

# THE Servant of India

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE lull on the Western front continued during the week. It was helped not a little by heavy rain and bad weather. Still it promises to be only a lull before the storm, the premonitory symptoms of which can be observed in the increased aerial activity. According to the military correspondent of a French paper the Germans have collected in this theatre of the war one million seven hundred thousand men. The same correspondent says that the German object is threefold: (1) to threaten Amiens, (2) to cut the Amiens-Clermont railway, (3) and to crush the Ypres salient. If the enemy succeeds in achieving this, he will naturally secure the evacuation of the whole of Northern France and establish a new front.

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THIS appears to be an ambitious programme. But the enemy has been preparing for some big stroke in the West for a long time. Count Hertling's interview refers to 'further events in the west' which 'will bring nearer the speedy end of the War.' Expert British opinion also admits that anxious times are ahead. But everything depends upon the ability of the enemy to keep to his timetable. It is the summer that will facilitate the work of the enemy offensive. If during this time Americans come in the expected strength and the Allies are able to throw the enemy behind his time-table, as they have done so many times before, the general situation will be decidedly better at the end of the summer. At present we can only 'wait and see.'

GOVERNMENT again announced at Delhi that Indians are to be given commissions in the army. The first announcement came several years ago, but then the commissions given to a few Indians appeared to be no regular commissions at all. Then last year the announcement was repeated with a flourish of trumpets, but the first instalment in accordance with it amounted only to giving them to nine of the former recipients, and we are told that the net result of this grant was loss by them of some seniority. We are informed that one of these nine recipients has gone out of active service and taken non-military service elsewhere. We do not know the actual reason for this, but suspicious people may draw very uncomplimentary conclusions. We trust that in accordance with the renewed announcement at Delhi we shall soon hear of a really liberal award of commissions to Indians and the immediate establishment of one or two colleges for the training of these officers.

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INDIANS will not be at all satisfied by the grant of commissions in the new army alone, as appears to be conveyed by what Lord Ronaldshay said at the Bengal War Conference, "the grant of a number of commissions to *members who join the new India army.*" Indians desire, as was made clear by Pandit M. M. Malaviya at the Delhi Conference, that they should get commissions in the Indian Defence Force and the present regular army, and not merely in the *new army*; otherwise the disappointment caused will be very keen indeed. In the matter of commissions for India the words *temporary, honorary* appear to be so well beloved by the powers that be that they cannot get out of their influence even at a crisis.

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WE trust that the attention of Government has been called to the various charges in the Press and on the platform about the way in which recruiting is being carried on. While one would be loth to give much credence to mere bazaar rumours, we cannot but think that in the present case there is considerable cause for inquiry, as the incidents are in many cases given in great detail. In Sholapur especially the abuses appear to be particularly grievous and call for immediate redress. The Collector of Sholapur is not particularly noted for his conciliatory ways, and perhaps his zeal and that of his subordinates taking their cue from him may have outrun discretion. An authoritative pronouncement from Government is immediately required to pacify the public.

WE are as keen as Government to see that recruiting is a success, for we realise that Indians must be prepared to defend their country with their life in case of necessity. The Viceroy, in words perhaps too guarded, explained at Delhi that there was a possibility of a danger of invasion of India from the North, and it behoves all lovers of their country to be prepared to meet the danger in good time. The leaders of the people must therefore bestir themselves and take upon themselves the role of recruiting agents. Some quarters, as for instance a section of the Provincial Conference at Conjeevaram, appear to regard this danger of invasion as a red herring across the path of Indian political development, but this is a matter in which we cannot possibly afford to take any risks. This is not to say that we should neglect political reform, but we only wish that the leaders of the people would do their part in a grave national emergency.

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"THE (Delhi) Conference means for me," Mr. Gandhi declared in his letter to the Viceroy, "and I believe for many of us, a definite step in the consecration of our lives to the common cause." And ever as good as his word, he has thrown himself heart and soul into the recruiting campaign. On May 15 the Gujarat Sabha under his inspiration passed the following resolution: "In the opinion of the Sabha the easiest and straightest method of attaining Swarajya is to help the Empire in this hour of danger by supplying all available men for fighting and other purposes in connection with the war, and therefore the Sabha resolves that it should with all possible despatch undertake recruiting." The sentiment herein expressed is only a paraphrase of what Mr. Gandhi himself has said: "If we serve to save the Empire we have in that very act secured Home Rule."

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REPORTS are coming from all parts of the country about the shortage of supplies and the enormous rise in price. Judging from local experience we are inclined to think that there is hardly any exaggeration about them. In Poona the high prices of the present day beat all past record. Even in the worst famine known to the present generation prices were lower than at present. As regards past experience very valuable evidence is furnished by a vernacular saying. "Corn sells at five seers a rupee" means in Marathi that the situation is critical or embarrassing. But now in Poona corn does *not* sell even at five seers. A leading merchant tells us that the real trouble is about supplies. If these are not coming in large quantities almost immediately the situation may be very critical before the week is out. There may be an element of exaggeration in this reading of the situation. But that it is substantially true is borne out by the experience of the Municipality about the grain shop.

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THE Poona City Municipality has decided to open a grain shop for the purpose of selling

grain to the people at a reasonable rate. This resolution is now some weeks old and still the grain shop has not been opened. We are informed that this is because the waggons which had been promised to the Municipality by the Controller have not yet been placed at its disposal, and hence there is no grain to sell in the shop. This reveals a serious state of affairs, and ultimately Government is sure to be held responsible for whatever happens. We understand the difficulties of Government in war time. What we honestly doubt is whether Government understands the difficulties of the people equally well. This is not a local question. What Poona experiences to-day other places in Bombay and other Provinces may experience to-morrow or have been experiencing already. We earnestly hope the authorities will look into the matter without delay.

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J SIR SUBBRAMANIA AIYAR the other day expressed himself utterly incredulous of the Secretary of State's scheme of reforms being at all satisfactory. On this the *Bengalee* thus remarks: "A well-known political leader has observed in a recent speech, 'and now it was clear that Indians would get precious little. It was far better to get nothing than the little that was under contemplation to give.' How does he know what we are to get under Mr. Montagu's scheme? His proposals have not yet been published, but what has been published is in direct conflict with what he has said. For the Secretary of State has told us in his message of the 20th August last, there is to be a 'substantial advance' towards responsible government as soon as possible. Are we to discredit the statement of the Secretary of State and condemn him in advance and before the publication of his scheme? Sir Subramania Aiyar has been a great and distinguished judge. Is this a judicial or even common sense frame of mind? Such a temper of mind would in this psychological moment be disastrous to the best interests of the nation."

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J FURTHER: "If Mr. Montagu's scheme means nothing, if it is one of the shadowy boons of which we have had so many in the past, let us oppose it to a man; but if it represents a 'substantial advance' towards full responsible government, bringing it within sight, not leaving it to chance or caprice, then we should be guilty of criminal folly to seek to wreck it by irrational clamour. Above all, let us not condemn it in anticipation before we know what it is. . . . Let not the prospects that are opening out to us be marred by any act of ours."

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MR. S. M. EDWARDES, the quondam Police Commissioner in Bombay, has, it is understood, retired from the civil service and is appointed secretary to the Indo-British Association. The point that arises for consideration is whether this Association of the enemies of Indian aspirations is to be allowed to poison the minds of the British

statesmen and the British democracy, while Indians are forbidden to carry on a counter agitation. If there is to be no propaganda in favour of self-government in England, it is but right that the one in opposition to it should cease—this is the least that Government in common fairness is bound to do. The contrast becomes the more glaring by the fact of a retired civilian heading the oppositionist movement. The *Times of India* well says that he has no place and no right in a political association of this character, and we hope Government will take due note of this observation.

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*New India* of Saturday last publishes particulars of the scandalous manner in which Mr. Robertson, the political Secretary of the Government of Bombay, has been prying into Mrs. Besant's money transactions of a purely private character. Having received information that Mr. Narottam Morarji had arranged with Mrs. Besant to pay her the value of a cheque on London, had the effrontery to ask Mr. Narottam if it was the only cheque or one of a series which he had undertaken to cash for Mrs. Besant and to request him to give him the dates, amounts, etc., of all such cheques. Mr. Narottam, returning graciousness for impertinence, supplied information to Mr. Robertson, but added firmly that he had no right to require any information from him regarding his private affairs. This incident, slight in itself, throws a lurid light on the way in which certain officials, particularly in the political department, spy upon persons engaged in political agitation and carry on intrigues against them. Such petty tyranny of a peculiarly vile and provoking type should not have been possible under Lord Willingdon's regime.

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THE *Bombay Chronicle* draws attention to the invidious distinction made in the treatment of the Indian and European members of the I. M. S., in spite of the fact that equality of rank and salary was promised to the Indian medical graduates who were granted temporary commissions after the outbreak of the war. First, English-recruited officers were given a salary of Rs. 540, whereas Indian-recruited officers have to be content with Rs. 420. But a greater inequality has been introduced by a recent order, which cancels the previous order declaring Indian recruits eligible for captaincy after one year's service as lieutenants and extends the period, both for permanent and temporary appointments made since 1917, to three years. This, besides involving a breach of faith, means a further injustice based on racial grounds in a service which is already too full of it. The *Chronicle* also brings to light the fact that several Indian officers—and only Indian—appointed before 1917 and even holding permanent appointments have been serving as lieutenants for more than three years without being promoted to the rank of captain.

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THE London correspondent of the *Hindu* understands that there is a scheme afoot to revive

the Indian Parliamentary Committee for the purpose of backing the Secretary of State's reform policy as soon as it is made known, and he anticipates that some formidable obstacles will have to be surmounted, both within and without the Cabinet. On the Home Rule League deputations he writes: "I have heard the fear expressed that instead of preparing the way for the official Congress deputation, these preliminary parties will be more likely to 'queer the pitch.' This may not be their intention or desire, but the view held in some quarters here is that the cause of self-government will be prejudiced and not helped by a more or less unauthorised agitation on the public platform under present circumstances." He further says that 'the whole representation of the Indian movement' will be beyond the authority and capacity of the gentlemen who have been delegated by the Home Rule Leagues in Madras and Poona and would prefer a representative Indian deputation, both permanent and special, to do the work intended by them.

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WHILE criticising the resolutions passed at the students' conference held at Palghat, affirming the necessity for strikes by students as a means of redressing their grievances, and condemning the action of the the authorities with regard to the recent disturbances at the Victoria College, the *Leader* remarks: "We are decidedly of opinion that the fullest opportunities should be given to students to think out and express their deliberate views on questions affecting their well-being. We think also that a calm and dispassionate discussion of subjects of general interest by students can tend only to a healthier atmosphere in educational circles. We may say all this and yet maintain, that there is such a thing as unhealthy discussion and that in disciplinary matters, it is not the students that can be the judges. . . . After all the days of studentship are days of study, of submission to order and authority, and, in the language of Mrs. Besant, of 'preparation and probation.' Now with regard to students' strikes, we have always made our position clear; we think that, save in the most exceptional circumstances, students' strikes are utterly indefensible."

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THE backwardness of India in point of education as compared to Great Britain is thus strikingly brought out in the comments of the *Statesman*: "In the United Kingdom, Parliamentary grants towards the cost of education alone amount to nearly twenty million pounds annually, while in Bengal the public money available from all sources for the education of an almost identical population is less than £ 1,000,000. Again, whereas illiteracy is almost unknown in the United Kingdom in individuals of either sex above the age of ten, Mr. Hornell's figures show that of the 24,000,000 Moslems who form half the population of Bengal, all but one million are totally illiterate."

### THE YOUNG AGAINST THE OLD.

A SIGN of the times that blazed like an awful portent during the troubled proceedings of the recent political Conference at Conjeevaram was the division between the older and the younger Congressmen. No doubt several men of advanced years could be seen among the supporters of the famous amendment as several juniors stood in the ranks of those that voted for the original resolution. But the bulk of the younger delegates, as soon as division was granted, grouped themselves in eager and vociferous array to the left of the President, while the familiar veterans of Madras politics mostly forgathered to the right, where Mrs. Besant, erect and combative as of old, strode to and fro, keeping the line of her followers, whose scared and anxious aspect was but occasionally relaxed by the cheery and good-humoured pleasantry of Dewan Bahadur Kesava Pillai. Mr. Kasturiranga Aiyangar, editor of the *Hindu*, had already discerned this line of division; for he had said that, though for his own part the resolution in its original shape seemed acceptable, he felt shaken by the fact that many young men were strongly against it. Mrs. Besant too had thought it necessary to talk straight to them. She recalled how the older Congressmen had been her unyielding enemies, and how she had turned to the youth of India and befriended and encouraged them; would they show their strength against her? They did; nay, worse. When she exceeded the five minutes' rule, some of them, with impartial irreverence cried 'time,' 'time.'

We do not forget the natural antagonism between the rashness of youth and the excessive caution of age. We do not forget that in the west, wherever there has been serious political upheaval, the young have got out of the restraining hand of the old, that Mazzini appealed to Young Italy and Young Europe, and that in Garibaldi's army the most dashing and reckless gallantry was displayed by companies of young men from college and school. Nor do we forget that even in India the first clear revolt of the young against the old was proclaimed during the anti-partition agitation of a decade ago. In fact, among the motives that disposed Mr. Gokhale in his last days to favour the reunion of moderates and extremists in the Congress organization, not the least was a desire to soothe the hearts of the younger generation and give them a chance of growing up in wholesome political conditions. Who would dare deliberately to estrange them or give a shape to India's future of which they might not feel proud? Still let us shed a tear for the simple time when the young would murmur and protest but finally yield to the persuasion of those more experienced, when they would clamour for more money but not snatch the

keys of the chest, when they would expostulate and hustle but not actually usurp the places of direction and authority. Respect for grey hairs, reverence for guru and parent are not with us weaknesses of which Indian character should be purged, but glorious virtues inherited from a proud past, which may need to be adjusted to a newer freedom and regulated by a larger sense of duty, but which we cannot allow to be destroyed by the inroad of an inferior type of western education. Just as we should grieve to see our women drop the modest and bashful graces natural to the east, so should we be shocked at the spread of the loud manners and easy familiarities that mark the behaviour of many educated young men towards their elders.

We may be old-fashioned, but we must protest against the intolerance that shouts down a speaker who happens at the moment to be unpopular, and refuses to listen to points of view that may not hit the general taste, but may contain much-needed elements of the truth. Groans and hisses are the usual ways in which western audiences express their disapprobation, but they are not necessarily to be imitated, for they prevent full discussion and elucidation, besides being insulting and unjust. Democracy has no peril so great as the shutting out of opportunities of enlightenment. The noisy manifestation of displeasure which brings about such gyrals is a temptation which the young must learn betimes to resist. No condemnation can be too great for the designing persons who play on the eager and unregulated passions of the young and teach them the intoxicating use of the power they have in public meetings to summon one speaker or dismiss another. To hear the other side patiently and, if it is the unpopular side, indulgently, is a virtue which teachers and professors must constantly inculcate on those whom they are moulding to an exalted citizenship.

In nearly all parts of India where political life is earnest, certain persons have of late been preaching a crusade against the older leaders. The younger Congressmen have been made to believe that, if only they crippled these and laid them on the shelf, the principal obstacle in the way of India's progress would be removed. We do not grudge the new leaders their success. Far be it from us to do so. But it is much to be wished that their success was attained by methods which left the young heart pure and tender and chivalrous, and which did not rob it of the rare jewel of ancient Indian culture, the quality of reverence. The renovated polity of the future cannot lose it except at its peril.

### PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE.

It is amusing to see tea-planters and their superporters in the Anglo-Indian press kicking up a row

against the Finance Member's action in throwing his income-tax net over the profits of the manufacture of tea. These self-same patriots have persistently charged the Government of India with having neglected their duty to raise sufficient funds by taxation and to spend larger sums for the prosecution of the war. Sir William Meyer has long been a favourite object of bitter criticism in a section of the Anglo-Indian Press for his alleged lack of courage and earnestness betrayed in the way he refrained from levying additional taxation. Anglo-Indian publicists have not tired of asking Government to stop all agitation that is calculated, even in the slightest degree, to hamper the vigorous prosecution of the war by diverting attention to the consideration of sectional interests and non-essential matters. Little did these mentors bargain for the financial operations of Government which, though in consonance with their pious preachings, threaten to encroach on the profits of a prosperous Anglo-Indian industry.

What is it precisely that has thrown the tea-planting interest into excitement and roused the righteous indignation of the papers of the type of the *Englishman* against the Government? The Finance Member has had the hardihood to touch the incomes of tea-planters and these patriots claim exemption from the income-tax on the plea that they are agriculturists. For the last thirty years, it is contended, income derived from the manufacture of tea has not been assessed to the income-tax and this is a privilege which the planters have so long enjoyed in common with ordinary cultivators and landlords. How can a departure from this long-established practice be allowed? Government has not had the courage to assess the incomes of wealthy landlords to the income-tax and they have, therefore, selected the planters for victims of their new policy. If these arguments, urged in no mild terms, on behalf of tea-planters do not suffice to bring the Finance Member to his senses and make him desist from the audacious course he is pursuing in attacking powerful interests, Government is threatened with legal proceedings. We have no doubt that the planters and their supporters in the Anglo-Indian press, with ready assistance of friends in England, will carry on an agitation that little accords with their own precepts and exhortations in the past with respect to patriotism and sacrifice.

But the Government of India need not be afraid of the agitation. It has a strong case which no denunciations of the planting interests and the Anglo-Indian press can demolish. Agricultural incomes are exempt from assessment to the income-tax even under the recently amended Act, and the issue now raised is whether the income of tea-planters can be regarded as agricultural income. The operations involved in growing food grains and raw materials like cotton and jute, are purely agricultural, and the income derived from them, being already subject to the land tax, cannot be assessed to the income-tax again as otherwise

it would have to pay a double tax. But those engaged in the ginning and pressing of cotton, for instance, cannot legitimately and reasonably claim exemption on the ground that it is an agricultural industry. Similarly, those who manufacture tea in their factories from the raw produce of the soil receive an income which is not strictly agricultural, and they cannot place themselves in the same category as ordinary cultivators and landlords, whose profits are not assessed to the income-tax. Common sense must definitely decide the issue against tea planters. There are two distinct operations in the manufacture of tea and coffee. One is purely agricultural, consisting in the raising of the plants, and the other is non-agricultural, involved in the making of tea and coffee fit for the use of consumers. If the manufacturers of tea are to be exempted from the payment of the income-tax what is there to prevent cotton gins and presses from being established on cotton fields and their owners from claiming the same privilege as tea-planters?

The argument that the exemption now claimed has been enjoyed over a generation, will not stand examination. Government may have been over-generous to tea-planters in the past, but, as the latter and the advocates of their interests in the Anglo-Indian press ought to remember, the needs of the exchequer are now urgent and large, and every rupee that can be obtained is wanted in aid of the war. Those who have waxed eloquent in the past over the supreme necessity of every citizen of the Empire making all possible sacrifices for the more efficient prosecution of the war, may be reminded that charity begins at home. It is easy to preach patriotism, and, as the agitation over the extension of the income-tax to tea-planters shows, difficult to practise it. Nothing can be more astonishing than the fact that of all people tea-planters should protest against taxation when the middle and lower classes are quietly bearing their burdens entailed by war conditions. But this is Anglo-Indian patriotism and sacrifice.

## IRELAND AND LORD MORLEY.

### I

NATURALLY the portions of Lord Morley's *Recollections*—and 'Meditations', as Frederick Harrison suggests—dealing with his stewardship of the India Office has been extensively read in this country, exhaustively treated in the Indian Press and, long before the book arrived in India, copious extracts, culled from the British papers, were reprinted in the Indian periodicals. That portion is certainly most interesting for the Indian public, for there Lord Morley broke new ground: for the first time and against tremendous odds he got an Indian in the Viceroy's executive council; he enlarged the Indian legislatures; and summoned Indians as members of his own council in London. In fact, whatever reforms may be coming now as the re-

sult of Mr. Montagu's visit to India, they will only follow the lead of Lord Morley's work and be an advance along the lines that he indicated. In these circumstances the average Indian reader should not be blamed if he concentrates his attention on Lord Morley's "A short page in Imperial History" and either skips through or totally avoids the other portions of his already famous book. Still there are many parts of the book that would interest persons of diverse tastes, for it is by no means a purely political or merely personal document but one that gives the story of the development of European thought in the 19th century and touches with a master-hand all the eminent personalities that made the century great. To the lover of literature many a page will appeal with great warmth as it will take him through all the famous classics of Greece and Rome down to the famous poets and novelists of the Mid-Victorian era; to the politician and historian the pages dealing with his Irish Secretaryship will be particularly interesting. Lord Morley writes of Ireland with genuine emotion and shows by his book, backed up as it is by solid work and attainment, that he loved the the Irish people, was in great sympathy with their aspirations, and was willing to take risks in working for their well-being. The friend and biographer of Gladstone could not be expected to do less.

## II

Let us take a hurried review of Irish history as a necessary introduction to not only what Lord Morley writes but also to understand the situation as it now stands. Ireland, as the world knows, has for centuries proved a veritable thorn in the administrative side of the government of the British Empire; and with Ulster on the one hand and Home Rule on the other—keeping the question of conscription hanging fire—the situation, always complicated, has been daily becoming more serious now. What is the genesis of the trouble? The first conquests of Ireland by England were undertaken in the 12th century when the authority of the English sovereigns came to be confined to the eastern portion of the island called "Pale." The northern and western portions were inhabited by the native Irish who lived under their own chieftains and followed their own laws and customs. The English barons were all powerful in the "Pale;" they reduced the peasants to serfdom and built great castles for themselves. So things continued. Early in the 16th century, while Henry VIII was sitting firmly on the English throne, Sir Edward Poynings was sent to administer Ireland; and he gave his name to the famous laws he adumbrated whereby the Irish Parliament was greatly shorn of its authority; it could not meet till called by the English king; none of its laws could be passed till the king approved of the same beforehand; and, lastly, English statutes came to have the same force in Ireland as in England. So long as the authority of the Irish Parliament was confined to the "Pale," it did not very much matter; but when

it was extended to the whole island, the independence of Ireland was completely destroyed. Then, Henry VIII assumed the title of the king of Ireland and began forcing the language and dress of the English on the unwilling Irish people. What was worse, he scandalised the Irish by asking them to accept him as the head of the Church, he having quarrelled with the see at Rome over his divorce and second marriage. Edward VI and Elizabeth only made matters worse by inculcating their reform doctrines on orthodox and Catholic Ireland. O'Neile's insurrection followed, attempting to throw off British rule altogether. It was cruelly suppressed and resulted only in a further enhancement of the misery of the Irish people.

Later, when England was engaged in decapitating its king and putting Cromwell on the throne, when, in fact, the Puritan Revolution of the 17th century was in full swing, Ireland once more revolted and was once more ruthlessly put down by Cromwell. The horrors of Drogheda have made such indelible impressions on the Irish mind and heart that when Parliament wanted to erect a statue of Cromwell in London, the Irish members made the situation so difficult for the ministers that the Government had tactfully to withdraw their proposal, and public subscriptions raised what Parliament denied to the memory of the great Protector. The scenes in Parliament on the occasion of the proposal are vividly depicted in the pages of Lord Morley. The worst of Cromwell's conquest was the confiscation of Irish lands and the squatting of large colonies of English conquerors with vast estates in the hands of soldiers. Two-thirds of Irish arable lands thus passed into Protestant hands. The suffering of the people was immense and they revolted once again—only to be again ruthlessly suppressed—late in the 17th century when William III invaded the country on the refusal by the Irish to accept him in place of the Catholic James. Economic distress was enhanced by the harsh laws of the British Parliament which sought to kill out Irish trade and industries by unreasonable export and import regulations, while absentee landlords living in England charged high rents and evicted their tenants mercilessly.

Towards the end of the 18th century, after persistent local disturbances and sustained political agitation as also the pressure of the American and French Revolutions, Irish Catholics were given the right to buy land, vote for members for Parliament and hold important civil and military posts. But these did not suffice, and once again in 1798 a desperate rising took place which was, as usual, suppressed with great loss of life and even the shadow of Ireland's legislative independence was destroyed by the abolition of the Irish Parliament itself in 1801. The Act of Union could pass the Irish Parliament only by the judicious bribery of its members and, under its terms, one hundred members of the House of Commons and 28 temporal Peers came to sit at Westminster. In 1828

came Daniel O'Connell's return to Parliament, and the Duke of Wellington, to avert imminent trouble, passed the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829, by which the Catholics came to have the same status as Anglicans, only they had to abjure the temporal power of the Pope and promise not to harm the established Church.

All this, however, did not tend to improve the economic condition of the Irish and the absentee landlords were the cause for continual soreness. The potato-famine of 1846-47 carried away thousands of people and the census commissioners wrote in 1851:—

"No pen has recorded the numbers of the forlorn and starving who perished by the wayside or in the ditches, or of the mournful groups, sometimes of whole families, who lay down and died, one after another on the floor of their cabins, and so remained uncoffined and unburied until chance revealed the appalling scene."

Then began the steady immigration of the Irish to America who carried to their new home their bitterness against the English who, they thought, were the cause of all their trouble. Those who were left behind, besides undergoing these sufferings, greatly resented the collection of tithes by the Anglican Church. All these troubles ushered into being the society of the Fenians—from *Fiana Eirean* or national militia. From the Irish in the United States, the Irish at home got immense moral and material support; disturbances followed; the jails were attempted to be blown up; and fenianism was put down. But reforms were also heralded. The Anglican Church was disestablished under the influence of such noted liberals as Gladstone and Bright, in 1869. The land question, however, remained in all its pristine bitterness. Charles Stewart Parnell formed his great Land League in 1879. Lord Morley's *Recollections* gives interesting side-lights on this great leader's character and attainments. The League demanded fair rent, fair sale and fixed holding. Parnell and his colleagues in Parliament, by persistent "flibustering," succeeded in getting their first Land Act in 1885, which sanctioned these three demands. The last Act was passed in 1903 during Mr. Balfour's regime, to whom goes a great deal of credit for improving the economic condition of Ireland.

But the demand for Home Rule, *i. e.*, complete legislative independence of great Britain, continues. But for Ulster—the descendants of the early "Pale"—the question might have been solved long ago. It will be interesting to note that *The Nation* was founded in 1842 to champion the Irish cause. The emergence of independent Balkan States out of the Turkish inundation during the first half of the 19th century, gave great impetus to the demand for Irish liberty. Daniel O'Connell himself shrank from civil war, but sporadic efforts even in this direction have not been wanting, perhaps the sorriest being that of Sir Roger Casement, not so very long ago. There has, however, been steady constitutional agitation with an occasional shedding of blood. The Phoenix Park murders shocked the

civilised world greatly and Gladstone realised that Home Rule was the only solution to the difficulties. In 1886 his first Home Rule Bill was defeated. The great statesman came in power again in 1892. It was then that Lord Morley became the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and of this period he writes in his *Recollections*, to which we shall now come.

(To be continued.)

SRI PRAKASA.

### THE CONFERENCE AND ITS MORAL.

THE debate on Mrs. Besant's resolution at the Conjeevaram Conference has a valuable moral for those to whom it belongs, by reason of their position in public life, to mould popular opinion. It is too generally assumed, with countenance from leaders, that the more uncompromising one is in opposition to the Government the greater service one renders to the cause of the country, and while the wrong-headedness of Government often makes this true enough, at a supreme moment in the country's history like the present, when questions of a novel character are raised for solution, demanding self-restraint and a due appreciation of the country's and Government's common peril above everything else, the governing formula of the patriot's duty fails to guide aright, and the leader who, instead of following the prevailing sentiment, seeks to control and shape it is found powerless to do so. On the question in dispute between Mrs. Besant and her opponents little need be said. That the Government is entitled to our fullest co-operation in the prosecution of the war, and that we are under a supreme obligation to render it, is common ground; it is also accepted on all hands that this co-operation will be evoked in full measure only by the Government granting us in our own country the freedom which they seek our help to establish in other countries. Nowhere in India are these two positions challenged; all parties are agreed on them, and in the Delhi Conference itself and outside they have been clearly defined. But within the sphere thus narrowed down has emerged a sharp division of opinion, which manifested itself in all its strength in the Madras Provincial Conference. Shall the people offer all the help they can, with such meagre chance of success as may attend the offer, even if Government in their short-sightedness refuse to do anything immediately to satisfy our political aspirations, or shall they withhold it in the hope of thereby forcing upon the Government a policy characterised by a wider vision and a larger heart? Mrs. Besant held fast by the former view, and refusing to submit weakly to a compromise, which would have served to obscure the rising differences, insisted on joining issue with those who held the latter. She pointed out how, when to a danger to the British Empire and to the civilization of the world was superadded a peril to the integrity of the motherland, self-interest should unite [with the moral obligation] to the

Empire in impelling all patriotic citizens to provide the largest available man-power in self-defence, irrespective of the political concessions Government may or may not grant. Leaders of public opinion had done their duty by solemnly warning the Government that the assistance which would be forthcoming from the people in the default of a soul-satisfying pronouncement as to their political destiny would be nothing compared to what might be possible with such a pronouncement to stimulate their efforts. But even if this warning was not heeded, the compelling necessity of protecting the country from foreign aggression must lead all her sons to lay aside for the moment all their outstanding differences with Government and to unite with them in ridding the country of the impending menace.

But to those who were incessantly taught to regard self-assertion as the supreme virtue in national affairs, Mrs. Besant's appeal for self-surrender carried no force, and Mr. Gandhi's appeal, pitched in a higher and nobler strain, appeared sheerly quixotic. I have no desire to belittle the services of those who, with much sacrifice and suffering, have offered an unflinching resistance to the vagaries of officials; I recognise that it is the normal quality required of a politician in India, and it is by no means over-abundant. But I should think that if the younger generation were consistently preached to temper their ardour and enthusiasm by self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Mrs. Besant's appeal to them to take up arms in national defence, without stipulating any conditions as to political rights, would have aroused a more heart-felt response. Similarly, an unequivocal repudiation of the notion of bargaining, when it was first started, would have prepared Mrs. Besant's audience for an exhortation from her for unqualified co-operation with Government. In the manifesto she issued with some prominent men, her position it must be admitted was made perfectly clear; but evidently the portion promising unconditional help was taken by some of the signatories themselves to be a mere rhetorical flourish involving no obligation on themselves. The opponents of Mrs. Besant's resolution also cited the opinions of Messrs. Gandhi and Tilak and Sir Subramania Aiyar in their support. How Mr. Gandhi, who had publicly told the Viceroy that he would, if he could, make the people abstain from whispering Home Rule in the present emergency, would by any process of reasoning be represented to support qualified help in recruiting, is hard to understand; Sir Subramania Aiyar has since repudiated in the columns of *New India* the construction placed upon certain words in his message to the Conference, supposed to give colour to this view, and Mr. Tilak, although claimed by Mr. Satyamurti and others to have been an advocate of conditional co-operation with Government, is apparently unambitious of the honour fastened upon him, to judge of his attitude from the article

in the last issue of the *Mahratta*. There is no newspaper in the country except the *Hindu* and no leading person except its editor, but has expressed entire accord with Mrs. Besant's position, and yet as many as half the Conference opposed it. The explanation of this singular phenomenon, I am inclined to think, is to be found in the normal temper of mind sedulously cultivated, among others, by some of those who on this occasion commended the course of unreserved co-operation with Government.

But what is far more regrettable than the fact of this injudicious opposition to Mrs. Besant's resolution is the tendency to impute unworthy motives to her. Writers in the *Hindu* have openly accused her of being secretly influenced by the Government of India, and the *Hindu* has made itself responsible for giving publicity to such vile and slanderous attacks. It is evident that where such a base motive was not openly attributed, it must have been at the back of the minds of many who opposed her, and the vote on the question must have been largely influenced by a similar idea. That a leader of Mrs. Besant's standing, who has suffered in her own person cruel persecution at the hands of Government, should be thought to be amenable to such a process of manipulation by them shows how extremely suspicious and mistrustful the public mind is and how weak in reality is the hold exercised by popular leaders on it. So long as they follow the path marked out by popular approval, they are greeted with hallelujahs, but directly they stray from a hair's-breadth from that path they are condemned in vulgar fashion and credited with base motives. It shows how essentially weak our public life is, and how undiscerning is the mass of even our educated men, who are to be the final arbiters in our national affairs. Mrs. Besant will of course live down such a canard, but that almost every leader, with an independence of mind, has at one time or another the character of a Government's henchman given him is in itself a most deplorable feature of our public life. Is it certain that the school of politicians, at whose head Mrs. Besant has placed herself, has not itself helped to produce such a morbidly suspicious frame of mind? Another disadvantage from which Mrs. Besant suffers is that she is a foreigner; "after all, a foreigner," is what an average man mutters to himself, whenever she is found to give expression to unpopular sentiments. This, again, is in part a result, I imagine, of certain persons over-emphasising the alien character of the British rule. Mrs. Besant herself makes no complaint of her being regarded as a foreigner, and "suspicion and mistrust of the foreigners are natural," she says. Perhaps so; they are natural, but would it not be far better if Indians taught themselves to regard certain persons belonging to a different race and country, like Hume and Wedderburn, Andrews and Polak, and Mrs. Besant with other than a parochial feeling? A certain political propaganda tends to produce a



directly contrary result, and it must be held accountable, in part at least, for the unreasoning prejudice it creates against Mrs. Besant. That Mrs. Besant, who in season and out of season distinguished between Yesterdays and Tomorrows should have to complain of a tendency among the younger party to oppose her because she was old seems slightly amusing, and it shows that her previous discrimination was not of the happiest and altogether just

S. G. V.

## QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

### AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

THE Committee appointed under the auspices of the second Gujarat Educational Conference held at Broach deserve to be warmly congratulated on their illuminating suggestions regarding agricultural education. They regret that the Government should have so long remained stolidly indifferent to the vital needs of over two-thirds of the total population of India and should have failed to provide a rational bifurcation of studies in country schools and to get special text-books prepared to this end. The tendency of the present-day system of education is "to create a distaste for manual labour of all sorts and a dissatisfaction with country life generally. By its new ideas, totally dissociated from the localities in which they live, are instilled in the minds of the young, who believe that such ideas can only be realised elsewhere." Accordingly, the Committee, while recognising that the ruralising of country primary and secondary schools is a distant ideal, recommend the adoption in our country schools of lessons in gardening, agricultural chemistry and the like. For the immediate present, schools like the one on the Baroda Experimental Station and another to be presently opened at Godhra are quite enough. The Committee realise the importance of having adequately trained teaching staff and recommend that a special training college should be started to meet this long-felt desideratum. Until we have a sufficiency of trained teachers it would be idle to organise purely agricultural schools. The Committee therefore suggest that the courses of study of the primary schools should cover a period of six years, out of which the first three should be devoted to giving an elementary education in agriculture through special text-books and leading off the pupils to a neighbouring allotment for lessons in elementary horticulture. When a modicum of agricultural education is thus assured the remaining three years should be utilised in imparting a specialised training, both in and out of the school. As the school work will not require an attendance for more than two or three hours a day, the parents will not exhibit any dislike of education and take their boys from school for the simple reason that their life-struggle is so keen and incessant that the inducement to secure

an additional wage from child-employment is terribly strong.

Nor have the Committee left grown-up agriculturists out of account. They propose that special classes lasting for a month or two should be opened for them, where they should receive demonstrative lessons, illustrating the advantages of clean seed, labour-saving appliances, cross impregnation, artificial manures and scientific rotation of crops. In America, the farmers have found the knowledge of arithmetic an asset of great practical value and they stand in no danger of being underpaid by their employers or wheedled out of their hard-earned agricultural wealth by unscrupulous sowcars. Simple book-keeping, again, is of the greatest possible utility to the generality of cultivators; the Committee likewise recommend organisation of itinerant work on a much more extended basis than heretofore. Finally, the Committee urge with all the emphasis at their command that steps should be taken to start an agricultural college in Gujarat where the higher teaching and research work should be carried on, the medium of instruction being the vernacular of the province.

### LAW OF IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

ATTACHMENT of property, sale, forfeiture, arrest and detention of the judgment-debtor in civil prison, are the different methods generally sanctioned by the civil law of modern civilised States for the recovery of debts. Imprisonment is generally considered as a proper punishment for criminal offences only. It is scarcely resorted to in civil cases. The success and appropriateness of a legal remedy depends upon its being adequate, just and necessary. Singly, neither of these three tests can justify the use of imprisonment as a method for recovery of debts. It is intended to be used only in exceptional cases. But recently it was brought to the notice of the people, as well as the Government of Madras, that with creditors in general and with the professional money-lenders in particular imprisonment of the judgment debtor was becoming a common method of harassment and intimidation. In order to investigate into the real state of affairs and propose a suitable remedy, Mr. Curgenvin, I. C. S., was deputed on special duty. His investigations have been embodied in a report, which is the subject-matter of this review. He has made a searching inquiry into numerous cases and after consulting the opinions of a large number of experienced judicial officers, has formulated his proposals in the form of nine recommendations. The Government, however, could not persuade itself to accept them wholly, but has done so partly.

Firstly, he suggests, that whenever an application is made for the imprisonment of a judgment-debtor in the execution of a decree, it should be made obligatory upon the court to make an inquiry as to whether he is in a position to pay

If there is a reasonable probability of the judgment debtor taking an unfair advantage of this circumstance, it would constitute the only exception to this rule. Secondly, it should be obligatory upon the court to examine him and determine whether he is able to pay the debt, in full or by instalments. These two recommendations have been rejected by the Government, being overmuch impressed by the difficulties raised by a large number of judicial officers, on the plea of extra work and the profitless character of proceedings.

For a clear understanding of the subject, it must be mentioned, that the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code of 1908 and the procedure laid down in the Debtors' Act have made the inquiry of the debtor's ability to pay or otherwise dependent upon the discretion of the judge. On the presentation of an application for arrest and detention of the debtor in execution of a decree, the judge may or may not hold an inquiry. He may, if he likes, order his arrest and detention at once and then proceed with the execution of the decree. In a Bombay case, it was argued that the word 'may' in O XXI rule 37 had the force of 'shall,' and hence an inquiry must be made obligatory upon the court. This contention was however disallowed by the late Mr. Justice Davar, who remarked that the discretion of the judge must not be arbitrary, but such as was guided by judicial principles and opinions. From an examination of numerous cases, it is found that neither the applicants nor the judges are very cautious in the matter. Imprisonment is not the proper remedy for the recovery of debts. It is objectionable, because it is unjust and inadequate. In the case of unsecured loans, the money advanced by the creditor is generally in proportion to his estimate of the general solvency of the debtor. The creditor hardly enters into such a contract purely for the benefit of the debtor. What is primarily liable for the debt is not the person of the debtor, but his credit. Arrest and detention, therefore, should be the last remedies to be resorted to in exceptional cases. Hence by transforming the permissive clause into an obligatory one, the Government will only be giving effect to the real spirit of the law. To perpetuate a grievance on the ground of increase of work is to subordinate ends of justice to official routine.

O XXI or 40 (1) C. P. Code already contains the third suggestion, viz., disallowing imprisonment on an undertaking to apply for insolvency. By a special resolution, the Government have sanctioned the fourth recommendation, emphasising the necessity of an interim custody for not more than ten days for arranging the satisfaction of the decree or the filing of the insolvency application. The fifth recommendation says that a receiving order should be passed and execution should be stopped on the admission of an insolvency petition. The Government of India have been already approached on this question of making the necessary amendment in the Provincial Insolvency Act of 1907.

The sixth suggestion refers to the reduction of the cost of insolvency proceedings. Government have promised to request judges to reconsider the question. High Court Judges have been requested to consider the seventh proposal which allows the court to order instalments or suspend the payment of a decree or variation of its orders, without the consent of the decree-holder, though after notice to him. This proposal is in direct contravention of O XXI r 11 (2), which requires that none of the above-mentioned orders can be made without the acquiescence of the decree-holder. Limitation of the maximum period of detention to six weeks constitutes the eighth proposal. The Government and the Judges of the High Court think the reduction undesirable. The consideration of the last proposal about the reduction of the period of limitation to three years in the case of small amounts, has been postponed.

Mr. Curgenven has anticipated the strongest objection likely to be urged against his proposals, viz, neglecting the interests of the creditors. But, as remarked in the report, the question ought to be looked at from the point of view of the community at large and especially from the borrower's standpoint. The creditor is intelligent enough to safeguard his interest. Taking into consideration the legitimate limits of credit, it would appear that the creditor has no moral claim against the person of the debtor. Such a provision becomes an instrument of terror and revenge in the hands of the money-lender. The permissive character of the present legislation on the point gives facility for its vexatious use. In a country, where the people are averse to taking advantage of the insolvency courts—a tendency which indicates the soundness of the moral conscience of the community—it should be made obligatory on the courts to protect the interests of the debtor as far as possible. Hence the first two proposals, which constitute the essence of the inquiry, deserve, in our opinion, sympathetic reconsideration and acceptance by the Government. So far as Bombay Presidency is concerned, agriculturists are exempted from arrest and detention in prison, in the execution of a decree for the payment of money under s. 21 of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act. A change in the direction outlined in the report will bring the Indian law on this point into line with English Law in its main provisions.

## REVIEWS.

### IMPROVEMENT OF SANITATION IN MYSORE.

THE report on sanitation in Mysore for the year 1916 affords valuable instruction to the social worker. The insanitary conditions, common to almost all the villages, which have to be attacked by social workers as well as local authorities are thus described: "bad housing, absence of drainage, water supply open to contamination, insanitary methods of storing manure, accommodation of cattle in dwelling houses, and untidy surroundings caused by the existence of stagnant pools and rank vegetation." In Mysore 13,474 villages have been brought under the operation of Village Improvement Committees, and nearly three lakhs of rupees were spent on them.

in the sinking of wells, removal of rank vegetation, levelling up of uneven surfaces, etc. The problem before the authorities consists of developing the present impulsive efforts towards securing better sanitation into "a conscious and sustained endeavour," and this depends largely upon the composition of the Improvement Committees.

Where possible, unhealthy villages are shifted to a better site, and there the construction of houses is stringently regulated. The provision of cattle sheds separate from human dwellings is insisted upon; endeavour is also made to induce house-owners generally to separate the cattle from the dwelling portion, and action is being taken to allot sites at reasonable distances from villages for dumping manure. Thirty-two villages were thus shifted, and in the Malnad 19 new villages were formed. Government sanctioned in September 1916 the construction of model houses of different designs and costs to meet local requirements, and since then thirteen model houses were constructed in one district in the course of the year. The establishment of itinerant dispensaries has also been sanctioned, but there has been delay in carrying out the plan. A sanitary survey to furnish information as to existing sanitary conditions together with particulars of improvements needed was conducted in 61 villages, and a "disease survey" was also conducted in 29 typical villages.

The system of medical inspection of school children, ordered in 1910, was carried on during the year under review, and 13,100 children were treated for various ailments. But in 1916, a comprehensive medical inspection of schools in district headquarter towns was ordered, but for want of appliances the scheme could not be worked, and Government in their resolution have administered a mild remonstrance to the department for having delayed too much in giving effect to a scheme sanctioned "so long back as March 1916."

Earnest efforts were made to combat the ravages of plague, malaria and other diseases and to improve the general sanitary condition of villages. Among the measures adopted to prevent malaria were the removal of rank vegetation and filling in or draining of pools. A definite plan on these lines, executed in the town of Hiriya, entailed an outlay of Rs. 5000. A special anti mosquito staff has been entertained since 1915, which searched in the year under review 3,669 houses for mosquitoes and searched 436 wells. Of the 189 wells, found to be breeding mosquitoes, 16 were closed up. A malarial survey was conducted out in the Bangalore City, and the conclusions arrived at from the investigation have more than local value. They are that

"The malaria-carrying mosquito prefers wells of fresh water specially when the well is in disuse or not much used and ponds or wells of fresh water in garden lands and occasionally breeds also in collections of rain water in shallow pools, pots, etc. The infective mosquito was not found to breed in open drains, box drains, sewers, wells of brackish water, wells in use when there is considerable agitation of water and sheets of water holding decaying organic matter in suspension. The mosquito was rarely found in tanks or large shallow sheets in rain water."

A similar malarial survey has now been sanctioned for the Seringapatam town, and the carrying out of such a survey is enjoined upon all municipal councils before an attempt is made to attack the disease, as varying local conditions are found to necessitate a variation in remedial methods. Slowness in adopting anti-malarial measures in rural areas is accounted for by the ignorance prevailing in those tracts of the essentials of sanitation, for it is stated in the report that the problem, so far as villages are concerned, is "one of education of public opinion on the subject."

Inoculation against plague was largely resorted to in 1916, and with encouraging results as to the immunity conferred by that method. Among 2,774 inoculated persons in one district, three attacks with one death occurred, the death being that of a youth who was suspected to have been incubating the disease prior to inoculation. Out of the 2,688 inoculations done in the Mysore district, 17 attacks occurred, with no death, the seizure having proved, in almost all the cases, to be of a very mild nature.

V.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### MUD-SLINGING.

SIR,—The Provincial Conference held in Conjeevaram furnished a good commentary on Shakespeare's description of the multitude as a myriad-headed monster. Never was the fickle-mindedness of a mob more strikingly illustrated. The idols of but yesterday were dragged in the dust to-day, so much so that one could have exclaimed like Antony, "what a fall, my countrymen!" Mrs. Besant, who was up to that time the most popular leader, was now roundly ac-

cused of being in an unholy alliance with the Government and all the compliments usually reserved for older Congressmen were now showered on the devoted heads of Mrs. Besant and her supporters, of course, with no more justification. It was a pathetic sight and a study in the psychology of crowds. Three years ago such loose talk and such irresponsible behaviour would have been unheard of, incredible, inconceivable at the smallest public meeting, let alone a big, annual gathering like the Provincial Conference. But now it has become the commonest thing. A writer recently complained in the "Hindu" against your Madras correspondent for saying that in the matter of public meetings, people had become a bundle of uncontrolled nerves. And now in the Conjeevaram Conference he has proved your correspondent's case up to the hilt. Who is responsible for this transformation, this decadence of the public taste, this degradation of public life, for all this dross and filth and vulgarity, scurrility, irresponsibility and rowdiness that disgrace our present-day political life? Whoever that may be, it is high time for them to realise that it is always easier to raise the devil than to lay him. We have all read the story of Frankenstein's monster; some of our leaders seem to be in exactly Frankenstein's position: they have created a great mass of public opinion, but they are no more able to control it than poor Frankenstein was able to control his monster and the monster now turns round on his own creators (and who shall blame him?) The conference has come and gone, but its echoes are still ringing. All the bad passions roused by it are still finding free vent and having full play in the press. The "Hindu" and "New India" are "at it," again to the great merriment of the "Mail" and the "Justice." On all sides, one hears the barking dogs of public life vociferously yelping at people's reputation; but as good fortune and the adage have it, barking dogs do not bite. I hope this dirty pastime of mud-slinging will soon cease in the interests of the nation and decency alike. "We implore, we beg, let this sniping cease!" as Mr. Lloyd George says. Yours, etc.

S. M. M.

Madras, May 17, 1918.

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