of the microscopes, this good, once that it is proclaimed, will obtain an adhesion that will cost no effort to man's sincerity. The apparent lie takes its origin in a loyalty which men lay upon themselves towards the divine images and authorities of the past, at a time when they are being entreated by all the forces, all the aspirations, all the august impatiences of the future. I think that, possibly, England may one day owe to us, to the daring and fervour of our researches and our thought, the contents of a new duty. We will return to this presently.

8

There still remains the worship of money, the importance attached to money-making—that which Napoleon implied when he called his enemies a nation of shop-keepers—among the features which the English themselves are inclined to disparage in their own civilization.

It might, however, be brought back to this, that it is the most modern manifestation, the manifestation most immediately permissible and most ultimately fruitful of the ancient will to live. I see in it the lawful recognition of the most potent factor of our latter-day civilization. Money, in fact, is the symbol in which modern man concentrates and salutes his most vigorous hope and his most eager desire of life and strength. Gold is the most recent, the most urgent sign of the will of power. This sign was formerly the sword or the keys. To-day, the Cæsar, the priest abdicate in favour of gold; from the decrepitude of those once redoubtable forces the new master rises amid hypocritical hootings. This fact cannot be

discussed ; it can only be accepted. It jars upon the most sacred beliefs of our inheritance, but we cannot order the morrow. A new morality will arise : it is already dawning. Wealth will have its duties and its saints. Art, the eternal laggard, will follow, no doubt, and some genius of the opening century will come, amid the magic of a work as colossal as *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, to release the gold from the curse of Alberich !

Our present duty is to thrust back our hereditary dislikes and to prepare, for the greatest conceivable good, the new universe which is being imposed upon our sons. Gold must be stamped with the effigy not only of appetites, but also of ideals, of every ideal. Gold rewards, as yet, only craft, economy, business instinct. It creates only a doubtful aristocracy. Every sort of superiority will have to owe its consecration to it. It will make duties for itself, in a manner automatically, before the threatening socialism. Capital can obtain safety only by paying tribute to the other forces of the race. It is a striking fact that this new conception of the duties of gold has appeared and is taking

shape in England and America. Cases in point are the will of Cecil Rhodes, the endowments of Mr. Andrew Carnegie and of so many other millionaires. These do great honour to the Anglo-Saxon race. A moral system which is formed not after an abuse nor under the incentive of an urgent necessity, but by the spontaneous impulse of generous minds constitutes progress. It is, therefore, a very correct sense of realities that tends, in England, to associate fortune with success in every career and also to crown fortune with honours. They bestow a financial reward upon a lucky general and raise a wealthy brewer to the peerage. In this way, the aristocracy is renewed. In this way, money is ennobled. These are harmonious exchanges of the future and the past which guarantee the health of the social organism, even as the harmony of the physiological exchanges ensures the health of the body.

9

I should like to close the chapter of grievances which certain persons persist in pleading against England with a few words

on imperialism. The word sums up the majority of the foregoing accusations and concretes them under the appearance of a sort of new cult which we love to picture as aggressive and voracious. Certainly, the instinct which it adorns with a fascinating label has allowed itself, like all vigorous instincts, to be carried towards excesses at which a thinker like Spencer, for instance, had every right to be afflicted.* No philosopher can praise the development of brutal appetites, the recrudescence of militarism, an apparent retrogression towards barbarism. These, however, are only the first reactions of too lively a feeling on souls too primitive, something like the inherited gesture of carrying the hand to the sword at the appearance of the stranger, which hand is held out after the act has been linked with reflection.

Let us rather try to represent the purified conception which the choicer among our neighbours across the Channel form of a dogma which, for them, conceals neither pride nor the lust of conquest, but expresses only a higher mission that has devolved

* HERBERT SPENCER; *Facts and Comments (passim)*.

upon England for the good of humanity. Lord Curzon does not hesitate to write, at the head of his *Problems of the Far East* :

“To those who believe that the British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has seen and who hold, with the writer, that its work in the Far East is not yet accomplished this book is inscribed.”

That is clear and distinct.

Some months ago, in an article devoted to Lord Curzon, the present writer ventured to make the following reflections :

“There is no more interesting phenomenon in the history of modern England than this opportune crystallization of an altruistic ideal and this anxiety to dignify her aspirations. Its interest seems greater yet from the speculative point of view : never did a better opportunity offer for studying the origin of moral systems. In so doing, one is exposed to the temptation of an irony all too easy. In no case could this be addressed to any particular nationality to the exclusion of the

others. Ancient moralists contended that love was based upon esteem : humbler than the love of individuals, the love of nations, to whose coming all thought worthy of the name looks forward, must learn, to begin with, to be satisfied with less. No social group has the exclusive privilege of virtue or of disinterestedness, any more than the right to disparage others. Among the more powerful groups, their very power exposes more greatly to criticism their methods of self-preservation and extension ; it seems more dignified to look with the composure of scientific observation upon the working of these totalities and not to give ear to the slightest suspicion of that sentiment which is as ugly as it is unphilosophic : I mean jealousy.

“ Here are the facts. A race endowed with adventurous and commercial instincts has seen these hereditary impulses aroused for more than a century by the conquest of India. An enormous field is opened to its enterprise, a field in which all its energies stand self-revealed, become inured, multiply and, lastly, seek new outlets. The conception of the British Empire appears, takes shape, is anxious as to its legitimacy. There is a

question of presenting to the world the new-born imperialism, rugged as yet of aspect, far from reassuring for the greater part . . . O joy, 'twas a Messiah! Peace to men of good-will.

“And let no short-sighted sceptic come to sum up his impression in such phrases as that England has become rich enough to pay for an ideal, or make unkind comparisons with those old financiers to whom a belated honesty is only a more expensive luxury. No; in insisting upon her civilizing task, the most marvellous thing is that England may be right. In landing her bales and starting her caravans, she has simply proved her greater fitness for managing the traffic of the planet. And, in the name of the planet's interests, which include her own, she claims that task as hers. That is all.

“If there be any irony in this, it is superior, cosmic, but it will not rouse laughter at England's expense, or at least not for long. The question thus put allows of only one reply on the part of the rivals of this champion so certain of her strength: to do better. In every human being, the right to rule is measured by his capacity for ruling.

“Let us add that a poet has arrived to add an æsthetical to the ethical imperative spontaneously begotten of the needs of the hour. After the sanction of good comes that of beauty. Your activity is just, says conscience ; it is fine, replies Kipling. A great gratitude rose up in return towards the inspired one who thus crowned the ancient and patient effort of those men and of their fathers before them, fulfilling the most elating functions, perhaps, that ever devolved upon the lyre. And Lord Curzon, in the course of an official speech, pays Kipling the compliment of a quotation, a witness to a like orientation and a common passion in the poet and the statesman. How powerful a social organism is a nation in which forces in other respects the most at variance display this homogeneity, in which the elect really guide the crowd instead of running too far ahead, in which men waste so small a part of the national intelligence and will !”

Other arguments would contribute towards showing in imperialism a play of fatal forces, inevitable in any living organism to which expansion is a law of its duration. And,

mark this, it is not with expansion that we have to do as much as with co-ordination. Imperialism has for its first wish the close union of the colonies and the mother-country. It is not vexed with needs of immediate annexation, it only takes care, logically enough, that the spheres of its probable extension shall remain free. It obeys resistless vital laws, against which our prejudices of individual morality struggle with the most touching, foolish and vain obstinacy.

From a loftier point of view, we ought to pay England, philosophically, the homage due to every powerful desire for unification and simplification, to every tendency to pass from the heterogeneous to the homogeneous. Hatred and war reigned, in days of old, between city and city; later, between kingdom and kingdom; to-day, they would set coalitions face to face; to-morrow, continents. War, I mean the bloody struggle, becomes more difficult in proportion to the masses which it would have to put in motion. The formation of these masses, the agglomeration of the nationalities, whatever the necessity that prompts or the sentiments that inspire them, seem to presage the desirable era when

slaughter complicated with geometry will no longer be the really heroic form of the eternal battle.

IO

I leave to an Englishman animated with sentiments and wishes parallel with those which have inspired these pages the care of pleading with his fellow-countrymen on behalf of the French faults that shock them the most. These are principally a cynicism of ideas, a cynicism of morals, an anarchical and railing love of negative criticism. But I believe, in good faith, that they have less far to go to meet us than we to meet them. I have a score of times verified among the pick of intellectual and artistic England the attraction exercised by French culture. George Meredith, who holds in English literature the position of discreet eminence formerly occupied among ourselves by Mallarmé; J. M. Barrie, a devotee of Balzac; the great Swinburne, who writes admirably in French (and even in archaic French) and who has devoted the most enthusiastic of books to Victor Hugo; John Bodley and Edmund Gosse, tried friends both; Henry James, an

Englishman by adoption, to whom our language and our literature are as familiar as to many of our academicians: these and many others all love our country! And I would go so far as to say that the sympathy which they show is inseparable from the intellectual and artistic development in England and that it almost always accompanies an individual superiority of this kind.

As for the people, it is ignorant, but cordial. I have verified this too. To the mind of the people, the great misfortune of not being born an Englishman gives any inoffensive stranger a claim upon its sympathy. We have the first claim. On the other hand, it hates the Germans, even more than it hates the Russians: it will never make friends with any nation, not excepting America, more willingly than with ours.

The practical aspect of the question is the necessary and increased diffusion of the English and French languages in the two countries. Both show a certain want of capacity for this study. This originates only from the absence, hitherto, of any pressing need. The two idioms, indeed, are the most widespread languages on the planet:

a striking fact, rich in consequences, heavy with arguments. A man who possesses both holds the keys of Latin civilization and Teutonic civilization, that is to say of the greatest treasure-house of human knowledge. This fruitful necessity is bound to spring from the reconciliation of the two peoples. The verb *s'entendre* expresses it eloquently.

Space fails me to unfold here a practical plan (in the English fashion) for a rational teaching of the two languages. The suggestions that present themselves to the mind in this matter are many. They will form the subject of a separate study. It is enough to say, for the moment, that the manner in which this teaching has, until very recently, been conceived and practised in France deserves no other epithet than that of ridiculous. In England, the inadequacy of French teaching was set off by a result which was rough in itself, but at least useful as a means of primitive communication. Mr. H. G. Wells, in his *Mankind in the Making*, says that he is sure "that it would be a very painful and shocking thought indeed to an English parent to think that French was taught in school with a view to reading French books"

(I need not explain what the term French books suggests at the first blush to an average imagination in puritan England). A plan of common action in both countries (allowing, of course, for all the shades and differences demanded by the difference of temperament) would first have to be worked out with this object. Next, it would have to be applied by every available means: the press, publicity, parliamentary action, appeals to capital. We ask for only an infinitesimal part of all the gold that flows towards the works of a charity blind enough to sacrifice the interests of the race to that of its most feeble, that is to say of its most dangerous individuals! There would necessarily be connected with the scheme a system of journeys, of mutual visits, the organization of which would combine a number of valuable collaborations and ingenious initiatives. Everything is to be done in this domain. The honour and the profit will reward the pioneers no less than the settlers of the conquered territory. We offer not only an apostleship, but a "business:" none but the clumsiest folly could refuse to see it, none but the most inveterate hypocrisy to proclaim it. Modern ethics have once

again boldly identified man's interest with his duty. They should never have been separated.

II

The reader would do wrong, judging by the foregoing, to expect to find in this book a stubborn panegyric of England, characterized by a methodical partiality, dictated by a definite intention, tending towards a clearly-proposed object. If this were its nature, the study would lose all critical value and the author is anxious to state that the following notes, taken at times anterior to the writing of these present lines, constitute straggling, unconsidered documents from which he has formed the presumptions which he ventures to set forth here. These documents have not followed on the thesis, but have come before them. The reader has but to look through them to convince himself of this.

I know not what the future of Franco-English friendship will be. Our noblest hopes encroach imprudently on the ironical future, even as our most ambitious formulas are riddled buckets which we lower in vain into the well of truth. We know all this. But,

having not elected to die, we decide to live and as entirely as we can. The false scorn of self-complacent reason does wrong to smile at seeing the English unhesitatingly take up the nearest work to hand, without providing for the morrow and its perhaps contradictory needs. This is a grave error of our intelligence, tainted of itself and limited by itself. That instinct for labour is, on the contrary, the first of all forces. It errs, it will err, so long as the laws remain unknown. But those laws are becoming better known daily and the habit of work is the one thing which it is important never to lose.

Whatever the future may be, it cannot be a useless task to have tried to set up on the horizon of time a true image of a successful people. No form of activity, when one knows how to look at it, in the corruption of its end or the rawness of its birth, escapes insatiable beauty. But I do not know that, notwithstanding the decree of the purists, the promises of happiness contained in an ideal of æsthetic harmony need necessarily degrade it.

Of all unions of nations outlined at the

present time none is more capable of maintaining life or more worthy of being served in the presumable interest of mankind. This alliance has militating in its favour not temporary or superficial reasons, but instinct, the need to behold the realization of that higher harmony of faculties and forces which the fusion of national temperaments so complementary as these would imply. This desire (which, in a manner, is as disinterested as the wish of a well-disposed Martian mindful of the rhythm of our terrestrial civilizations) is none the less patriotic for that. It is a rare piece of good fortune to find two imperatives, that of the general and that of the national good, too often hostile, now reconciled in one fair hope.

Let us take the question in its least particular form. It may be said that the fundamental difference, the respective superiority no less than the weakness of the two peoples, is that one sees the universe under an intellectual aspect, the other under a moral aspect. The Englishman refuses to separate the moral end from the idea; where we are concerned, morality must adapt itself to the idea: that is morality's affair. The Frenchman

is a theatre of ideas : they are so many masks whose dance affords him the most delicate pleasures ; but let one of them arise in the nudity of the brain of a Saxon or Slav : forthwith imperious, eloquent, behold it ready to enthral him. The result of our love of the psychical ballet is a more brilliant civilization, animated, ventilated with perpetual discussions, sifting every conception and every principle, a civilization doubtless indispensable to the intellectual movement of the world, but dangerous to itself through lack of homogeneity (for elasticity does not always supply the place of resistance), dangerous through the rashness of the experiments which it proposes and which it risks in the exhausting crises of its revolutions.

No doubt it is a good thing that truth should constantly be called into question. But we do not prove our grasp of the law of continuity by violently and continually shaking the belief of yesterday to its most sacred foundations before preparing a shelter, were it but a wretched makeshift, for the sorrowful herd of which it was the only lodging. Truth, like the human being, must eliminate its decaying elements without con-

vulsions, by the very law of its growth. To attack it at its foundations is to threaten its very promises. One does not graft the tree upon the root. Spiritual voluptuousness, which is our capital sin and which intelligence finds gnawing at its base, in a manner reduces the exquisite art and the supreme irony of our intellectual nihilists to the level of the stupidity of the Catoblepas, which, when grazing, unconsciously devours its own feet. How different it is with the Englishman, with his simple equipment of principles, at once stops and props, beyond which he considers it indecent to let his reflections run! The speculative boldness of the German alarms him; the Russian, with his habit of pushing an idea to its ultimate catastrophe, offends his common sense; French scepticism inspires him with a curiosity which is a little anxious, sometimes charmed and sometimes contemptuous, according to his degree of culture and comprehension, although, at bottom, the most Athenian of our smiles must produce upon him the effect of the grimace of a monkey putting out its tongue at itself in the glass.

Now in both countries there is a chosen class that perceives the defects peculiar to its culture. This is a considerable phenomenon, upon which we must insist, for it is new in the history of general civilization. No people before modern times possessed the necessary amount of personal and comparative documents to form as it were an impartial idea of its own tendencies and capacities. It has been said that races possessed no justice except within doors: the same might have been said of their intelligence.

These tendencies (supposing the impossible case that they should be exercised under seal, so to speak) would end by making of London a Babylon of coal and gold, some warehouse of the world, a soulless metropolis of innumerable counting-houses, and of Paris the Rome of a sort of intellectual and iconoclastic papacy, without temporal dominion, ere long delivered to the contempt which the sophists and Græculi have always deserved. Still, these previsions are but a jest and I will at once ask the reader to excuse me, here and later, if I endeavour sometimes to fix his attention by means of lively images.

I know no intelligent Frenchman that has reflected or travelled, be it ever so little, and is not ready to admit our national faults, too often, indeed, with a wealth of disparagement which is calculated to scandalize the foreigner who listens to it. On the other hand, the book from which I have quoted above, *Mankind in the Making*, points with great precision to the movement of modern ideas that directs the evolution of English culture. The cry of the English writer is, "Give books!" He is constantly returning to it, as representing the most urgent need of the hour. Whereas, with us, our critics warn us against the opposite danger : we have too long kept up the barren cult of bookish learning ; what we need is the direct lessons of observation, facts and life. . . .

In that brain of the cosmos which is the human race (I know all the criticisms and reproaches of anthropomorphism which people address to this sort of analogy : nevertheless, we must return to it, once that we have the notion of that continuity of phenomena of which M. Dastre says so justly, in his fine work, *La Science et la vie*, that it is "a form of mentality"), the differentiation always at

work has created cells which, served by the senses, weave upon the loom of the nervous fibres images of the outer world, images of every kind, artless, ingenious or beautiful. Such is their charm that their artificers become enraptured with them, sometimes, one would think, to the point of forgetting that the need which prompts their task is, before all, perpetually to conclude, from the shadows cast by outside things upon the woof of the soul, which movements, which acts are best adapted to the preservation of the total organism. In other cells, on the contrary, the faculties for co-ordinating external teachings attain a fuller development. It seems that the division of labour, the fundamental law of evolution, presides over the play of these activities, which seem to separate only soon to unite more closely than before in the harmony of a higher life.

The conclusion of this apologue will not have escaped the reader. Nothing is more logical or more desirable than to associate two human groups, of which one, France, has the gift of supplying the brightest representations of the planetary conscience, while

the other, Great Britain, possesses the tried-wisdom and power of co-ordinating the lessons of those images conformably with the greatest usefulness.

This wish will, no doubt, appear Utopian : to tell the truth, what I have here sketched is, above all, an ideal alliance. It will be formed some day, across other frontiers, what matter ! The disillusion of the present count only in existences limited by the cradle and the tomb. Besides, it is well to open up large perspectives : they lend dignity to the foreground. Moreover, the star-gazer who falls into his well cuts, in the main, a less comical figure than those apostles of common sense who from the Promised Land of the possible carve out little provinces according to the measure of their intelligence and their generosity.

I do not think, for the rest, that we should look very far into the future for a motive and a reward for this hoped-for union. England has the habit and the love of duty : she keeps the mental mould into which we are eager to pour the glowing metal that bubbles in the crucible of our thought. We

can cast in it the statue of a beautiful morrow.

What that future duty (without which we die) will be science will teach us. We can look only to science for that revelation. Science, in less than a century, has re-created the universe around us. We hardly notice it, we who have so long been kept asleep by the old dreams. The religions and moralities of the past, encampments of an hour's duration, were built up on the old formidable and ill-apprehended instincts. Here verily is the twilight of the Gods and the deliverance of Prometheus. The great myths clasp and respond to one another. Zeus, Odin, Yahveh trampling nations under foot have crumbled into the abyss. But it is not the voice of useless and cowardly renunciation that hovers over their ruin; the Nixies have not for ever carried away the prophetic gold from the depths of the Rhine. The liberated Titan whose name is Work, Effort, Hope lifts the gold made young again towards the sun. Black, fierce, bloody, hideous as thou art, hail, son of Chaos and Sorrow, father of Mankind! The opening era will take up thy idyll by the voice of all

its geniuses, at that turn in the human road where the genius of the age that is ending, a victim of the ancient witchcrafts, refused to hear, instead of the bells of Montsalvat, the sublime sound of thy broken chains !

The tables of a new Law are in liberating hands : characters as yet mysterious, for ever mysterious, which the two elders of the world's civilization are about to spell out with foreheads brought close together and with joined hands.

But let us leave this region of symbols, distrusted by the crowd.

And, to take leave of metaphorical language, let us say that the new conception of good and evil which science is elaborating will create a new duty. We shall doubtless be the first to perceive it, but England would teach us the prudence and the practical wisdom that should preside over the passage from the morality of yesterday towards that of to-day. She is already taking preliminary action. The bishops no longer fulminate against the scholars. With her aid, we shall perhaps form a first necessary notion of *respect*. But into this respect we shall have flung the

purest portion of the spoil of intelligence : it shall be no longer dupery or pharisaism. It shall acquiesce with smiling piety no longer in the lie of the immutable essence, but in the truth of the eternal Becoming, in truth ever provisional, rejuvenated, perpetually breaking loose from itself, like virtue and like beauty.

12

I trust that many clear-sighted and well-intentioned minds will make good what is lacking in the foregoing statement and be able to discern in it some reasons to believe in the national as well as human interest which the two peoples would have in uniting. It is time, in the history of the globe, that two nations should set the example, so rich in noble promises, of this understanding, whether it be limited to a more intimate reciprocal acquaintance with each other's institutions and souls or end in the narrow communion of our effort and our social life by throwing into common stock our respective contributions to culture and the world's progress. Those minds and ener-

lx THROUGH ISLE AND EMPIRE

gies whom the destinies of the world adjure will next have it as their task to work for that future. It is a duty to prepare it; it is already an honour (of which we modestly claim our share) to have felt it coming.

R. D'H.

PORT MÉJEAN, CAP BRUN

May 1904