

THE Servant of India

Editor: V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

VOL. I, No. 30.]

COONA—THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1918.

[ANNUAL SUBSN.: Rs. 4

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

WHILE the question of a counter-stroke by the Germans is being discussed in the papers, they have turned back upon the Allies who pursued them, and one of those epic battles extending over miles and engaging millions of men with which the war has made us familiar is on the point of being joined. It has now been our experience that such battles are preceded by a tremendous activity of the artillery belonging to the parties. Report says that the artillery of the enemy is thundering as it has not done for a long time and that the enemy is feverishly reinforcing his defences before Laon and preparing for a prolonged halt in the trenches of the Monampteuil plateau. Thus the situation on the Western front has changed once again and we must await further developments. For the result of this battle will determine to a large extent the nature of the operations which will be carried on in winter in the Western theatre of the war.

THE Viceroy, in the speech he made while opening the Simla session of his legislative council, emphasised the binding character of the announcement of last year and claimed for the reform proposals that they exactly satisfied the conditions mentioned therein. It, however, they could be proved to fall short of the pledge, those who complained of their inadequacy had good ground, he said, for a further extension of the scheme. It would have been well, therefore, if the Viceroy had attempted a reply to the criticism levelled unanimously throughout the country against the third of the formulae deduced from the announcement instead of trying to show that the proposals constituted a substan-

tial improvement on the present position. As it is, the Viceroy's speech afforded no indication as to the way in which the unofficial proposals on the score would be received. Sir William Vincent, while speaking to Babu Surendranath Banerjea's resolution, observed that the authority of the Government of India must be maintained as one of the fundamental principles of the reforms, and it was in this belief that he signed the despatch which went Home with the report. It is immaterial in what belief Sir William signed the despatch; the only question is, whether it follows from the declaration of August last year that only increased influence but no power could be given to the non-official members in the Government of India; does not the declaration rather require that simultaneous reform should proceed in provincial and central Governments? Neither the Viceroy nor the Home Member answered criticism on this head.

SIR WILLIAM also maintained in his speech that the changes proposed in the report represented the maximum to which public opinion in the United Kingdom would possibly go, but being coupled as it was with the admission that he had no authority to make that statement on behalf of the Government, it loses all its force. It would perhaps be more true to say that the official opinion in India could not be induced to go any farther, but we are clear that if the promise made in the August declaration is to be redeemed, the process of popularising the Government of India must not be made to wait till provincial Governments have become fully autonomous. Both the Viceroy and the Home Member laid particular stress on the fact that the certification power and the procedure which it called forth were to be used only on exceptional occasions, and this assurance would perhaps serve to create a favourable impression of the operation of the reform scheme in its normal features. Sir William remarked that it would be idle to say that the Council of State would be used constantly to over-ride the authority of the Legislative Assembly in an unreasonable manner, and any such abuse of power would be brought to notice and punished. The Viceroy also spoke in a similar sense.

WHERE the views of the author differ from those of the reader, what is the duty of the former? Should he "change his opinion altogether with regard to the good and bad of his country" in

order to bring it into conformity with the prevailing opinion? Sir Rabindranath Tagore raises this question in his reply to the criticism of a correspondent on one of his novels and says that such a moral somersault should not be required of any author and indeed cannot be justified. And he concludes: "My last request to my correspondent is this, that she should take me seriously when I say that I love my country. If I did not, then it would have been quite easy for me to become popular with my countrymen." We answer in the same words to those with whom we have the misfortune to differ on the most momentous question of the day. It is very unpleasant to hold views which are out of accord with the views of a large number of people, but if we are not to be untrue to ourselves we cannot change our convictions with regard to "the good and the bad" of our country. Of the unpopularity which results from this we have no right to complain, but we would ask our critics to be charitable in their judgment. The Servants of India Society has been subjected to bitter and violent attacks in the press on account of its attitude towards the reforms question and we would wish in this connection to offer our grateful thanks to the *Leader* for its chivalrous defence of the Society against such attacks. ↓

THE need for an All-India Liberal Conference, says the *Indian Social Reformer*, "has been no whit lessened by the unexpected degree of moderation evinced by the Special Congress. The Conference is needed to endorse on behalf of the Liberals whatever was just and practicable in the Congress resolutions and to correct whatever was extreme and impracticable for the time being." It is also needed to supply the omissions of which the Congress was guilty, and one such is the failure on the part of the Congress to consider the representation of communities other than Mahomedans. The method recommended in the report is rightly condemned by the leaders of these communities, and a suitable electoral machinery needs to be devised to secure due representation to them. The Liberal Conference will have to go carefully into this question, and if, in the absence of necessary material to form a judgment on in this matter, it cannot make definite proposals with regard to the mode of election, it must at any rate pronounce in favour of circumscribing nomination to the narrowest possible limit and making provision, in some way that may be found to be most practicable and least open to objection, for fair and adequate representation for non-Moslem communities.

IN a communication printed elsewhere Mr. Latthe complains that the leaders of the moderate party in the Deccan have not definitely and consistently expressed their views on this important question. This complaint we are inclined to think is unjust. Leading members of that party and their organs of opinion in the press have from the first recognised and given clear expression to the

necessity of removing the sense of injustice which backward communities and minorities feel on this question. It is too much to say that all are agreed as to the best way of doing justice to the various classes; opinions differ, for instance, on the question of the formation of communal electorates. While some are opposed to sectional election, others are prepared to reconcile themselves to it in some cases, if no other method will attain the desired end. This attitude may indeed appear to be somewhat halting to those who see nothing evil in the institution of separate electorates for various communities. Those, however, who are of a different opinion can only give qualified support to such a proposal, especially when the detailed information needed to judge of the desirability or necessity of providing for the representation of some of the communities through special electorates is not forthcoming. But the moderate party is united in thinking that steps must be taken to allay the fears by the backward communities that they will not be adequately represented in the coming councils. From this position that party has never wavered.

BY the sudden death of Sir Ratan Tata, most of the progressive movements in India will suffer a terrible loss. Although he was himself immersed in the many business undertakings which he and his family launched on such a vast scale, he helped with munificent donations every cause that made for the progress of the country. His charities were quite catholic and very discriminating. No sectional institution conducted in a narrow spirit could expect any assistance from him. Nor was this help continued in a mechanical sort of way. He took deep personal interest in the actual work of the institutions which he helped with money, and always made kindly and sympathetic inquiries about the details of their activities. Another characteristic of his generous gifts was that there was no condescension about them, as is too often the case. He always left on the recipients of his charity the impression that in giving the monetary assistance he did to any institution he was only doing his part of the duty. His charities did not always follow the lines marked out by Government approval; in all actions he showed a sturdy independence both of official and popular prejudice. The Servants of India Society, along with many other public institutions, received his warm and liberal support, both moral and material, and from our case we can imagine how such institutions must feel crippled by its sudden withdrawal.

WE are extremely sorry to announce the death of Godubai, the younger daughter of Mr. Gokhale, on Tuesday last in Poona. She had an attack of what at first looked like influenza, but on the sixth day it was pronounced to be pneumonia, and she succumbed to it on the ninth day. She was 22 years old.

INDIA'S SACRIFICE FOR THE EMPIRE.

THAT India would be called upon to make a further financial contribution to the prosecution of the war, was anticipated when it was decided to raise an additional army of five lakhs in response to the appeal of the Prime Minister. The resolution moved by Sir William Meyer in the Supreme Legislative Council recognising that 'the prolongation of the war justifies India's taking a larger share than she does at present in respect of the cost of the military forces raised or to be raised in this country' did not come as a surprise on the people. What was perhaps not expected was that Government would not find it necessary during the current year to levy additional taxation for meeting the extra financial responsibilities entailed by the raising of the new army. It was thought that the Finance Member would bring forward proposals for fresh taxation at the September session of the Viceregal Council, and speculation was rife as to the form which the burden would take. But Sir William Meyer's lucid statement has now made it clear that the Indian exchequer will be in a position, during the present year, to bear the strain which his proposal will impose upon it and that additional taxation will become necessary only in connection with the budgetary arrangements for the next year.

The position so far with regard to India's financial liabilities for the prosecution of the war has been this. Apart from the liberal contributions which the princes and people of India have generously made to various funds connected with the war and otherwise, this country has borne the whole normal cost of its army, the additional expenditure on account of the military operations of the Indian forces in various theatres of war being met by the British Government. As Sir William pointed out in his speech, India will have contributed to His Majesty's Government, by the end of the current year, about £ 30 million towards the prosecution of the war and the military expenditure has increased from £ 20 to 29 million a year entirely owing to the war. There was again the contribution of £ 100 million made by India to the Government as a war gift, entailing an annual charge of £ 6 million on our exchequer. Besides this India has been assisting the Empire by supplying various valuable materials, and this unstinted help has been acknowledged and appreciated by British statesmen and the public, whatever over-enthusiastic or carping critics may say notwithstanding. India has given generously out of her poverty, and comparisons made to her detriment between her contribution and that of the colonies, are neither fair nor justifiable.

The Government of India itself has taken this view in the past and resented the charge brought against India to the effect that this country is the only part of the Empire which, instead of making sacrifices in carrying on the struggle, has made profit out of the war. It now feels that with the

extension of the enemy's activities in Asia and the consequent necessity of preparing to meet the new menace, India must make further financial contribution to the prosecution of the war in response to the appeal by Mr. Lloyd George. Sir William Meyer's resolution, therefore, proposed that the further help India should give should be in the shape of taking over certain items of military expenditure in which this country is vitally interested, but the cost of which under the present Parliamentary resolution falls upon His Majesty's Government. India's present liability is confined to the cost of 160,000 soldiers, and it is proposed to take over the cost of 200,000 more from 1st April last and of another 100,000 from April next. The financial responsibility that India will shoulder by the beginning of next year will be for an army of 400,000 soldiers and the charges will amount to £ 35 million during this and the next two years and a further £ 10 million for military pensions.

These additional charges will be met this year out of current surpluses, but an excess profits tax will be imposed next year to provide for the increasing expenditure undertaken. It must be frankly stated here that this burden will be heavy for a poor country like India to bear. A war profits tax had been proposed to Government in the past in connection with the funds required to finance urgent reforms like education whose progress is likely to be retarded. But there are three considerations which it is needful to bear in mind here. First, that the people of India appreciate the principles for which the Empire is fighting against German autocracy and the menace which threatens this country; second, that they are prepared cheerfully to make any sacrifices they may be called upon to make for the Empire and the noble cause for which it has been in the war; and third, that an assurance has been given that only the wealthy—those, in particular, who have made abnormal profits out of war conditions—will be subjected to financial burdens in order to raise funds required to meet the additional liabilities, and that the mass of the population will not be affected.

Patriotism in the highest and the broadest sense of the word requires that the proposal of the Government of India should be unanimously and enthusiastically supported by the country. Let it not be said that further sacrifices were called for from India for sustaining the cause of civilization and maintaining the security of the Empire and that the response was partial and grudging. Let the British public and Empire realise that India is prepared to do her utmost and to suffer for the common cause. Let them see that the Indian people who are asking for greater political power and a higher status in the Empire are willing to bear the responsibilities which the concession of their demands involves. The criticism of the proposal related to the safeguards and limitations which are necessary to ensure a proper carrying out of the scheme of additional expenditure and

taxation and did not affect its substance and principle. And we feel it our duty to emphasise that with the heavy financial burden India is shouldering, the responsibility of the Government has materially increased. It will have to see not only that the proposed fresh taxes fall upon those who are best able to bear them but also that the funds which are required to promote social progress in India are liberally provided out of current revenues and not stinted on account of the larger expenditure for war purposes. The people of India have a standing grievance in this matter and care must be taken to see that it is not intensified.

AN ALARMING SITUATION.

WE wonder if the Government have realised the full significance of the grave situation that is rapidly developing during the last few weeks in the country, but more particularly in the Deccan with special reference to which these remarks are being made. The rains have been holding off in an altogether unprecedented manner. The statistics published by Government show that rain-fall is in considerable defect all over the country, except at Raipur where it is nearly twenty-one inches in excess. Partly as a result of this, there has been an extraordinary rise in prices. The oldest person living does not remember to have heard of the price of the staple article of food of the poor being at more than six seers a rupee. According to a Marathi proverb, a prevailing rate of five seers shows a critical state of affairs. But here we have, not in an out of the way place but, in an important centre like Poona connected by railways with important food-producing centres *bajri* and *jawari* selling at three seers a rupee, indeed at $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers. If such is the state of things, with prices higher than in any famine year, the mind is appalled to think to what height prices will mount when regular 'famine' conditions establish themselves.

With all this, Government appears to be as quiet as if nothing exceptional had happened! In ordinary times, especially during the last fifteen or twenty years, people had learnt to look up to Government to organise relief measures in anticipation of famine. This year we are in the very midst of it. And war has added its own inconveniences, miseries and horrors to increase the seriousness of the situation. With all this, Government has not moved its little finger to grapple with the problem. We have heard people attributing the wildest motives to this inaction of Government. We should be the last persons to believe in all that is freely talked about. But we want Government to realise what people feel and what inferences they draw. After all, large bodies of people do not always reason logically, and very often go wrong. There is a psychology of masses which officers of Government in high positions can hardly afford to neglect. It is not only what Government actually

do that matters, but also what people *think* Government are doing. If they have really taken any steps to lessen the stringency of the situation, let them not keep that counsel to themselves, but spread the information broadcast among the people.

In such a crisis there is a double duty which Government have to perform. They have, in the first place, to strain every nerve to increase the productive capacity of the land and to utilise every inch of the soil; and secondly, to afford facilities for the proper distribution of the supply of corn, so that they may be available in the places where they are most badly wanted. We attach more importance to the first point, because by working at it India would have served the Empire magnificently in her hour of need. It is a patent fact that Great Britain wants all the supplies of food products that India can possibly send out and strenuous efforts ought to have been made in that direction immediately on the outbreak of hostilities. More than three valuable years were allowed to go by and only a few months back food production committees came into existence. We are afraid precious little has been done even since then, and a detailed report of the work of these committees will be interesting reading. Increased production is besides, an urgent need of India. Very large quantities of food supplies have already been exported from India, so that if the rains continue to hold off longer, all the available supplies in India may not suffice for all her needs. But what passes the comprehension of the ordinary man not in possession of the secrets of Government departments, is that Government should fail to afford the facilities necessary for evenly distributing the supplies of food that are yet in the country. The case of Poona furnishes an admirable illustration. The municipality of Poona City made arrangements to open a cheap grain shop for the benefit of the poor. For a long time, no railway waggons could be made available for bringing the corn which had been purchased in the Central Provinces. At last, large supplies arrived on the spot and the poor in Poona blessed the municipality and those who worked to make the grain shop success. Again, however, there is the difficulty about the waggons and perhaps, the grain shop may have to be closed in a short time if no waggons are made available for the purpose of bringing the rice from the Central Provinces. For ought we know Government may have their own difficulties. But the man in the street cannot understand them unless Government come out with whatever explanations they have to offer. Especially is he inclined to doubt the very existence of these difficulties, when he sees Race Specials run for the benefit of the rich, and for what to him appears as the encouragement of licensed gambling, while all special arrangements are stopped for *melas* and fairs to which the poor resort out of religious sentiment. It appears that the business of 'controlling' everything has landed Government in the sphere of over-administration. This has probably overtaxed the

energies of Government and they have failed to move, or to move as quickly as was necessary. Whatever that be, let us repeat again that the situation is serious, and the seriousness is increasing almost every day. We, therefore, think that Government owe it as much to themselves as to the people to issue a full statement of the measures they have adopted or propose to adopt for the purpose of meeting the crisis that stares all in the face.

H. G. LIMAYE.

THE HINDU MARRIAGE BILL.

THE Hon. Mr. Patel's bill for validating marriages between Hindus of different castes came up for discussion in the Imperial Legislative Council last week and appears to have led to a lively discussion after which leave to introduce the bill was granted. From the nature of the opinions expressed there, mostly by non-official members, it does not appear likely that the first reading of the bill will be carried when it next comes up for discussion. Government through its spokesmen, Sir William Vincent and Sir George Lowndes, declared that they neither supported it nor opposed it at this stage, but were willing to call forth opinions on it from the local Governments and various public bodies. This, in our opinion, is not unsatisfactory. All that we expect government to do in matters of social legislation is, to let the non-official members decide one way or the other, Government itself preserving a benevolent neutrality in favour of reform, seeing that they represent the advanced ideas of the West in India and that the reform movement itself is a direct consequence of the British rule. At the time of the discussion on Mr. Basu's bill several Government spokesmen declared that the bill had a deep political motive behind it, and hence Government brought its whole weight to bear against that measure. We hope that this attitude will not be repeated in the changed circumstances of the country at the present time.

What is, however, of more importance than Government attitude is the attitude of the non-official members towards that measure, and we feel constrained to say that the discussion augurs ill for social progress in India under home rule for some years to come. Most of the members roundly opposed the introduction of the bill, taking their stand on existing caste restrictions and usages. One member—a Maharajah—thinks that the community should be safeguarded against individuals and thus every oppressive regulation laid down, perhaps two thousand years ago, should continue to be held sacrosanct. Another member—a Rajah—thinks that no useful purpose would be served by legislating ahead of the times, as if legislation is not always slightly ahead of the times and does not express the better mind of the community. Mr. Surendranath Banerjea thought

that the bill should come before the reformed councils of the future, though he sympathised with its object; in this opinion he was joined by Mr. Sastri who, however, said that he would heartily support the mover if a division were taken. Pandit Madan Mohan was altogether opposed to the bill, an opinion which we no doubt expected from his well-known orthodox views but which is all the same regrettable. The thorough-going supporters of Mr. Patel appear to have been Messrs. Sapru, Jinnah, and Khaparde, the last of whom is said to have occasioned considerable laughter by his remarks which have not been reported in the papers.

At the last special Congress a resolution was enthusiastically passed which declared that the people of India are fit for responsible government and repudiated any assumptions to the contrary. Now we believe that this fitness is not to be proved by eloquent speeches or by resolutions. It can only be fully demonstrated by showing it in action, by allowing everybody to enjoy those elemental rights of personal freedom which all advanced countries enjoy, and by not allowing ourselves to be bound down by out of date laws and regulations. If we are to wax eloquent over our rights as against a Government by foreigners, are we not equally bound to see that every Indian should have the same rights as against other Indians themselves? We felt greatly shocked by a South African law that a second wife of an Indian during the life-time of the first was not to be recognised as such and that her children were to be regarded as bastards. Should we not feel ten times more shocked when we find that a High Court Judge feels compelled by the existing Indian law to declare that a man who has been married to a woman of another caste for twenty-five years and has eight children by her has been living in illegal union with her and that he, his wife and children are *chāndālas*, the lowest of the low? If we welcomed a campaign of passive resistance in South Africa as a protest against its arbitrary regulation, should not we also in our own country go in for almost active resistance against such an outrageous law? The change of law is in our own hands. We cannot claim to have our machinery of Government modernised unless we are prepared to accept all modern ideas of personal freedom also.

To look at the matter from the lowest point of view, we shall be only giving a handle to our enemies if we hug fast all our old customs. See what a nice argument we present to Dr. Nair or Lord Sydenham—who by the way reported strongly against Mr. Basu's bill in his own regime and is thus really out of court and not entitled to use the argument—when they can say that India is not a nation, and that Indians are not citizens of one country since in its three hundred millions of population there are innumerable marriage-tight compartments, each compartment containing anything between a few hundred to a few lakhs of souls. The hard-headed voter of Manchester or

Glasgow is not likely to be satisfied with historical justifications of the institution of caste. He knows that he himself can by his own worth aspire to raise himself to any position and that the marriage of his son to a duke's daughter is not beyond the range of possibility. One knows, of course, that this is not very likely, but neither is the marriage of a Brahmin with a Shudra very probable. Such marriages are bound to be rare under any circumstances, but the laws of a country ought not to raise an impossible barrier against them.

Mr. Patel's bill is a small effort in the direction of redressing a great wrong done to individual liberty. As we said in our last number, the bill may be deficient, but if that it is so, the defect should be remedied. But every lover of the country must sympathise with its object, must do what he can to enlist support for it, argue with the orthodox and himself openly express his adhesion to the principle. The bill is in a small way a trial of Indian nationalism which will illustrate our high sounding arguments in favour of home rule or refute them according as we force this or a similar bill through the Imperial Council or throw it out. Already several far-seeing social reformers are fearing that under a democratic Indian Government the path of social reform in India will be none too smooth when an unscrupulous demagogue can rouse unreasoning hostility of the conservative and the orthodox to anything new or foreign. We trust that the public will realise this aspect of the question and give such an enthusiastic support to the bill that even an unsympathetic Government will be compelled to pass it. That will indeed be a real victory for modern India, and do more than resolutions or speeches can to show to British democracy that India is on the high road to be democratic in the best and the truest sense of the word.

R. P. PARANJPYE.

AN APPEAL TO MODERATES.

THE recent announcement of the Viceroy on the question of communal representation opens that controversy once again and as must be obvious to every one, the agitation in favour of it will lead to unpleasantness in respect of the relations of our advanced and backward communities, unless care is taken to approach a discussion on the subject with prudence and broad-minded statemanship. From whom, if not from the Moderate Party, is such a frame of mind to be expected in a consideration of this much-vexed question? When the same problem, in its application to the Hindu-Moslem relations, was being considered in 1908-09, it was the greatest Moderate leader of his days, the late Mr. Gokhale, who took the lead in recommending to his compatriots a solution which was then much criticised but has eventually led to the harmonising of Mussalman with Hindu political aspirations. It is necessary that wisdom and fore-

sight similar to Mr. Gokhale's will be brought to bear upon the solution of the present problem also by those who are seeking to form a Liberal Party in Indian politics.

The need of a careful consideration of this question becomes all the more important in view of the turn which the question is likely to take unless it is dealt with in a spirit of large-minded statesmanship. A great deal of the bitterness exhibited by the advocates of communal representation is due to the utter lack of definiteness in the views of persons who wish to lead political thought among us. During the past two years or so that the agitation is going on, the two parties who hitherto formed the Congress have equally displayed a confusion of thought and unwillingness to meet the situation such as cannot but lead to an aggravation of the feelings of the communities claiming it. There are few men of light and leading who have openly and frankly stated their views on this question and of those who had the wisdom to do so, fewer still have the steadiness to stick to them and see them carried through. Neither the Extremists nor the Moderates have in their conferences or representations to Mr. Montagu last winter expressed themselves consistently and frankly on this question. Apart from the extremists, even the moderates as a party have not unfortunately given the lead to educated India in this matter. Mr. Gokhale's memorandum on the subject mentioned the necessity of separate representations to important minorities like the Lingayets in the Deccan. Even the Congress scheme referred to arrangements for the representation of important minorities. But none of the Congressmen has cared to specify who these 'important minorities' are. The Bombay Presidency Association proposed to Mr. Montagu the reservation of four seats in a council of 150 for the representation of Indian Christians and the like as well as the 'untouchable classes.' And when the Joint Report refused to consider even this ultra-moderate proposal, that body has not cared to say a word about it. The Deccan Sabha of Poona, in its representation to Mr. Montagu, attacked the advocates of communal representation with a strange and provocative violence and, perhaps because some generous minds asserted themselves in the end, inserted a slip suggesting a small concession in favour of the agitation, which would have produced a much better effect in a more favourable setting than was given it in that document.* I recount these facts, not because I wish to revive the bitterness which is the sure result of mutual misunderstandings, but because I wish to make clear how distrust begets distrust and parties which ought to fight

*The Deccan Sabha, in its representation, expressed disapproval of the agitation of those among the non-Brahmins who opposed all constitutional reform and the reversal of the repressive policy of Government, but gave firm and unequivocal support to the movement for securing adequate representation of backward communities.—Ed.

together the forces of social and political injustice, are themselves ranged in opposite camps.

Looking back to the history of public activities in the Deccan, during the last thirty years nothing appears more prominently before the mind's eye than the persistent growth of a party which has, as it were, laid the foundations of its whole work on the ashes of a movement of all-sided reform. The death of Agarkar removed from among us the only individual who had a hold on the minds and imagination of Maharashtra and who could have, to some extent stemmed the tide of growing social reactionism. Since then, the volcano of struggling social justice has become almost extinct and the field is wholly open to political propaganda. What therefore, began as social reactionism soon developed into political radicalism or better known as extremism. The first of its postulates is, that the social order of things has nothing whatever to do with the attempt to graft democracy on the ancient branches of the Hindu oak. The second is a racial antagonism which now assumes a veil and again emerges into full prominence as a 'nationalist' movement. The third principle is that the best way to cure social evils is to neglect them and the sovereign remedy for our internal discords and consequent weaknesses to say that these do not exist. Though deceptive and therefore disastrous, these are the theories which flatter your vanity and appeal to your sentiments. The quick success attained by the opponents of Agarkar and Ranades is thus the result of a natural vanity which spoils societies as well as individuals, and of the readiness of men to place their confidence in methods which are superficially easy to adopt. The effects however, of this school of national vanity and imprudent ambitions on sober thought and solid progress in Maharashtra have been of a most disappointing nature. Practically the whole of educated Maharashtra has now pledged its allegiance to Extremism and poohpoos the recent endeavour to rally the forces of progress inaugurated by Sir D. E. Wacha in Bombay. The peculiar features of extremism described above, do not apply to anything outside Maharashtra, and I, therefore, address my remarks to those in this part of the country who wish to take up the fallen standard of the moderate party to pause and think over the real issues between Extremists and Moderates in Maharashtra, so that they may realise the difficulties ahead to rely on for the purpose of defeating reactionary movements which have for the time being got the better of them.

What is the really national movement in India? The one that boasts that India is a full-fledged nation or the one that tries to establish harmony between the communities which have to be welded into nationhood? If the former, the claims of extremism to that title are indisputable. If the latter, the numerous castes and creeds in Maharashtra which are waking up to a sense of their own existence

and by educating themselves through their communal institutions are trying to outgrow the limitations of the past—it is they, who really represent the national movement in Maharashtra. Paradoxical as it may seem, the communities which were so long slumbering in the darkness of ignorance are now exhibiting an apparently sectional activity which is bound to develop into the most nationalising movement of the times to come. The Mussalman awakening, started by Sir Sayad Ahemad, was anti-Congress and men were not slow to attack it as such. Anti-Congressism of Sir Sayad was, however, the result of no narrowness of the Islamite view. It was the natural outcome of a distrust of Hindu ascendancy inherited from past experiences of mutual rivalry. The communal movement among the hitherto politically-indifferent classes displays similar features for similar reasons. But he who runs may read in it an impatience on the part of the backward classes to submit meekly to a position of inferiority in any branch of life, a keen desire to right the wrongs wherever they be, a throbbing national life in fact, if not yet in name. May it not be that remedies which were applied to the removal of the soreness of heart from among the Mussalmans may succeed equally well in the case of our backward communities also? If only the leaders of moderate thought in Maharashtra realise how glorious will be the result of enlisting the sympathies of the socially-degraded sections of our society, of setting at rest the anxieties which may be groundless, but which all the same make their hearts tremulous, of giving them what they claim as a measure of protection which, if unnecessary, may be withdrawn after a short period? The late Mr. Gokhale had clearly foreseen what some of the Moderates now regard as a foreign-inspired agitation and with the generous wisdom so peculiar to him, he has pointed out the way also to meet that agitation. The way to remove the soreness of heart is not, he said, to disregard it, but to adopt 'special supplementary elections' to the Council which will rectify inequalities and injustice. That is the way to help progress, while to shut your eyes to the existing demand is to retard it. The application of some such means to the present situation in Maharashtra will I think, renovate the party for the time being overwhelmed by extremism and add such strength and vigour to it as will enable the party to make Maharashtra a really 'great nation.'

A. B. LATTHE.

REVIEWS.

THE MAHABHARATA.

EPILOGUE TO THE MAHABHARATA by Rao Bahadur Chintaman Vinayak Vaidya, M. A., LL. B. published by Chiploukar and Co. (Tenth volume of the Marathi translation of the MAHABHARATA) pp. 625 price Rs. 4.

MR. C. V. VAIDYA is known to English readers as an eminent scholar by his works on the two

greatest Indian epics which show a close study and some amount of research also of this vast subject. This Marathi volume carries further that study and research, and the views expressed by Mr. Vaidya are well worth being known to a wider circle of readers than that to whom they have been addressed in this volume.

The Epilogue is divided into eighteen (a significant number in the *Mahābhārata*) chapters, each devoted to a thorough discussion of an important topic. In introducing his subject to his readers, the writer points out the great importance of the *Mahābhārata* as a source of post-Vedic history and recommends the use of the scientific method of investigation.

This vast poem of a hundred thousand verses *prima facie* indicates a joint authorship, and the threefold beginning in the Adiparva favours Mr. Vaidya's theory of three recensions. The original "Victory" of Krishna Dwaipāyana must have gained in bulk, though so slightly, in being narrated by Vaiśampāyana to Janmejaya, and assumed the present immense form of the *Mahābhārata* at the hands of Sauti.

Vyāsa wrote his history soon after the great war, which Mr. Vaidya holds to have been waged in 3101 B.C. A most impressive personality is Vyāsa. An inspired poet with an intimate knowledge of life, he handles his subject with consummate skill and in language at once simple and dignified. Like all great poets, he has a message to give to the world, insistence on the performance of duty being the refrain of his sublime song. "With arms stretched out am I crying, but no one heeds me! Dharma brings the fulfillment of all desires, why not resort to it?"

Mr. Vaidya says it is not possible to find out how much we owe to Vaiśampāyana, whose recension of Vyāsa's original contained 24,000 verses, and was called "Bhārata." Several centuries must have elapsed before Sauti re-wrote the poem, during 3rd century B. C. The advent of a new religion and the consequent diversion following on it, was an event to draw out the best in Sauti, the great historian. And he made the *Mahābhārata* a repository of all traditional wisdom. He also thought it necessary to store the accumulated wealth of legendary lore, thus saving it from being appropriated by the Buddhists to their own purposes. Gifted with a kindred genius, he has so much imbued the spirit of his great master, that he succeeds in giving his additions the appearance of an organic growth. We must not suppose, however, that his work is altogether free from blemishes, inevitable in an undertaking beyond the power of single individuals, and Mr. Vaidya has clearly pointed these out. But Sauti is so much like Vyāsa's own self, reincarnating to finish his half-left work, that Mr. Vaidya looks upon the whole of the *Mahābhārata* as directly belonging to Vyāsa himself. Mr. Vaidya concludes the first chapter by showing how the poem fulfils all the requisites of a great epic.

In the second chapter the author maintains that Sauti must have made the recension during 250-200 B. C. and he gives an overwhelming amount of evidence in support of his view. Dion. Chrysostom, a Greek writer who travelled through Southern India during the 1st century A. D., mentions in his journal an Iliad with a hundred thousand verses, which could be no other than the *Mahābhārata*. The Hindus adopted the Greek method of grouping the stars in constellations not earlier than 200 B. C. and the *Mahābhārata* never once mentions a constellation. European scholars, ignoring Chrysostom's testimony, put the date of the *Mahābhārata* at four centuries after the Christian era. The *Mahābhārata* mentions the Greeks as a brave race, and thus comes a definite knowledge of Alexander's invasion of India in 323 B. C. This shows fairly our author's line of argument. The rest of this interesting chapter is taken up with an acute discussion of the chronology of several Sanskrit works. We mention only one instance which is particularly interesting, as the author differs from Mr. Tilak. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* ch. 13-V-4, ब्रह्मसूत्रपदेति, etc., Mr. Tilak sees an unmistakable reference to Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana, which again in several instances refer to the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Mr. Tilak cuts the Gordian knot by identifying the author of the Vedānta Sūtras with the author of *Bhagavad Gītā*. Mr. Vaidya, on the other hand, solves the difficulty by otherwise explaining the passage in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. He finds it hard to believe that Krishna Dwaipāyana should hold to the tenets of Sāṅkhya and Yoga in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and mercilessly expose these in the Vedānta Sūtras. He holds Vyāsa Bādarāyana to be a different person from Vyāsa Dwaipāyana.

In chapters three, four and five, after disproving conjectural theories of European scholars about the mythical character of the great war and its heroes, Mr. Vaidya goes on to determine the date of this great event and he fixes it at 3101 B.C., the beginning of Kaliyuga. Next comes the question, who were the Bharatas mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*? These were the descendants of Purūavas, the son of Ilā, after whom the region north of the Himalayas was called the "Ilā-varsha." Thus they belonged to the lunar branch of the Aryan warrior race and should not be confounded with the earlier occupants of the Ganges valley, the solar Bharatas mentioned in the *Rigveda*, for the *Mahābhārata* itself says: "The ancient Bharatas were a different people."

In the next three chapters VI, VII and VIII, the author has discussed several interesting social topics, *viz.*, the castes, the Ashramas, education, marriage, food, dress, manners and customs.

The *Mahābhārata* traces a long history of the relation between the sexes. It has glimpses of a time, when there used to be a community of wives and it sings praises of monogamy as the most desirable form of marriage. The wife's was a status of great dignity and she wielded unbounded

influence in the family. In a chapter in Vana-parva, Draupadi describes a model wife, and to realise this ideal has ever been the ambition of Hindu women. Marriage being a sacrament is indissoluble. Our ancestors had industrious habits and a genial optimistic disposition. They were exemplarily simple in their dress and food, of unassuming manners and noble bearing.

The caste system in India threw the responsibility of government on the warrior class. The Brāhmanas and the Vaiśyas had their own duties to look to and they never much cared for political power so long as the machinery of government was not complicate. The Kshatriya king consulted his subjects, but he soon became absolute. Yet as he could not make laws (the ancient sages having already formulated them for him,) his power must have been always limited, and we find that he felt called upon to explain to his subjects the *rationale* of his conduct, when in any way it happened to be unusual. Thus law and public opinion exercised a wholesome check on the power of the king. The evils of a weak Government being quite evident, it is no wonder that the subjects should look up to the king, with the awe and reverence due to a deity. At the same time we must not forget that an idea of a mutual contract between the king and his subjects was not altogether absent and that the ministers could depose a bad ruler.

In the next seven chapters (from ten to seventeen) the author gathers information about the arts, industries, sciences, literature, religion and philosophy of the epic period. The details unmistakably point to a high standard of domestic comforts and social pleasures. The various branches of polite letters seem to have been assiduously cultivated and the different systems of philosophy grew side by side in an atmosphere of noble toleration.

The last chapter XVIII is given to the consideration of *Bhagwad Gītā*, which has ever since the time of the *Mahabharata* exercised a lasting influence on the Hindu mind. European scholars agree in believing it to be a part of the oldest portion of the *Mahabharata*, and Mr. Vaidya has adduced a number of interesting arguments to prove how it cannot be an interpolation of Sauti on the evidence of its language and of astronomical facts mentioned in the book itself. Our author maintains that Vaiśampāyana must have composed the song some time between 2000 and 1500 B. C. and like the rest of Vyāsa's work comes down to us in the words of his disciple.

The author then gives us the purport of the divine teaching of Śrī Kṛṣṇa—his gospel of knowledge, service and love. The passage describing how humanity has always been tossed between extremes of Hedonism and Asceticism is exceedingly interesting and our very sincere thanks are due to Rao Bahadur Vaidya for clearing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's character of all calumnious charges, and for establishing the nature of his

relations with Gopis on a foundation of pure love.

This in brief is the outline of R. B. Vaidya's very important work and we have no hesitation in saying that he has done yeoman service to the cause of oriental learning. He has clearly proved that the *Mahābhārata* is "a gem of purest ray serene" and the people whose history it portrays are shown to be a great people enjoying a unique civilization.

R.

SHORT NOTICES.

REPORT ON THE JAILS OF THE C. P. & BERAR FOR 1917.
REPORT OF THE PRIVATE ESTATES UNDER GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT IN C. P. FOR 1916-17,
NOTE ON THE WORKING OF THE REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT IN C. P. AND BERAR FOR 1917.

THESE reports of the administration of three departments of the Central Provinces Government, for the year 1917, throw an amount of light on their successful working and the probable room for future development in respect of them. One of the notable features in the jail administration, consists in the tribute, that is justly paid to the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies and to some leading citizens in C. P. and Berar, who have volunteered their services for the religious and moral instruction of prisoners. We fully endorse the view of the Inspector-General of Prisons, that the public instead of waiting till the offender is in jail or has been released from it, should immediately undertake the work of reclamation, even before a prisoner receives his first sentence, which undoubtedly blasts his whole life. Prisoners' Aid Societies should be conducted on the lines of the 'Police Court Missionary Work,' in England. Influential members of such societies must make it a point to visit the jail, say for instance, once a month or fortnight and take advantage of the facilities, which the officers in charge have expressed their readiness to give, for confidential conversation with prisoners. The present war has also contributed some new problems to the jail administration. There is an increase in population on account of large addition of Military offenders. Some prisoners have been sent to Mesopotamia, while some others have been enlisted in Jail Corps. We would like to suggest that young prisoners may be directly enlisted in free labour corps and if taken over by Military authorities, their sentences may safely be remitted.

In the working of the Registration department, there was a decrease in the total number of registered documents probably on account of poor cotton crops, prevalence of plague, and the general rise in prices. The total income declined from Rs. 4,21,133 to Rs. 4,02,113, while the expenditure rose from Rs. 1,27,436 to Rs. 1,52,546. As it is not possible to review the reports in detail, we have no remarks to offer about the second.

LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

MADRAS.

THE SPECIAL CONGRESS AND AFTER.

IT IS now a well-known fact that the Madras Moderates largely attended the Special Congress. However opinions might differ as to the resolutions passed by that Congress, the special session has had a most sobering effect on Madras politics, so much so that the other day the "Hindu" described the scheme of reforms as a "slight advance" and "New India" has admitted that it constitutes "some advance in some directions." It is a thousand pities that these papers did not

say so at once, as soon as the scheme was out, for that would have prevented a good deal of mischief and might have even prevented the secession of the Liberal party as a whole from the Special Congress; but the mischief has been done: still "better late than never" as the proverb has it. Mr. Pattabiseetharamaiya, himself a well-known nationalist leader of these parts, says in a letter to the "Hindu" dated the 6th inst. "I am glad that the secession of the older leaders has had this sobering effect on the special session of the Congress and however, uncharitable you may be in attributing to them personal motives, there are persons in the country who appreciate their worth as *saviours* at a critical period in the history of the mother-country." The impression is general here that but for the abstention of that party as a whole, the special Congress would have passed resolutions much more radical and drastic than those it has now adopted.

RIOT AND LOOTING.

We are living in troublous times. The air is thick with all kinds of canards. Everyday brings news from one district or another about food riots and looting of shops. So far looting and riots on a large scale have taken place in broad-day light in the districts of Vizagapatam, Kistna, Salem, Madura, S. Arcot, Trichinopoly, and reports have reached from Chingleput, Coimbatore, Tinnevely and other districts that the situation is becoming critical. It will be no exaggeration to say, that almost every district in this presidency is in a state of panic bordering on desparation. For some days past, rumour has been rife of impending riots even in the city of Madras. The terrible increase firstly, in the cost of food-stuffs, and secondly, in the price of clothes is solely responsible for all this unrest. Even in the city of Madras where food-stuffs and clothes are generally supposed to sell at comparatively cheaper rates than in the districts, prices have gone up by leaps and bounds within the last few days—indeed they have doubled and trebled. Rice, the staple food of the rich and poor alike which sold at four measures a rupee now sells at three and three quarters; another common article of consumption, chillies, for which we paid 4 as. three months ago now sells at Re. 1-10—thus representing a rise of 400 per cent; that commonest article of food, salt, formerly less than 1 anna per measure, now costs 6 as. a measure. Kerosine oil without which nobody can get on now-a-days sells at three or four times as much as formerly. It is difficult enough for even the middle classes to make both ends meet in such hard times. What then could the poor classes do? Are they to live at all? As for the monstrous rise in the price of cotton-clothes it is too notorious to require any mention here. It is preposterous for any body to advance the lame excuse on behalf of the traders and shop-keepers, that this abnormal inflation in prices is entirely or even chiefly due to War conditions. The belief is now fairly general that it is largely, if not chiefly, due to the inhuman greed of traders and merchants who see their chance in the war and seek to grow richer and richer at the expense of starving and naked populations. The feeling is universally entertained that the masses of men and women should be clothed and fed, before a few men are allowed to amass riches. The Government, with their characteristic dilatoriness, have issued an order that Committees are to be appointed in the districts to advise the Collector in tackling this problem of problems—that of living. In this connection, the "Hindu" pertinently asks whether such committees were appointed in the districts where serious disturbances have broken out, or whether they are going to be appointed only hereafter. Something must be done and done immediately, or it will be too late and the situation may get out of hands completely.

THE END OF THE STRIKES.

It is to this economic unrest that the series of strikes which this Province has recently witnessed are directly traceable, whatever the "Madras Mail" and its valiant echo "the Justice" may say to the contrary. The Madras Mill strike

and the Madras Tramway strike to which reference was made in the last letter are now happily over, though not equally successful. Whereas the strikers of Madras succeeded in getting 25½ p. c. increase in their wages, their less fortunate brethren of Madras had to be content with their Manager's assurance that he would sympathetically consider their demands if they returned to work. They have returned to work and it is earnestly hoped by all that Mr. Powell will keep his word.

THE WAR LOAN DAY.

These economic disturbances have another bad effect which the Government cannot afford to ignore. They tend to weaken the war efforts of this Province. When food is scarce and clothes are luxury, it is hardly probable that men and women can be induced to take any interest in the "German" War, as they call it. Recruitment and investment in War Loan Bonds are reduced to a minimum, in consequence. In spite of these, however, Madras rallied splendidly to the help of the Empire on the 2nd instant, which was observed as War Loan day throughout this province. At an influential meeting in Madras, presided over by the Governor, over 22 lakhs was subscribed on the spot.

A POLITICAL ARREST.

Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu, an itinerant Home Rule lecturer who has done much to arouse the political consciousness of the masses in the Tamil districts of this Presidency and who as a stump orator had few equals and no superior, was arrested on the 30th of August on a charge of sedition and taken to Madura for trial where he has been let out on bail. A security of Rs. 2000 has been demanded from his weekly Tamil organ the "Prapanchamitran." Though the Doctor had in his writings and speeches been carrying on a regular campaign of hate and calumny against Mrs. Besant, Mr. C. P. Ramawami Iyer and all others from whom he politically differed, he has been serving his country as he thought best, and considerable sympathy is felt for him now that he is in trouble and subscriptions are being collected to help him to get out of it.

TRAVANCORE.

FINANCE.

ANOTHER anxious period of stock-taking of the financial condition of the State has just past and the results are very creditable to those who have been husbanding the resources of the State. The budget for the coming year 1094 M. E. which will commence on 17th August, 1918, is a gratifying record of financial progress all round. The revenue and expenditure for 1093 under Service heads were, according to budget estimates, Rs. 1,59,13,700, and Rs. 1,57,78,200 respectively, with a surplus of Rs. 1,35,500. These stand revised at Rs. 1,61,35,600 and Rs. 1,62,18,900 respectively, resulting in a deficit of Rs. 83,300. The revised estimate of capital expenditure not charged to revenue is Rs. 11,63,000, against the budget estimate of Rs. 6,00,00.

The budget estimate for 1094 provides for a revenue of Rs. 1,63,65,200 and an expenditure of Rs. 1,59,57,360, resulting in a surplus of Rs. 4,07,900. The estimate of capital expenditure not charged to revenue is Rs. 77,400. The year 1093 was a particularly eventful year, in which additional expenditure had to be incurred on such items as the 60th birthday or *Shashthiabdipurttee*—a rare event in Travancore—of His Highness the Maharajah and the famous religious ceremony, known as *Murajayam* coming once in six years. In spite of all this unexpected rise in expenditure, the deficit was only Rs. 83,000. A noteworthy feature of the year 1093 (which will close on the 16th August current) was the encouragement of local salt and the stopping of a large quantity of Bombay salt. There was a fall of Rs. 3,24,000 under foreign salt and an increase of Rs. 4,09,300 under local salt. Travancore has long been accustomed to Bombay salt, so much so

that the people had a partiality for it and a strong prejudice against local salt. For some years the experiment was tried of issuing more of local salt and less of Bombay salt in all the salt depots of the State with the sole object of encouraging the indigenous industry. But the people first declined to buy local salt and preferred the foreign article. Slowly the Bombay salt had to be elbowed out for this reason that Travancore coast has excellent facilities for the manufacture of salt and it was cultivated for a long time. The attempts of the Government in popularising local salt received considerable stimulus from the fact that, on account of war conditions, Bombay salt could not be had. It is also a matter for mention here that the Government have been giving special concessions for the cultivation of salt from the various local pans on the coast in South Travancore and the area under salt has considerably expanded.

A noteworthy feature of the year 1914 is that Rs. 24 lakhs has been allotted for education, the highest amount on record. In other words, 14.6 per cent. of the total revenue and 15.04 of the total expenditure of the State is the amount spent on education which will be found to be much larger than several other States and British provinces in India. The three items for which increased provision is made are: (1) additional expenditure on account of an increase in the salaries of officers on a progressive scale, (2) special allotments for the opening of new schools and higher classes in existing schools, and (3) higher grants-in-aid to private schools.

Travancore has ever been in the forefront of advanced facts in India—both Native States and British Indian Provinces included—and it is a source of extreme gratification to the well-wishers of India that the present Dewan, Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair, is keeping up the traditions of that policy the aim and object of which is to promote education and enlightenment in the State.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

WE feel fortified in our opinion of the reform scheme by the cablegram from Lala Lajpat Rai published in the *Tribune*. His estimate of the scheme is evidently much more favourable than that of many nationalists. He says, "Its admirable spirit deserves sober constructive criticism, avoiding bitterness and emphasising autonomy." If this advice had been generally followed, the united action urged by Mr. Lajpat Rai would have been much facilitated.

ALARMING news comes from Madras that the wild rumours of bazaar looting which were afloat for the last four or five days, have unfortunately proved true. Though it is generally believed that the police were already apprised of the coming storm, at any rate, when looting actually broke out in Choolai, Triplicane, Kotwal Bazaar, George Town, Mylapore and several other parts, the police were taken unawares. The direct and immediate cause of the outbreak was a combination of profiteering in cloth and in foodstuffs. Rice was sold at 2 measures a rupee and chillies at Rs. 2 per viss. The result was that the people took the law into their hands and wrought vengeance and havoc. When the police force, Madras guards and the Anglo-Indian force were trying to restore order, in the general *melee* that ensued, a large number of casualties—more than a hundred at the least—occurred. The unpreparedness of the

City Police, the absence of the Government on hills, and the general inadequacy of the measures for controlling profiteering all round, are the chief causes responsible for the non-prevention of the outbreak and the delay in bringing it under control promptly.

A GREAT benefaction amounting to five lakhs of rupees has been announced in the name of Sir Vithaldas D. Thackersey. The fund will be created into a charitable trust for the purpose of helping poor college students of all castes and communities. It is the object of the trust to meet the needs of students, who wish to prosecute their studies at colleges affiliated to the Bombay University but who are unable to meet the whole or part of the expenses of such study. The help will take the form of loans, repayable without interest after graduation, in convenient instalments, generally not exceeding one-fifth of the monthly salary, but of not less than Rs. 10 per month. Twenty-five new students will be selected every year for the first four years, and after that the number of studentships, which will be brought up to 100, will be maintained out of the funds. The amount advanced will not ordinarily exceed Rs. 400 per annum in each case. Candidates will be required to insure their lives for the benefit of the Trust Committee till repayment. Sir Vithaldas intends to make further contributions later on to the trust property. He has earned the gratitude of the public by his philanthropic donation.

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