

# THE Servant of India

Editor : V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

VOL. I, No. 35.]

POONA—THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1918.

[ANNUAL SUBSN.: RS. 4

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE most important news of the week on the Western front is the occupation of Cambrai and Laon by the Allies. With Cambrai and St. Quentin in their hands, the situation on the Western front has changed completely in favour of the Allies. In the Champagne region again the advance has been substantial. In Albania the Austrians are being harassed by the Italians. In the Balkans the enemy is being pushed back, and fighting is going on round Nish, which has been taken. Beirut has fallen in the East, thus furnishing an excellent naval base for the Allies. Thus the week's news may be summarised as constituting an advance on all fronts.—The sinking of the *Leinster* and the *Ticonderoga* adds to the tale of the crimes of the Huns. It has already evoked strong protests in Ireland and America and may lead to further embitterment of feeling. There is also news from Turkey of the fall of the pro-German ministry and the coming into power of Tewfik Pasha. Another item of news from Turkey conveys information about the revolt of the Governor of Smyrna.

BY far the most important event of the week, however, is the reply of President Wilson to the German Peace note. President Wilson did not take his cue from the suggestions and recommendations of the Jingo press either in Europe or America, but asked for guarantees of good faith from the Germans and wanted to know whether the Central Powers accepted unreservedly all the points stated in his addresses. The German reply, of which the text has been published, has reached President Wilson's hands. Germany accepts

definitely all the principles enunciated by President Wilson, agrees to evacuate occupied territory, and assures America that the peace offer has the support of the German nation. In the meanwhile an important conference of the Allied Premiers has been held in Paris, probably to consider the peace proposals.

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THESE things point towards peace at an early date. But we can do better than be too sanguine about it. The issue in this war has never been a single one or a plain one either. President Wilson's principles have not all been accepted ungrudgingly by all the Allies themselves. The Allied press hints at additional points brought up by the Allies being insisted upon. There is besides the usual crop of rumours and reports about abdications and depositions. Some Allied papers call for the punishment of the Kaiser; an important Socialist paper insists upon his abdication. Unconfirmed reports about his abdication have been current for about a week. All the Sovereigns of the German Federal States have been summoned to meet in what has been described as a Crown Council. Such a body is, so far as we know, unknown to the Imperial Constitution of Germany and its meeting may mean anything. Admit this uncertainly the slightest incident may produce far-reaching results, notwithstanding the utter exhaustion of the Central Powers and the great strain on the resources of the Allies. In these circumstances it is necessary to watch closely the course of the negotiations for peace and to note carefully the talk, responsible and irresponsible, relating thereto.

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THE order of 'externment' against Dr. Mehta of Rangoon will cause great anxiety in India. Both for his own high and public-spirited character and for his devoted attachment to Mr. Gandhi, he is regarded with genuine esteem by great numbers of the educated people in India. The action taken against him by the Burma Government need cause no surprise to those who remember how jealously it guards its "primitive Arcadia" from all outside influences that may bring enlightenment and ambition that in its narrowness it does not approve. What does cause surprise is that the Government of India, meticulously careful for itself of its policy of conciliation, should allow the operation of that policy to be marred by occasional manifestations of individual idiosyncrasy by local satraps. War-

time though it be and resentful as the service may be, we think the Simla authorities might show in a just cause a little of the strength which is so much admired in overgrown subordinates, even when they show it in a wrong cause. Everybody knows the generalities which are the refuge of the erring official: practice must vary according to conditions, what is safe in one province may be dangerous in another, the man on the spot knows best, &c. But there is a limit to this sort of plea, and when the vagary of a local Government threatens needlessly to disturb the relations between the Government of India and their people, they must not hesitate to interpose with their higher policy, which is based on their larger outlook and heavier responsibility.

OF the many bands of self-sacrificing workers that have come forward to provide medical relief to the poor and needy during the influenza epidemic in Bombay, the Social Service League, whose activities among the working classes are well-known, is the foremost. In co-operation with the Hindu Medical Relief Association, the League's efforts to offer organised medical aid have been very successful. Besides engaging the services of some qualified medical men, the League has secured the help of a number of students of the Medical College, including some women students, who have enthusiastically responded to the appeal and placed themselves at the service of the League. Many volunteers have been enrolled, whose work is not only to distribute freely stock mixtures, kept at the street depots, but, what is of far more importance, that of making house to house visits and carrying the medicines to the very doors of the patients. It is gratifying to learn that many lives have been saved by these volunteer corps by rendering timely medical aid. The latest figures available show that about 190 people are being every day treated. The League has also been supplying milk and clothing to the needy. It has so far collected Rs. 50,000.

MR. BERNARD HOUGHTON, the famous author of "Bureaucratic Government" writes in the *Positivist Review* to express a general approval of the reform proposals as marking a notable advance and evincing true statesmanship. Commending the division of subjects in the provincial Governments, he insists on a similar bifurcation in the Government of India. The chief defect in the report is, according to him, that the proposals leave the central Government practically unreformed. He adds: "Is an unreformed central Government likely to administer the new constitution with sympathy? Surely not. The mere addition of an Indian member to the executive council will not remedy matters. What is required is the division of the portfolios into reserved and transferred, the latter being in charge of a minister responsible to the Assembly. Such an amendment would go far towards liberalising the Simla bureaucracy; it should strike the imagination of India, whilst

providing a real half-way house on the road to popular government."

THE London correspondent of the *Hindu* continues, in his recent letters, to emphasise the need of Indian public opinion giving a general adhesion to the reform scheme. Expecting that the Congress and the Moslem League would refrain from assuming an attitude of hostility to the basic principles of the scheme, the correspondent goes on to express the hope that it will be possible for these bodies to give a more definite endorsement than this, because, he adds, the passage of the necessary measures may be endangered if real support is not forthcoming from the popular party in India. So far as England is concerned, he remarks, "I may say frankly and without fear of contradiction that progressive opinion is practically at one upon the advisability of accepting the scheme as a basis upon which to develop full self-government in India. We all recognise its unsatisfactory details and will do our best to get them removed or modified and more adequate provisions substituted. But (we must remember that) there is no practicable alternative which either this or the next Parliament can be expected to pass."

THE correspondent further adds: "It is admitted that certain features, especially in relation to the Government of India and the powers reserved to provincial Governors, are unsatisfactory, but these are not regarded as fatal to the scheme as an instrument for the attainment of ultimate home rule. Even if these objectionable features should unfortunately be retained, India will nevertheless be set going along the path towards full self-government, and nothing in the scheme or out of it can seriously affect the impetus with which she will move in the direction of that goal. . . . Let us first prevent the principle of the scheme from being torpedoed by the Sydenham party and then turn our attention to the task of getting the details improved—that, I think, sums up the attitude of those who are most in sympathy with the Indian Nationalist demand. The only critics we have to deal with at present on this side are those who regard the new policy as a betrayal of British interests. It will take us all our time to circumvent these opponents, and we are devoutly hoping that the task will not be complicated by a development of unbending hostility from the opposite pole."

THE All-India Moderates' Conference has been now definitely fixed for the 1st and 2nd of November. We trust all those who are of the opinion that the country's best interests require that a general support should be given to the Montagu-Chelmsford reform proposals and modifications urged in consonance with the terms of the declaration of last year, will make it a point to attend the Conference in Bombay, even if the dates be inconvenient to some.

### THE PIONEER ON THE NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE report on constitutional reforms submitted to the Viceroy by the non-official members of the Indian Legislative Council is a document of considerable importance. It gives decided, though discriminating, support to the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals. It keeps faithfully within the four corners of the famous Cabinet declaration of August 1917, and is in strict conformity with the general proposition regarding the nature of the official proposals, which is contained in the first part of the resolution appointing the Committee. The 'nationalist' organs of the press, with an exception or two, have generally complimented the report, though in a left-handed manner; its approximation in essentials to the standard of the Special Congress has been the theme of commendation. The *Pioneer*, on the contrary, in its issue of the 3rd inst., sees unpardonable excesses in the report and has convicted its authors of political ineptitude. The gravamen of offence is the laying of a profane hand on the Government of India, which the Viceroy and the Secretary of State have pronounced to be sacrosanct. The *Pioneer* may indulge in heresy against the official creed when it suits its policy, but will piously condemn to the stake other sinners against the Simla canon. Having always worshipped from outside the gate, the non-officials, in judging of the reform scheme, have done so by a standard outside of it and not by a standard set up by itself. They are not prepared to be bound by a formula enunciated by the authors of the scheme in the same way in which they agree to be bound by the declaration on which the scheme is based. The "indisputable" authority of the Government of India, which is held to require its complete inviolability by the popular element, is no less an object of concern to them than the indisputable authority of the provincial Governments. The authority of all government must be indisputable. The question is, does the transfer of a few subjects to the control of the legislature amount to disputing what should be indisputable? The confusion arises, if the remark is not overbold, from using the expression Government of India to mean two very different things and claiming for one thing the indisputable character which belongs to the other. The supremacy of the authority in Simla over the authorities elsewhere in the country must be maintained intact; and this supremacy belongs of right, not to the Viceroy and his ministry, but to the larger entity which includes the legislature as well. The claim is advanced in the name of the rightful owner, but the decree is passed, by a subtle mistake, in the name of his agent.

The *Pioneer* makes another mistake, not so subtle as this. It accuses the non-official members of not recognising the fact that the scheme aims at leaving to the Government of India only those functions which may be called imperial

The non-official members are not without recognising this aim. But is the *Pioneer* clear whether it means, by the word imperial, those subjects in which the British sovereign power is interested or those which, being concerned with India only, are of a federal character? Of the former class are war and peace, treaty-making, copyright, shipping, naturalization, &c. War, peace and treaty-making are within the competence only of the British Cabinet and Parliament, but in the self-governing Dominions the other subjects of this class can be dealt with by the respective Governments concerned, though the laws passed are "reserved" by the Governor-General for the pleasure of the Crown. Are the people's representatives in the legislatures of the Dominions kept out of the decisions regarding these imperial matters? If not, what is the point in urging the distinction in the case of India? Customs, salt, income-tax, railways, the post and telegraph are by nature federal. Customs may involve to some extent relations with strictly British interests and it has been the practice for the Cabinet hitherto to dictate the fiscal policy of India. The analogy of the Dominions does not show that this is a stable or final arrangement. Subject to common and equitable imperial obligations, which Indian politicians are willing to acknowledge, the policy of India in regard to her fisc must be left to be determined by her natural leaders. The railways and post and telegraphs are now, during the war, subservient to military needs. But so will they be in any war of considerable dimensions hereafter. In peace time why should they not be, as in the case of the Dominions, under the control of the legislature? Of salt and income-tax nothing need be said. If the non-official members' report does not go into these details it is because they cared for the principle of responsible government being introduced into the Government of India more than for the precise manner in which, or the extent to which, it was introduced.

Once the functions of the Government of India are split up into reserved and transferred, it would follow, on the analogy of the arrangements proposed in the case of provincial Governments, that the Viceroy's power of certification and the procedure of the budget should both be altered. The proposals of the non-official members in both these respects fall short of the provincial standard. That is as it should be. Curiously, however, the *Pioneer*, far from appreciating this fact, complains of it. The Montagu-Chelmsford report, not recognising any transferred subjects, restricts the Viceroy's power of certification by a general formula to those cases in which the needs of peace and order or good government require that the decision should rest in the hands of the executive. (Be it noted, by the way, that the parenthetical explanation that the words 'good government' include sound financial administration does not occur in the text of the report but in the summary—a point which requires elucidation.) If the provincial standard were to be

the guide, the non-officials should have restricted the Viceroy's power of certification to the reserved subjects. But they have mentioned a few subjects which are reserved and brought in the general formula besides, which would allow the Viceroy to certify even transferred subjects when he thought fit to do so. Why then does the *Pioneer* characterise the non-official proposal as 'obviously an unreasonable attempt to tie the hands of the supreme Government?' Is it on account of the difference between the words of the general formula? The official report has the words 'peace and order or good government'. The non-official members' report has 'the public peace, tranquillity and defence of the country.' It is hard to say whether either expression would prevent the executive from appropriating the decision on any subject when they thought it necessary to do so. Events alone will show how these phrases will be interpreted in actual practice. The layman, however, who takes a hand at the preliminary stage, may well shrink from the vagueness of the expression 'good government,' with which, as if it were not wide enough, the summarizer has already taken liberty.

We cannot obviously sympathise with objections which take it for granted that responsible government is weak government and that bureaucratic government is necessarily strong government. Strength has many elements. Neither bureaucratic nor responsible government possibly commands all these elements or commands any in full degree. The control of the legislature may weaken administration in some ways, but its chief recommendation is that it strengthens administration by basing it on the wishes of the people's representatives; and to gain this great strength some strength of less consequence may be sacrificed. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State exalt the principle of responsible government and seek to introduce it into the provincial sphere and to expand it as rapidly as possible. Is it conceivable that they would seriously do so unless they felt that it would give Government upon the whole greater popularity and stability than it could ever have under the present regime? If, in view of the ultimate gain, it is worth while to incur risks in the provincial sphere, why is it not worth while to incur the same risks in the highest sphere of all? No proper answer to this question is to be found in the Montagu-Chelmsford report. Its authors only say we must wait for the results of the provincial experiments to declare themselves. Of these results they are very sanguine, so far as the provincial sphere is concerned. The diffidence that seizes them in the case of the Government of India is therefore unintelligible. They display much eloquence in showing up the faults of the Morley-Minto reforms as having developed in Indian publicists the power of criticism without a sense of responsibility. The moment the non-official members learn this lesson and wish to apply it to the Government of India, earnest protests are made from

the seat of the highest authority in the country and organs of official opinion like the *Pioneer*. To justify their proposal of the gradual increase of transferred subjects, the authors of the official report say that the jump from complete irresponsibility to complete responsibility will come with a crash. As in the provincial, so in the imperial sphere. A crash is a crash anywhere. If anything, it should be avoided with the greater caution in the Government of India. The sooner we begin the process there, the better. The periodical Commissions and certain other proposals are expressly meant to make agitation for advance as far as possible unnecessary; in fact the whole of the movement culminating in the scheme is for allaying agitation. Would this object be completely fulfilled so long as the Government of India remains untouched? Indirect influence over Government has lost its charm for the people. They now want the reality of constitutional power. The official scheme fails to make satisfactory provision either in the present or for the future for the popularisation of the central Government; and as that is the sphere where the master policies are determined, the country's resources disposed and the national destinies shaped, it is not wise to bar it against the ambition of the sons of the soil. Official classes in India and timid politicians in England may consider that the non-official members of the Indian Legislative Council have put out their hands too far in asking for constitutional changes in the Government of India. These feel, however, that without such changes the requirements of the political situation would not be completely met. In a certain sense, therefore, they are necessary, and if, as the foregoing argument has tried to show, they are, besides, good in themselves and safe, there is every reason for making them. We earnestly trust that the authorities in England as well as in India will remember that once the opportunity is lost, it will not be easy to gather the momentum necessary for another great political advance and that they will turn the present psychological moment to the greatest possible account.

#### OUR DEPARTED BROTHER.

WE have lost heavily by the death of Hari Shrikrishna Deva. Though he joined the Society but recently and had not risen to the status of Ordinary Member, his colleagues had always looked upon him as among the seniors. He brought with him much worldly knowledge and experience, the advantage of a wide circle of affectionate friends, and the habit of charity and broad sympathy. To me he was near of kin, for we were both too apt to see and allow for the opposite point of view. Now he is gone, there can be no harm in saying publicly that, as often as we discussed in our meetings any question concerning the 'nationalist' policy or the 'nationalist' leaders personally, Deva's opinion was marked by the nearest approach to the other side and the greatest tenderness to the

reputations involved. Gentle of speech and considerate to a fault to the feelings of others, his services were in constant request when an understanding had to be restored or reluctance had to be talked over. His courtly and refined ways (he had spent many years in the service of a Ruling Chief) made him a welcome visitor in high circles, and his solicitations for pecuniary aid on the Society's behalf met with greater success than those of others. He enjoyed the confidence of the late Mr. Gokhale in the fullest measure and was treated by him rather as a personal friend than otherwise. Of his love of the Society or his devotion to its interests, it is not easy to write in adequate terms. When I saw him for the last time in the Bhajekar hospital on the eve of his removal to Dhulia, he was too feeble to talk much. But he gathered up strength to say, "Don't let the Society die. I know you are now very unpopular and can't get much money. But if you are compelled to beg in the streets, keep the Society alive. Otherwise you would be false to your master's memory." He recognised this was superfluous to me and apologised for the exhortation. But I saw it in no such light, for I remembered Mr. Gokhale's own injunction which was similar; and Deva naturally thought of the Society's future at that critical moment. I gave him the assurance. "Please go now," he said, "I can bear no more." As I was about to take leave, I expressed a hope that I might see him once more in Dhulia. He just turned his eye towards me to show satisfaction. That was our last view of each other.

V. S. SRINIVASAN.

ALTHOUGH the friends of Dr. Deva were prepared for the worst for some time, the news of his death caused them deep pain. Almost all felt it as a personal loss. Wherever Dr. Deva went, and he served in three different States as Durbar Surgeon, he endeared himself to the officials and the people alike. He was, however, not merely a doctor, his beneficent influence being felt throughout the administration. In Sangli, especially, where he State served for more than fifteen years, he took part in inaugurating many of the reforms which have marked out Sangli as a progressive State in the Southern Maratha Country. Dr. Deva found his true calling when he joined the Servants of India Society in 1914. For he was an embodiment of the spirit of service and sacrifice, and had been living a life of pure selflessness even when he was in service and drawing a substantial salary. In matters of opinion and controversy he was equally selfless and always tried to understand and appreciate the other point of view. Opponents as such he hardly had any. But his friends sometimes complained that in his zeal for fair play and conciliation he was unfair to them. He did very useful work in Poona during the last few years in connection with the Sanitary Association, of which he was the founder, the movement for night

schools, &c., and substantially helped Mr. Gandhi in his work in Champaran. A really good man and true was Dr. Deva, and Poona and the Maharashtra are certainly the poorer on account of his death.

H. G. LIMAYE.

### CONTROL OF COTTON CLOTH.

A FEW weeks ago Mr. Athavle, the Presidency Magistrate in Bombay, convicted a retail vendor of firewood for selling it at more than the maximum price fixed by the Controller. The counsel for the defence contended that the vendor himself had to pay the maximum retail price for it to the wholesale dealers and considering the additional expenses he had to undergo such as cart-fare and a legitimate business profit, he could not possibly afford to sell it at the same price unless at a loss. What is a retailer to do under such circumstances? Is he expected to give up his business? The magistrate admitted the soundness of the contention but as he was bound down by the law and as the law was intended primarily in the interests of the consumer he had no alternative but to convict the accused of the charge. He was, however, careful to point out the root of the evil, *viz.* that of fixing the retail price of an article leaving the wholesale one untouched. Firewood was one of such articles. The interests of the retail vendor could have been safeguarded had he been allowed a certain margin of profit over his cost. But in that case, the object of the law, *viz.*, cheapening the commodity for the consumer, would have been difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The only right way to deal with the difficulty, therefore, was to fix not only the retail but also the wholesale maximum price as well. So, there was one more innocent victim to the lack of constructive imagination that is so profusely manifested in framing laws and regulations in India.

Unfortunately, the same mistake is being committed again in an attempt to control the price of standard cloth leaving that of cotton at large. This time there is more likelihood of the consumer not getting the expected benefit and thus the law defeating its own purpose, for the conference that was called to discuss the question of cloth control at Bombay was careful enough to put down the 'price of cotton to be adopted as the basis of the price of standard cloth' (summary of the Bombay Conference Proceedings, Art. (10) *The Times of India*, 7th October). Now the price of cotton enters into that of cotton cloth and it is absurd and futile from the consumer's point of view to try to control the latter only which, to use mathematical phraseology, is a variable dependent on the former. And the price of cotton, we hear, has risen three times its pre-war value. The control of cotton is objected to by some on the ground that it will fall on the poor *rayats* who export cotton to foreign countries or sell it to in-

digenous manufacturers. Everywhere in the world it is the middleman who transports and stores raw products that gets the lion's share of profits and India is no exception to the rule. The Indian *rayat*, through his extreme poverty, is not in a position to bargain or leave his stock unsold. It would be interesting indeed to compare the prices which the *rayat*—where there are any unpaid independent cotton cultivators—gets for his produce and those which the wealthy middleman exacts from the foreign importer or the manufacturer. The difference would make the soberest among socialists shudder with envy. We are not blind to practical difficulties in the way of fixing the price of cotton. For instance, we may fix it for home consumption, but what about export prices? Should we cheapen cotton for the foreign importer as well? Or, if the foreign importer is ready to pay more than the fixed home price for it, how to prevent its exportation in abnormally large quantities? A duty on the export of cotton is what naturally suggests itself as an antidote. But it is doubtful whether it can have the desired effect of preventing the export of cotton to any appreciable extent and thus cheapening it for home consumption, since the rich Japanese importing syndicates (or syndicate?) supported by the State can afford to pay any exorbitant price for it and the duty would thus be made to fall ultimately on the shoulders of the importer. Now does it seem advisable to prohibit the export of cotton altogether? The best remedy, in our opinion, is for the Government of India to buy from the middlemen or directly from the *rayat*, at a decent war-rate, as much quantity of cotton as is needed by our manufacturers to supply home demands and sell it to them at cost price, granting these also a certain amount of war profit on their manufactures and distribute the standard cloth through licensed bona-fide agencies, as is proposed to do at present. Only the surplus, if any, should be allowed to export. This will not only prevent undue hoarding and speculative purchases of cotton and cloth on the part of the unscrupulous middleman, but will do justice to everybody concerned and help greatly to standardize the value of the cloth meant to be controlled.

There was another sound and practical suggestion offered by Sir D. E. Wacha which did not, however, receive the attention it deserved. It requested the Government to buy the desired variety of cloth at market price, sell it at a loss to the poor, if this was high, and recoup the pecuniary losses entailed in the transaction by taxing industries like those of cloth, coal, &c., which have made and are making extraordinary profits owing to war conditions after allowing a maximum dividend of about 15% to the shareholders. The last year's Income Tax has left a loop-hole for the industrial profiteer to escape by not fixing a limit to the payment of dividends, for in a concern where the shares are mostly or wholly held by the owners themselves there is hardly any real distinction between actual

profits and the so-called dividends, which are sometimes as high as 50%, and there should have been no just ground for complaint had a limit been fixed in the case of dividends after a respectable war-margin.

A. S. BHANDARKAR.

### SHORT NOTICES.

INDIA'S GOAL BY MESSRS. G. A. NATESAN & Co., MADRAS. PRICE AS. 8.

The book contains in a handy volume some of the best selections from the most important constructive criticisms on the Montague-Chelmsford Report by prominent Indian leaders. The publishers have also added to the usefulness of the book by incorporating into it the full texts of the Congress-League Scheme and other important documents essentially connected with the Reform Report, such as the memorandum of the Nineteen, Gokhale's Scheme, Declaration of August 20th, and the Indo-British Scheme. The book supplies a long-felt desideratum and will prove of immense help to a student of the M. C. Report to bring under control the piles of literature on the subject. The selections have been arranged in such a manner as to present even to a casual observer the salient features of the scheme, and the views of representative Indians, containing helpful criticism with constructive proposals, on the manifold aspects of the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms.

HINDI TRANSLATION OF THE REPORT ON INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS BY SRI PRAKASA B.A., LL. B. (Cantab). BAR-AT-LAW, BENARES.

Pandit Shri Prakash, who is not unfamiliar to the readers of this journal, deserves to be highly congratulated upon the patriotic service that he has so promptly rendered to the motherland by translating this momentous state document. This book, which is remarkable for its faithful, lucid and accurate rendering of the original, would have been widely circulated but for the ill-considerate and arbitrary order of the bureaucracy in U. P. Now as the order has been retracted, we feel confident that the book will prove to be great service in popularising the Reforms.

THE PARROT'S TRAINING, BY SIR PABINDRANATH TAGORE. PUBLISHERS, THACKER SPINK & Co. CALCUTTA & SIMLA.

In the most difficult art of narrating short stories Rabin-drathnath Tagore cannot be easily excelled. To convey a moral lesson in the simplest style has been generally considered as the aim of short stories, of which *Aesop's Fables* and the *Biblical Parables* are the excellent models. Tagore, however, approaches this subject from a different standpoint. Not only does he avail himself of the psychological situation created by depicting a short story in a simple manner to convey a philosophic lesson deep into the hearts of the young and old, the ignorant and the wise, the savage and the civilized, but at the same time he electrifies his short and simple narrative with extraordinary sparks of his poetic genius. Among his short stories, the *Parrot's Training* may certainly be classed as Tagore's masterpiece. It is a fable, a parable and a satire, all in one place. It is highly admirable for its simplicity, spontaneity and suggestion. Its trenchant sarcasm, without being in any way offensive, is the most effective condemnation of the artificial methods of education. To an Indian mind the story ironically suggests the utter failure of the educational department in India. Rabin-drathnath is an apostle of naturalism not only in literature, and philosophy but in education as well. The greatest proof of real genius consists in the fact that its all-prevailing influence shall be felt by men in all stages of life.

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## LETTERS FROM THE PROVINCES.

## MADRAS.

Madras, October 12.

## THE FOOD PROBLEM.

THE food problem still continues to be the biggest of all our problems, before which all others, political or social, pale into insignificance just now, and so far, I am sorry to say, we are not in sight of an adequate solution. The Madras Government's *communiqué* on this subject dated September 28 has caused universal dissatisfaction and disappointment. They have sought to put the whole blame of the recent food riots on the shoulders of the poor political agitator, entirely losing sight of the economic distress which was at the bottom, much to the disgust of all fair-minded people; nor have they taken any steps to avert such calamities in future as yet except the appointment of a Director of Civil Supplies. This official has, under orders of Government, stopped the export of rice to Ceylon and he has also notified that "no steamers or sailing crafts carrying rice should be allowed to clear from any port in this presidency without the permission of the Director of Civil Supplies," and that is all or about all that has been done so far, and much good this order is expected to do! But it will result in precious little, seeing that, even without this order, there is not much rice to export. It would have been far better if the Director of Civil Supplies had turned his attention to the question of importing as much rice as possible from Burma, for instance. Some time ago, a hope was held out that two steamers were coming here from Rangoon with a cargo of rice, but that hope has been cruelly dashed to the ground by the news that, owing to a shortage of ships, those two steamers are not coming after all. The failure of crops has been reported from some parts of the presidency and if there is to be no replenishment of stocks from outside, the situation will speedily grow from bad to worse and the recurrence of a second epidemic of looting and rioting is not beyond the limits of probability. It was to avert this calamity that proposals for the fixing and controlling of prices were made to the local Government, who, however, have taken shelter under the good old Famine Code and refuse to budge. It is devoutly to be hoped that wiser counsels will prevail and that Government will take speedy action of this kind and save this province from further trouble.

## THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

"The epidemic unity of India," as the *Indian Social Reformer* wittily phrased it, has been again demonstrated all over this country, including our fair province of Madras. This is the second time that this fell disease has paid us a visit. So far the death-rate here has not reached anything like the high figures that have been reported from Bombay and Poona and other parts of India, but it is bad enough. The numbers of deaths one meets with in the course of a tramride or a short walk is frightful; nor is it confined to the metropolis, but seems to be spread all over the mofussil. In some small towns like Mayavaram 40 deaths per day were reported some time back; and whereas in Bombay it is on the decrease, it is daily on the increase in Madras, and nobody knows how it will end. It must be said that the authorities concerned have not profited by the example of Bombay and taken adequate steps to prevent its further spread. And let me hope that they will do so without any further delay, for prevention is always better than cure.

## A MISCHIEVOUS MOVEMENT.

It is extremely to be regretted that the Brahmin-non-Brahmin controversy should have begun to invade our colleges and schools too, but such is the fact. Recent incidents in Pachiappa's College, Madras, illustrate this sad truth. It began in the Board of Trustees and we all hoped it would end there, but, now it has permeated the class-rooms also. According to reliable accounts, the students of this

institution now seem to be divided into two factions, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, and quarrels between them are of almost daily occurrence. Nor is this all. The students display the same spirit towards their professors and teachers. Recently a Brahmin professor was not allowed to open his mouth by his non-Brahmin pupils, who would have none of a Brahmin teacher. Apart from the undesirability of introducing political factions among students, can anyone imagine a greater want of discipline than this? But of discipline there seems to be not a shred or particle left in Pachiappa's at present. All this is most lamentable, and whoever or whatever may be the cause of all this, unless this is stopped betimes, the institution will become a laughing-stock and by word of reproach and, what is worse, its usefulness gone, it will become a source of mischief, a festering sore in our midst.

## BAN ON THE "HINDU" AND "COMMONWEAL."

Besides the export of rice, the export of the *Hindu* and *Commonweal* to Ceylon also seems to have been stopped. It is possible to understand the former, but not the latter. A Ceylon correspondent writes to *New India* about this and innocently asks, "Are we to be treated like little children?" Perhaps he does not know that Sir Reginald Craddock, the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, has set a glorious example in the futile task of trying to free his province from all political taint by prohibiting Indian journals and now by externing Dr. Mehta. The Government of Ceylon is apparently only copying his methods. What futility!

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## 'NATIVE INDIAN LAND FORCES.'

SIR,—You have done a valuable public service in drawing the attention of the military authorities, in your issue of October 3, to the injustice inflicted on the nine officers belonging to the Native Indian Land Forces, who were selected for commissioned rank in August of last year. It is important that your readers should understand how exactly these officers stand to suffer by their so-called preferment, which was announced with such a tremendous beat of the drum. It must be remembered in the first place that commissions were not bestowed on these officers for the first time last year, as is wrongly imagined by some people. They held commissions before, and right King's commissions these were. They were given the same rank which they had already held in the Native Indian Land Forces, and they continued to draw the same salary. So outwardly they underwent no change, either in status or pay, except that they were translated from the Native Indian Land Forces to the Indian Army. And a very elaborate process this was. On August 25, 1917, two orders were issued; by one they were first appointed to the Unattached List for the Indian Army, and by the second they were admitted from this Unattached List to the Indian Army itself. In this way, the general "throwing open of commissioned ranks to Indians" which was announced last year, with such a heavy expenditure of righteous sentiment, meant to these nine officers only this—that, instead of belonging as before to the non-descript Native Indian Land Forces they belonged thereafter to the Indian Army proper. That is how we all understood it. They did not obtain any sort of promotion in passing, by two stages, from the Native Indian Land Forces to the Indian Army, because their rank and salary remained the same, but they certainly did not bargain for an actual loss in rank, with which they are now faced, if their substantive appointment is held to date from August 25, 1917, and if their previous service in the same rank is not to count towards promotion. This will mean virtual degradation to these officers, as you have rightly pointed out, and their translation to the Indian Army will in that case do them an ill-turn instead of a good turn.

Is it, however, true that these officers have now been taken over into the Indian Army for the first time? Not so, if His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is to be believed. For he told the Indian Legislative Council in March last, in reply to the Hon'ble Capt. Ajab Khan's question that "the term 'Native Indian Land Forces' is synonymous with the term 'Indian Army.'" And these nine officers have thus always belonged to the Indian Army. What is the meaning then of the mummery, through which these officers passed on the memorable day of August 25 last year, of being appointed first to the Unattached List for the Indian Army and then to the Indian Army properly so called—if the term, Native Indian Land Forces conveys identical import with the term Indian Army? And why was the former term, which has caused such a confusion, at all devised if it means the same thing as, and nothing more or less than, the well-understood term Indian Army? The Commander-in-Chief also told the Imperial Council that the nine officers in question "were not transferred from the Native Indian Land Forces to the Indian Army, but were granted commissions in His Majesty's Land Forces (which includes the British Army as well), similar to those held by British officers." Then does their distinction, which they achieved last year, consist in this that they held now for the first time commissions in His Majesty's Land Forces, "similar to those held by British officers?" If last year's announcement raised them to this honour for the first time, what becomes of Lord Curzon's promise (made in the speech of July 24, 1904) that the Imperial Cadet Corps "will eventuate as time goes on in the bestowal of commissions as British officers upon Indian chiefs, nobles, and gentlemen?" The Native Indian Land Forces are thus shrouded in mystery, being neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring, and in whatever way the mystery is cleared, it is flagrantly unjust that the nine officers, who were supposed to be elevated in rank by the announcement of last year, should now suffer a degradation. If they are pushed back some 500 to 700 places in the list, as you say they will be, an injury will be done to them, to which no self-respecting officer will quietly submit.—Yours, etc.

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प्रकाशित:—"अब्राहाम लिङ्गन" मूल्य ॥) "भारतीय शासनप्रबन्ध-सम्बन्धी सुधारोंका आवेदनपत्र" जिल्द १ मूल्य ॥२)

छप रही हैं:—"जापान का राजनैतिक विकास" "इटली के विधायक महात्मागण" "भारतवर्ष का प्राचीन इतिहास" "भारतीय शासनप्रबन्धसम्बन्धी सुधारोंका आवेदनपत्र" जिल्द २ और ३।

प्रचारित:—स्वर्गवासी अण्वापक लक्ष्मीचंद्रजी रुत। १ "रोश-नार्द बनाने की पुस्तक" ॥) २ "सुगन्ध-साधुन बनाने की पुस्तक" १) ३ "तेल की पुस्तक" १) ४ "हिन्दी कमेस्ट्री" १) ५ "साल रसायन" २) ६ "बार्निश और मेण्ट" १) श्री मुकुन्दलाल रुत "मानस-मुक्तावली" मूल्य १-)

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