

Indian Opinion

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IN THE FIGHTING LINE

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS, Under Secretary of State for India, in moving a resolution, similar in terms to that moved in the House of Lords by the Marquess of Crewe, giving the sanction of the House to the ordinary expenses of the Indian Expeditionary Force operating in European countries being chargeable on the revenues of India, said that he hoped the House would join with him if he added a word or two about the manner in which India had displayed during the despatch of these expeditions. It was always difficult, at a distance from any country, to be sure that one gauged and interpreted rightly the feeling of that country, but he thought one could distinguish certain different notes in the mass of telegrams, resolutions, manifestoes, speeches and newspaper articles in which Indian opinion had expressed itself. It was quite impossible to summarise them, but one noted first the fighting spirit of many of the Ruling Chiefs who at once despatched telegrams pleading in urgent and insistent terms their personal claim to serve the King-Emperor on the battlefield. (Cheers.) He would quote one striking phrase which struck him in one telegram. It was as follows:—"The noise of battle is lulling me to Rajput blood." That was the spirit of the Maharajas who are at the front—the veteran Sir Pertab Singh and his young nephew, and the Maharajas of Jaisalmer and Kishengarh. Would the House allow him to quote another telegram which the Maharaja of Jaisalmer sent:—

"I and my troops are ready and prepared to go to any place, either in Europe or India, or wherever services might be usefully employed in the interest of safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and his Dominions. Your Excellency knows the traditions of the Rathor Bika Rajputs. We long to be early at the front, but whether my troops can be used at present or not, I would earnestly ask your Excellency at least to give me myself an opportunity for that personal military service of the King-Emperor and the Empire which is my highest ambition as a Rathor Chief and as a member of His Imperial Majesty's Staff."

The Maharaja had had his wish. He was in France at the front, and his Camel Corps had been doing very useful service in the peninsula of Sinai. Might he add one other telegram? This was sent by the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Mahomedan ruler of the largest Indian State, who said:—

"At this crisis I beg that your Excellency will lay before His Majesty the King-Emperor the assurance that my heart beats at one with that of all the loyal people of Great Britain and her Dominions throughout the world, and that my sword and the whole resources of my State are His Majesty's to command for England and the Empire."

It was very difficult to acknowledge adequately all the princely munificence of the ruling chiefs in connexion

with the expedition. The generosity of the Maharaja of Jaipur and that of the Maharaja of Gwalior might be mentioned as instances. The Maharaja of Gwalior, besides princely contributions to every fund started in England or India, running into many thousands of pounds, had, organised, jointly with the Begum of Bhopal, a hospital ship and had given a large contribution of horses. His latest munificent gift was a fully equipped motor ambulance fleet. Ill-health alone, to his grievous disappointment, had prevented him from taking the field in person.

Some Night Work

Paris, November 30.—Once again all the British troops at the front are talking about the latest exploit of their Indian comrades occurring in this instance during the fighting around Dixmude.

For several days during which the British and Germans had faced each other from the trenches, all efforts to dislodge the Germans had proved ineffective.

Then into the trenches alongside the British came a regiment of Gurkhas. All through the day, right into the night, they fought side by side, but towards midnight it was noticed that the majority of the Indians had disappeared.

Their disappearance was noted without comment, it being assumed that they had been drafted to some other part of the line, but at dawn it was observed with surprise that the Indians—the majority of them having their left arms and hands bandaged—were back at their posts.

At the same time there was also observed a remarkable absence of fire from the German trenches.

For some time staff officers discussed the absence of fire, loth to give an "advance" order, in view of the possibility that a trap was in preparation.

Finally they decided to chance it, and two Midland County regiments dashed into the open to gain the first line of three German trenches. Therein, to their surprise, they found a trench of dead. Guns were in position, everything in order, but along the line there was nothing else but a row of dead German soldiers.

The Gurkhas had been doing some night work, and they had done it effectively.—Central News.

A Talk with the Wounded

Sir Andrew Fraser contributes to the *Scotsman* the following interesting account of his visit to the Indian hospitals at Brockenhurst:—

I was visiting an old friend in the New Forest in Hampshire when I heard that two hotels at Brockenhurst had been taken as hospitals for the Indians wounded in the war. I happened to be at the railway station when one of the first trainloads of the brave fellow arrived. I talked to one or two of them;

they seemed so glad to hear one speak to them in "their own tongue, wherein they were born," that I promised to go to see them in the hospital. A few days later I went.

I found crowds of wounded recently received, or just being received, into a commodious building which was being converted into a hospital as the patients arrived. All the staff were overwhelmed with work; but the organisation was splendid; and, with plenty of bustle, there was no confusion. I suppose I could hardly have expected to get in had it not been that fortunately the British medical officer who received me belonged to the Indian Medical Service, and had met me in Calcutta. He recognised me, and knew that I could be trusted to enter the wards without him. So he left me free to talk to the Indians.

I found them comfortable, clean, contented, and cheery. I went into a ward filled with privates; they had few words of English among them all, but were delighted to hear me speak their own language. They asked me how I knew it. I said to one, "How old are you?" He told me he was thirty. I said I had been thirty-seven years in India, so I was even more an Indian than he. They cheerily assented. They talked to me about India, and were pleased to find that, in the course of my tours in India, I had visited most of the towns or districts from which they came. Then they talked about the war, relating their own experiences, sometimes most dramatically. And they asked how things were going. They had "done their little bit," and had seen their part of the fight; they wanted to know more. And I had an eager crowd of listeners as I tried to tell them the news of the day. They were not downhearted, but keen and plucky as possible. I did not hear a murmur or see a sign of complaint; but I saw the tears running down the cheeks of a wiry little Gurkha as he told me of his colonel having been struck down and several of the European officers killed.

I went into a ward full of Indian officers—a Subhedar Major, some Subhedar, and some Jamandars—fine, handsome, brave men, with strong hearts and kindly faces—some of them well on in years, and with memories of our frontier wars. It was to them a different warfare to which they had now come. They spoke regretfully of the much larger number of quick-firing weapons possessed by the Germans, and of the wounds and death that came from afar. They wanted more hand-to-hand fighting. But they had no doubt of the issue. They had tales to tell of German methods of warfare, which they utterly reprobated, and they said, "We have come to show what we can do for the Empire, and to make ourselves a name with the white soldiers of the King, and we will never let go. They never let go, and you know we never let go. Through the favour of God we must win." I said to one of them, "It is well; indeed, that you have come to stand shoulder to shoulder with us;" and he said, "Yes; you have often out of kindness called us Brothers, but now there is brotherhood indeed!" And his brother officers spoke out their concurrence.

I told them of the letter I had seen from a brave old Indian Prince, saying that, as he was now an old man, death must be near, and that he hoped it would find him on the field of battle. An old Rajput Subhedar said, "So we all believe: if a Rajput dies on the field of battle he goes straight to Paradise; if he dies on his bed he has a chance!" A Baluchi officer replied, "Nay, but we all believe that it is good to die fighting; but it is better to live and fight." They thought, most of them, that, in the interest of King and country, they must be ready to die; but the important thing was to fight well. It was quaint to hear these wounded warriors discussing the matter quite philosophically on their hospital cots.

The officers, like the men, were anxious for news from the front, and drew all they could out of me. I mentioned to the Secretary of State for India their thirst for information, and he has kindly informed me

of arrangements for giving it regularly. I believe that the coming of these men to fight for us is of the highest political importance, and I am sure that the kindness they receive will further strengthen the bonds that bind their brave and loyal hearts to the King-Emperor.

Naik Darwan Singh Negi received his V.C. from the hand of the King-Emperor very soon after the act of heroism for which it was awarded, on the battlefield, too, within sight and sound of actual operations and before an Indian force. The Mahomedan sepoy, Khudabad, of the 129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis who won the V.C. on October 31 in Belgium, was unable to receive it from His Majesty, being wounded and in hospital, but it was sent to him with His Majesty's warmest congratulations.

Indian troops are being shown some sights of London; their favourite places appear to be the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and the King-Emperor's Palace.

"If Ranji handles his troops as cleverly as he handled the bat and his Sussex men, England has gained a brilliant recruit. This is the comment of a literary sportsman on the appointment of the Jam Sahib as honorary Major in the Army.

The Reward of Valour

We reproduce below the fine tributes which the *Manchester Guardian* paid in its issue of December 8th to those brave men who were the first to be privileged to wear the Cross for Valour.

"Last night's *Gazette* contains the names of the first two of his Majesty's native Indian troops on whom the Victoria Cross has ever been conferred, and the news that two of their countrymen now share the reward of valour that fell to Havelock, Roberts, and a hundred other Englishmen who won glory in India will flash through the bazars, bringing pride and gratification to millions, who will see in it the best reward of the loyal support they have given to the British Raj in time of peril.

"None who welcomed the boon which, at the 1912 Durbar put Indian soldiers on a level with British in this respect dreamed that the honour would so soon be implemented; but, had the wise step not been taken, at that time of pageantry, Indian gallantry in this time of hardship and sacrifice would have compelled it. The Garhwal rifleman who, twice wounded, continued to head successive rushes which recaptured our trenches near Festubert in the face of severe fire from bombs and rifles at closest range, and the Baluchi Sepoy, who, though badly hurt himself, worked his gun at Hollebek till his British officers and all his five comrades had been killed, are surely as fit subjects for the Victoria Cross as any on whom it has been conferred. Their bravery is typical of that recounted of our Indian troops from day to day, and all parts of the Empire will rejoice that it has now been given the most coveted of all recognition."

The Gurkhas and the German Mail-Bag

The *Central News* (says *India*) reports a conversation with an officer from the front, who speaks in glowing terms of the work of the Indian troops. Their cleverness in spying out the enemy is a mystery to the British soldiers.

As the result of one of their exploits, the Army Intelligence Department was presented with some valuable information contained in a couple of mail-bags for the Germans. How the Gurkhas obtained the booty has not been divulged by the men. With the consent of their officer they crept out of the trenches, and, after a few hours, returned with the bags. It is assumed they accounted for those in charge of them, and, on their return, they took them to the officer, saluted, and returned to their posts without offering any explanation.

From the Editor's Chair

(1914

IN spite of the world-wide catastrophe that has sullied the political records of the latter half of 1914, British Indians in South Africa will still look back upon that year with feelings of pride mingled with modest self-gratulation, for it witnessed the end of an agonising and painful episode in the development of the community and a new page has been turned holding fairer prospects for the future. The year commenced amidst dark and lowering clouds, threatening a storm of even greater violence than that through which the community had suffered before. It seemed as though there were practically no way out of what appeared to be an impasse, but fortunately the spirit of the then New Year had entered the hearts of those who were engaged on either side of the tremendous controversy in seeking a solution of it, and the sunshine of Mr. Andrews' presence in this country, combined with the benevolent influences exerted by highly placed friends behind the scenes, and the spirit of reasonableness in both official and Indian circles, eventually resulted in a settlement honourable to all alike, and securing for the Indian community of South Africa a status of definite legal equality with the most privileged section of the community, and one in practice very much higher than it had ever secured in the past. We have it from the very highest authorities here, in India, and in England, that the settlement that was reached last July, of the problems that had resulted in the Passive Resistance Struggle, had far reaching effects in India in bringing about that spirit of union and intensifying the loyalty that has been so remarkably demonstrated in these last few sad months. It does not follow, and it would be untrue to say, that the Indian question in South Africa has been finally solved; but we are entitled to say that it has been put upon a footing rendering a final solution possible in a future that may not, after all, be very distant. Principles have been laid down from which neither side can withdraw. A feeling of greater mutual trust has replaced the former strong sentiments of distrust, and this feeling has been accentuated by what is perhaps one of the brightest parts of the silver lining to the existing gloom, the attitude of Indians in the war now raging, and the wonderful deeds of heroism that have been performed by the Indian soldiers at the front. The way is open, in course of time, and with due regard for the difficulties and prejudices that still await removal, for a considerably greater advance politically, civilly, socially, and ethically, for the Indian community in this country; but we say again that this will almost entirely depend for its rapidity of achievement upon the self-discipline and morale, the moderation and courage and inspiration of Indians themselves. The year 1915 may well involve a step in advance of the year that has just ended, so far as British Indians here are concerned, and we

earnestly hope that it will hold for them in general and for our readers in particular, real prosperity and happiness in a degree to which they have been stranger in the past.)

In the Fighting Line (Continued)

The casualty list published on December 4 contains the names of two Indian members of the Indian Medical Service who have been killed in action in France. Major Pandit Piarayal Atal obtained his commission in January, 1899, and had been attached to the 29th Baluchis since April, 1913. Captain Kunwar Indarjit Singh entered the Service in January, 1911, and had been officiating in medical charge of the 57th Wilde's Rifles since March last.

Queen Alexandra's Puggarees

Visitors to the new British Red Cross Hospital at Netley report (says the London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*) that the wounded Indian soldiers under treatment there are very deeply impressed by the care that is taken to ensure their comfort. In each of the Indian wards is one sister and three orderlies. The sister attends to the general management of the meals. She directs the nursing, but does not come into actual contact with the patients, the nursing being carried out by the orderlies. Indian gentlemen living in the district attend regularly to act as interpreters and talk with the men. The Indian soldier is described as a "good patient." It is apparently a point of honour not to admit that he is badly hurt, and the doctors mention with admiration the handsome Sikh with a gunshot wound in the lung who tells everybody that he is "Very well," although he has to gasp to say so. Some of the Indian soldiers have been much distressed because they have lost their puggarees. Head-wraps provided as a substitute did not at all please them. Word of this reached Queen Alexandra, and her Majesty at once sent 400 yards of lawn muslin so that the men might have new puggarees. But they are not wearing them. They have folded them away carefully in paper so that they may take them home to India.

Indian Ambulance Corps

The Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corp (says the London correspondent of the *Anurita Bazar Patrika*) has been distributed in all parts of the country where Indian wounded are received; they are installed at Brighton, Bournemouth, Netley, of course, as I have already written, and on the hospital ships. Edinburgh is taking the matter in hand and training its own volunteers. I continue to hear excellent reports of the work of these young men and of the willing service they give; they are becoming very efficient. More are wanted.

A member of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps sends us the following notes of an inaugural mess-dinner held at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, on Saturday last (December 5th), says *India*.

The President, Mr. Jalai Shah, and the Committee, made excellent arrangements, and, to judge by the delight of the guests, all wants will be provided which were felt with regard to messing. The menu included a number of Indian dishes, and the Ghosht Poolah, Koettahs, Bhaaji-Turkaari, were all very much appreciated. The toasts of the King-Emperor, India, the Patients, and the Corps were drunk with great fervour.

A programme of music was rendered. Mr. Raghunath Gupta sang a devotional song in Marathi set to the Rag Yaman. Mr. Gaytonde sang his favourite "Chhubo dhubitajah," which was very pleasing. Mr. Ganguli

and Mr. Banerjee sang a Bengal duet with a few English words typical of orthodox criticism of reformers. Popular English songs were given by Mr. Sinha, Mr. Fakio, and Mr. Pereira, and Mr. Naidu sang a classical Telugu song. Lastly, Mr. Raghunath Sang led the chorus of "Saareh juhaanseh uccha Hindustaan humaarah."

The Jats and the Pathans

It should be noted (says "Observer") that the tendency to speak only of Sikhs and Gurkhas involves some degree of injustice to other very valiant ingredients in our Indian Army. No regiments, for instance, in the whole Army have behaved with greater gallantry, patience, and resource than those which contain Pathans and Jats.

The Chivalrous Pathan

Mr. Percy J. Philp, special correspondent of the *Daily News* in Northern France, records how a Pathan belonging to a Lancer regiment rebuked a man who spoke slightly of the German peoples.

"Do not talk that of the Germans," he said in a way which had an amazing dignity. "It is a great country which can make war on five Powers, and they are brave men who can fight and die as the Germans do. It is a pity for them that they are not as well trained as we."

Winter Clothing

In the House of Commons on the 19th November Mr. J. M. Henderson asked the Under Secretary of State for War what arrangements were being made to supply the Indian troops at present fighting in France and Belgium with warmer clothing than the khaki drill which they usually wear.

Mr. Tennant: The Indian troops were sent from India equipped on the winter scale, and have received flannel shirts and woollen vests and drawers in addition. Arrangements are being made to supply them with serge clothing, consignments of which have already been sent.

A Stubborn Fight

London, December 30.—A telegram from Pas de Calais says that, on December 20, a strong German force attempted to break through the British line from Festubert to Givenchy, two ruined villages 50 miles east of Boulogne, which were dominated by the British, French, and German heavy artillery.

The trenches occupied by the Indians extended along the front of the villages, while the Germans at the same point were not 50 yards distant.

In the early morning masses of Germans left the trenches, armed with bayonets and hand grenades. The Indians fought stubbornly for hours, but were unable to resist the avalanche.

General French's Despatch

The following is contained in General French's despatch published in London early last month:—

On the 24th October the Lahore Division of the Indian Army Corps, under Major-General Watkis, having arrived, I sent them to the neighbourhood of Lacon to support the Second Corps.

I have already referred to the excellent work performed by the battalions of this Division which were supporting the Cavalry. The remainder of the Division from the 25th October onwards were heavily engaged in assisting the 7th Brigade of the Second Corps in fighting round Neuve Chappelle. Another brigade

took over some ground previously held by the French 1st Cavalry Corps and did excellent service.

On the 23th October especially the 47th Sikhs and the 20th and 21st Companies of the 3rd Sappers and Miners distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct in the attack on Neuve Chappelle, losing heavily in officers and men.

After the arrival of the Meerut Division at Corps Headquarters the Indian Army Corps took over the line previously held by the Second Corps, which was then partially drawn back into reserve. Two and a half brigades of British Infantry and a large part of the Artillery of the Second Corps still remained to assist the Indian Corps in defence of this line. Two and a half battalions of these brigades were returned to the Second Corps when the Ferozepore Brigade joined the Cavalry further north.

The Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade arrived in the area during the 1st and 2nd November, and the Jodhpur Lancers came about the same time. These were all temporarily attached to the Indian Corps.

Up to the date of the present despatch the line held by the Indian Corps has been subjected to constant bombardment by the enemy's heavy artillery, followed up by infantry attacks.

On two occasions these attacks were severe.

On the 13th October the 8th Gurkha Rifles of the Bareilly Brigade were driven from their trenches, and on the 2nd November a serious attack was developed against a portion of the line west of Neuve Chappelle. On this occasion the line was to some extent pierced and was consequently slightly bent back.

The situation was prevented from becoming serious by the excellent leadership displayed by Colonel Norris of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Since their arrival in this country and their occupation of the line allotted to them, I have been much impressed by the initiative and resource displayed by the Indian troops. Some of the ruses they have employed to deceive the enemy have been attended with the best results and have doubtless repulsed superior forces in front of them at bay.

The Corps of Indian Sappers and Miners have long enjoyed a high reputation for skill and resource. Without going into detail I can confidently assert that throughout their work in this campaign they have fully justified that reputation.

The General Officer Commanding the Indian Army Corps describes the conduct and bearing of these troops in strange and new surroundings to have been highly satisfactory, and I am enabled, from my own observation, to fully corroborate his statement.

The political and social consequences of the participation of India in the war cannot at present be realised: we must, however, recognise that India claims to be no longer a dependency of the Empire, but a constituent.—*Western Mail*.

His Highness the Jam Sahib of Nawangar, who is the latest of the Indian princes to proceed to the front, is gazetted to the temporary rank of honorary major in the Army.

A Reuter's message from London dated the 31st ultimo states that, of the 28 officers killed, in the latest casualty list, 22 were serving with the Indian regiments.

Col. Kirsten, O.C. the 6th Dismounted Midland Rifles, Somerset East, has cordially accepted and expressed appreciation for the offer of a weekly supply of fresh vegetables for the soldiers under his command from Messrs. K. T. and L. T. Gajjar Brothers, of that town.

The Cape Town Council Beaten

During the past five years, in true Prussian style, the City Council has administered the General Dealers' Act with a rod of iron against Indians (says *A.P.O.*) Men of thirty and forty years residence in Cape Town have been refused licences to trade, while aliens of all nationalities, including Germans, have never experienced any difficulty in obtaining the necessary permission. Indeed, no European applicant has ever been refused a licence, provided the police had nothing against him. Against Indians, on the other hand, there was a dead set. Be his credentials as to obtain for him entrance into the highest circles in Europe, his application to the Cape Town Council for a licence to trade has always been met with blank refusal, simply and solely because he was an Indian. In one case a man who has been in Cape Town for nearly forty years, and who is a grandfather, was refused a licence, although he held a trading licence for many years previously. Not content with what it had, the Council sought wider powers—powers to prevent Indians from moving from one premises to another. In that it thought it had succeeded when the Ordinance of 1914 came into operation for it immediately began to refuse removal permits to Indians only. Fortunately, as we pointed out in two previous issues, the Administrator, who evidently has little faith in the Cape Town Council's sense of justice, reserved to himself the right to overrule the Council's decision. That right he has now exercised, and the three applications which were refused by the Council have now been granted direct by the Administrator. This has evidently brought the City Council to its sober senses, for we hear that it has granted removal permits to other applicants. Well done, Sir Frederic de Waal!

"Komagata Maru's" Voyage

The vice-president of the London Branch of the All India Moslem League sent the following letter to the Under-Secretary for the Colonies:—

I am directed by the Committee of the London All-India Moslem League, to respectfully invite the attention of the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the deplorable effect the attitude of the British Columbian authorities towards the Indian emigrants is creating in India.

The Committee feel sure that the illiberal treatment of the British Indians who have proceeded to British Columbia, will give rise to an intense feeling of indignation against the Colony, in which, we fear, the Imperial Government may also be involved on the ground that it does not exercise its authority of the protection of the interests of his Majesty's Asiatic subjects who, by right of Imperial Citizenship, consider themselves as much entitled to travel and settle in different parts of the Empire as the King's British or Colonial subjects.

The hostile and illiberal attitude of the Colonies, which is hardly consistent with the advance of civilization and the progress of ideas in the modern world, will probably lead to insistence on the part of the Indians for the adoption of retaliatory measures, which if forced on the Indian Government by Indian public opinion, would cause an accentuation of the present feeling.

The Committee venture to hope that his Majesty's Government will at this critical moment use all possible endeavours, and take such measures as may be considered expedient and necessary to stop the development of a crisis which is likely to place in conflict the Asiatic subjects of the King with his Majesty's overseas subjects.

The Committee respectfully submit that the injury to the economic interests of the Colonies is hardly of a magnitude to justify the extreme measures which are being adopted by the Columbian Government against the British Indians, and they think that some *modus vivendi* can be devised by which the conflicting interests may be so reconciled as to prevent the aggravation of a difficulty of a particularly unfortunate character which is certain to retard the development of harmony and goodwill all over the Empire.

Indian National Congress

Discussing the questions that need discussion, the *Leader* (Allahabad) says that the Congress will discharge its duty by the Government no less than by the nation, by earnestly pleading for a reconsideration of the present unjustifiable and unwise policy of distrust of Indians in respect of the defence of the country. It will urge that opportunities should be afforded to our countrymen to acquire military training and to pursue a military career, so that the manhood of the country may not for ever be emasculated; that Indians should not be debarred from becoming volunteers, a disability not imposed even upon alien Europeans, some of whom are now avowed enemies of the King-Emperor, and that the invidious and galling distinction between foreigners and natives of the country perpetrated under the Arms Act (which Mr. Gladstone stigmatised in hard terms) should be removed. These demands the Congress has been making for twenty-seven years, but without being heeded by the Government. The present opportunity is the most suitable for it to press them earnestly; no such will occur again in our time.

There is next the proposal of the Viceroy regarding a reciprocity arrangement between India and the Dominions. A time of war, it is true, is not a fit and proper occasion for the settlement of acute or chronic controversies, but as in respect of the problem of Indians and the defence of the country, so in respect of this subject of the relations between India and the self-governing Dominions there will not be a more propitious time than the present for a strenuous endeavour to arrive at a just and an honourable settlement. For the demonstration of Indian loyalty has made a deep impression on the people of the Dominions, whose soldiers are now comrades in arms of our soldiers on the field of battle, and it is very probable that the dishonouring notion that India is only peopled by "coolies" not fit to be fraternised with has been abandoned in those parts of the Empire. Their mind must, therefore, be more receptive now than it was or will be to proposals for a settlement. Nor will India always be as fortunate in her Viceroy as she is in Lord Hardinge, in whom the qualities of the statesman and of the humanitarian are so excellently commingled. It will be a blunder if the Congress does not meet this year to consider his Excellency's well-meant proposal.

London, December 30th.—Reuter's Madras correspondent telegraphs that the Chairman, in his opening speech at the Indian National Congress, emphasised their loyalty, and declared that there would be no thought of dissolution of the Congress till they were nearer the goal of India being a self-governing Dominion under the Crown.

The President, Babu Bhupendranath Basu, said it was not a time for contentious matters, and they must present a united Empire. India could put into the field a wall of soldiers at which German militarism would be hurled in vain.

Continuing, the President said that India forgets the past and thinks only of the future.—Reuter.

Mikado's Reply to the Kaiser

Mr. Balfour, in his speech at the Guildhall banquet, made mention of a vigorous Japanese reply to one of the most impudent messages ever addressed by one monarch to another. "Everywhere," telegraphs the *Chronicle* Paris correspondent, "people have been asking what these enigmatical words might mean, and trying to guess in vain what monarch they referred to.

"The enigma is explained by the newspaper *Retch*, of Petrograd. This newspaper says it has information that on the eve of the fall of Tsingtau the Emperor William II. sent the Mikado a message in which he proposed to conclude peace with Japan on whatever terms the Mikado would like to fix.

"In return William II. stipulated for only one thing—that Japan should attack Russia. German diplomacy supposed Japan capable of concluding peace separately, if Germany assured her of advantageous conditions, and the Kaiser's message was addressed to the Mikado.

"Not merely did the latter decline the proposals of William II. in the most categorical fashion, but he declared in his reply—

"*That the day when the last base of German culture in the Far East fell would be one of the most glorious in Japanese history.*"

"The Mikado, moreover, declared that William II., who violated the Belgian Treaty of Neutrality, signed by Prussia herself, was grossly deceived if he thought that Japan was capable of committing a like crime.

"As to the Kaiser's message, the Mikado had it handed over to the English Ambassador at Tokyo."

News in Brief

London, January 3—Reuter's correspondent at Washington telegraphs that the Senate has adopted the Immigration Bill, comprising the literacy test for aliens. President Wilson opposed the infliction of that test, and has announced his intention to veto it.—Reuter.

The Calcutta correspondent of the *Morning Post* reports, under date of November 5th, that the eighth list of contributions to the Imperial Indian Fund shows a grand total, paid and promised, of £330,000. Of this rather more than half was contributed by the Bombay Presidency, Bengal has so far given about six lakhs (£40,000).

One of the troopers lately returned from German West Africa states: "A most remarkable transport feat was accomplished early in the campaign. Two hundred mule wagons, in charge of coloured men, covered a distance of 200 miles in nine days, making an average of a little over 22 miles a day, and this through very sandy country."

"It is not a great stretch of imagination to believe that a Japanese army will soon be on the way across the Siberian Railway to East Prussia, a ten days' journey; for Japan is at war with Germany, and at peace with all the world beside," says Mr. William Blane in the *Nineteenth Century*.

We have information from Stanger of an unfortunate exhibition of rowdism that occurred on Christmas eve. It seems that a party of Europeans were amusing themselves by throwing fireworks and, it is alleged, some of these landed inside an Indian store. Protests were unheeded. Eventually the store was closed although it was only eight o'clock which was an early hour on such a busy night. It is also stated that, after the store was closed, these "hooligans" broke the window.

"And one more thing must go. The religion of barbarism must go. The world is weary of it. It has withstood the religion of peace on earth already too long. The trinity of king, cannon and God has out-lived its usefulness. If civilisation is indeed better than savagery, the God we worship must be a power other and worthier than a mere Head Devil of the Universe." So writes Professor F. H. Giddings, Professor of Sociology in Columbia University.

I remember a service in St. Paul's Cathedral which I attended some time about the commencement of the war (writes "An Indian Christian" in *The Challenge*) It was a reverent congregation. There was obviously on their faces the pressure of a great crisis which they felt both as a nation and as individuals. The stately, superb service of the Church of England was more impressive than ever, and under the dome of the Cathedral I seemed to hear the voice of a great nation loudly pleading with God. But when the sermon came the whole effect of the service was lost on me. It justified and vindicated and challenged, and ended by quoting from a poem published in the Press some time ago, which spoke of the "joyful" sound of the "rolling drum" and other war delights of old pagan time. It was a crushing disappointment. As I walked home that night, amid the glaring lights and the many khaki uniforms, threading my way through that great throng that seemed continually to pour out of the Cathedral, my thoughts went back for a moment across the seas, to my village home in India, far from the military camps and the Legislative Council—pagan, heathen, animistic, call it what you like—but where they love their neighbours, and if they hate, they hate with a bad conscience; and I felt that there at least, in the wide world to-day, Christ could still walk as he walked in Galilee.

A Japanese on our Civilisation

Mr. Uchimura, the well-known Japanese educationist, who makes no secret of his convictions on religious and political affairs, wrote as follows in the English column of the *Yorodzu* :—

"What is the Western civilisation after all? They say it is the Christian civilisation. But, is it? Is it a civilisation based upon the Crucified One? Certainly it is not. It is a civilisation based upon the Crucifying One, the Devil, 'a murderer from the beginning.'

"War, war—war, upon the slightest pretext—that is their cry and inborn propensity. To say that their civilisation is based upon the Gospel of Peace is the grossest falsehood. The present conflagration of Europe is the veriest evidence, written with hell-fire upon the face of the sky, that theirs is a sham civilisation, beautiful upon the surface, but, within, dead vacuity. Like thunder-storm in a summer afternoon, the two poles of human wrath come to crash to spend itself, to leave the sky clear for the better and more beautiful thing.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold the King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. . . . And He shall speak peace unto the (European) heathen; and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.'

"I am confident that, after all, the good time, yes, the golden time, is coming."